

Student-Athlete Briefing

BACKGROUND

For the 2023-24 athletic year, certified by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), Oregon State University participated in the NCAA Division I Bowl Championship Subdivision as a member of the Pac-12 Conference (Pac-12). OSU sponsors 16 varsity sports (plus men's rowing): baseball (men), basketball (men and women), cross country (women), football (men), golf (men and women), gymnastics (women), rowing (men and women), soccer (men and women), softball (women), indoor and outdoor track and field (women), volleyball (women), and wrestling (men).

In August 2023, ten schools announced their decision to leave the Pac-12 at the conclusion of the 2023-24 athletic year, leaving Oregon State and Washington State University as the two remaining members. As a byproduct of realignment, for the 2024-25 athletic year scheduling agreements were formed for our teams to compete in the following conferences:

Mountain West: football (under the Pac-12 umbrella).

West Coast Conference: men's and women's basketball, men's and women's soccer, men's and women's golf, cross country, volleyball, women's rowing and softball.

Pac-12: gymnastics, baseball, wrestling, indoor/outdoor track & field and men's rowing

CONNECTION TO PROSPERITY WIDELY SHARED

The Department of Intercollegiate Athletics (Athletics) focuses on the holistic growth of its 500+ student-athletes through academic and athletic excellence in a progressive and inclusive environment of mutual respect. The Department of Intercollegiate Athletics spent the 2022-23 academic year updating and revising the current Build the Dam Strategic Plan (2018-2023) and was ready to publicly launch version 2.0 in August 2023, but as a result of uncertainty due to conference realignment and the need to refocus significant efforts toward securing a future at the highest possible level of competition, version 2.0 has been tabled.

During this period (August 2023 to present), efforts are being guided by principles that were developed in conjunction with university leadership. These guiding principles, which are listed below, are consistent with the values that inform *Prosperity Widely Shared* (PWS).

Oregon State University Guiding Principles through Realignment:

1. *Prioritize the holistic development and well-being of student athletes to support their academic and athletic goals.*
2. *Champion the ability of OSU student-athletes to compete at the highest level possible.*
3. *Provide the best experience for alumni and fans to inspire engagement across all sports.*
4. *Create visibility for OSU nationally and globally.*
5. *Maximize financial resources for OSU Athletics programs and support for student-athletes.*

METRICS

While version 2.0 of the Build the Dam Strategic Plan had to be tabled, the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics has been guided by the measurable objectives and strategies identified in the original Build the Dam Strategic Plan (where still applicable), the realignment guiding principles, and PWS.

KEY INITIATIVES, PROJECTS, AND/OR PRIORITIES

Student-Athlete Success

To date, OSU's student-athletes have performed well academically during the 2023-24 academic year. During the 2024 winter term, fifteen teams earned a term and cumulative GPA higher than 3.0, and 240 student-athletes had a term GPA of 3.5 or higher. The top academic teams this winter were women's golf with 3.78 GPA and women's gymnastics with a 3.70 GPA.

Student-athletes earned 97.2% of credits attempted and 97.3 % of our student-athletes are in good standing, with 212 individuals on the OSU Honor Roll.

Service to the community of Corvallis remains a priority for OSU's staff, coaches and student-athletes. To date, 86% of student-athletes have participated in community service and over 2,200 hours of community service have been logged by the student-athlete population. While many entities are impacted by this service to the community, the Vina Moses Center, Corvallis Public Library, Boys and Girls Club of Corvallis, and Corvallis School District have been visited most frequently by our student-athletes and staff.

The holistic well-being of our student-athletes remains a top priority and with the addition of two full-time positions and two part-time positions, we have increased accessibility and availability of student-athlete services to meet the ever-growing demand for care. Counseling, Holistic Advancement, and Mental Performance Services (CHAMPS) launched in fall 2023 and our clinicians have increased their presence with teams and the student-athlete community with the goal of fostering relationships and eroding the stigma surrounding mental health. Our accessibility to services, quality of care, and diverse staff places us amongst the top tier of NCAA Division I athletic departments. Many of these changes were made as a result of executive administration intentionally creating opportunities for on-going conversation with student-athlete leaders to understand their most pressing needs.

