NCAA baseball is returning to the **University of Oregon** after a 26-year absence, it was announced yesterday in Eugene, OR.

U of O has been the only university in the Pac-10 without a baseball program. Baseball was cut after the 1980-81 season due to financial reasons.

To make room for baseball, the U of O wrestling program was dropped.

The announcement comes on the heels of **Oregon State University's** back-to-back College World Series Championships, raising interest in the region for collegiate-level baseball.

But, according to Oregon athletic director **Pat Kilkenny**, the recent visibility of OSU's success and the reinstatement of baseball at U of O was purely coincidental. As reported by the Oregonian :

"I think that's awesome what they did at Oregon State," Kilkenny said. "(But) take this in the spirit it was intended, I almost wish that it wouldn't have happened, because I think there's too much attention given to what happened in Corvallis and something that we were doing, which was totally separate."

Kilkenny further added:

"It became very clear that we needed to make some adjustments to react to the changing times and the changing appetite as it relates to intercollegiate athletics," said Kilkenny, citing the athletic department's financial future and the "significant growth" that college baseball has made nationally in recent years.

U of O will start with 3.4 scholarships for its first season and build toward the NCAA maximum of 11.7 for the 2011-12 season. Kilkenny said he would look to hire a baseball coach "as soon as possible," and that the new coach would play a role in assisting the search for a new baseball facility.

Eugene’s Civic Stadium, where the Class A Emeralds play, is seen as a viable interim facility.