Competitive Success

OSU's student-athletes and coaches have once again enjoyed a year filled with much competitive success. Since 2018, OSU is the only school in the nation that has had a 10-win football season, men's and women's basketball in the Elite 8, baseball and softball in the College World Series, gymnastics compete at the National Championship Finals and men's soccer reach the College Cup.

The football program finished ranked 19th in the final CFP rankings and competed in the Tony the Tiger Sun Bowl. Trent Bray (Oregon State class of 2007) was hired as head coach following the season.

The men's soccer team competed in the College Cup (final four teams) for the first time in program history, with Logan Farrington earning Pac-12 player of the year and offensive player of the year recognition. The regional performance by Kaylee Mitchell and Grace

Fetherstonhaugh earned them the chance to compete at cross country nationals. Mitchell placed 12th and for the third time was an All-American in cross-country.

Under the direction of head coach Scott Rueck, women's basketball advanced to the Elite 8 and was ranked 8th in the final AP Poll. Coach Rueck was named to the Naismith College Coach of Year Late Season watch list.

The wrestling program had five individuals compete in the NCAA championship with Trey Munoz placing 3rd, the best individual finish for the program since 2018.

Gymnastics competed in the post-season for the 49th consecutive year. Sophia Esposito was named Pac-12 freshman of the year and Jade Carey posted a perfect 10.0 at the Pac-12 Championship.

Spring sports are underway now, with baseball currently ranked 5th in the nation and on pace to host NCAA Regionals competition in Corvallis. Kyra Ly, women's golf, shared her first individual title at the Juli Inkster Invitational.

Student-Athlete Development, Support and Programming

Department of Intercollegiate Athletics emphasizes and invests in the holistic development of our student-athletes. We offer dynamic programming as we strive to provide the tools necessary to be successful during their time at OSU and beyond. Programming is developed with intentionality, focusing on professional development, leadership enhancement, and community engagement. Our staff works to foster a stronger sense of community among student-athletes and ensure equitable access to all of our programs.

Programming and Initiatives that directly impact student-athletes are:

- The Building Beavs (previously branded as Everyday Champions) program is broken down into class cohorts and put into place to encourage every student-athlete to complete one event, such as Beaver Blast Off (the school year kick-off event for all student-athletes), NIL Summit (Name, Image and Likeness education), The Benny's (student-athlete award show) and one development program of their choice during fall, winter and spring term. Examples of development programs include Beavs Mean Business (Interview preparation) and various financial literacy programs (topics include money management, credit, and investments). Thus far, 93% of the student-athletes have participated in the events held by our student-athlete development team. The rebrand and enhancement of this program enabled us to better align it with our mission statement, core values and strategic plan.
- The Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC), comprised of elected leaders and representatives of each team, has seen an increase in participation and is actively networking with other universities. In April, Oregon State University and the University of Oregon cohosted the spring Pac-12 SAAC Meeting. The student-athlete leaders have reoccurring meetings with athletics administration to report, reflect and discuss any concerns that were addressed during their meetings. This term, OSU SAAC will also network with the Washington State University SAAC department to continue conversations and collaboration.

- Professional development and leadership enhancement opportunities are provided through a number of programs, such as Beaver Belonging (explores socially conscious leadership), the OSU Sport Summit (mentorship program with alumni), Beavers Without Borders (service-learning study abroad program), Beaver Nation Networking Nights, Dam Able (inclusive events for community members with cognitive and physical disabilities) and BeavBold (celebration of National Girls and Women in Sports Day).
- Oregon State will be represented by 12 student-athletes at the national Black Student-Athlete Summit. This conference encourages our black-identified student-athletes to be inspired, to lead, and to maximize their experiences in their learning development.

Facilities Master Plan Progress

- Completing Reser Stadium was completed in August 2023. It includes a new state-of-the-art interactive Student Welcome Center that serves year-round as an on-campus first stop to introduce prospective new students and their families to Oregon State University and a wellness clinic that serves as a campus hub to provide students, faculty, staff and community members with year-round access to expanded health care and wellness services.
- In support of the Build the Dam Strategic Plan, the following facility improvements have been completed since 2016 where private support was a key driver:
 - a. Kelly Field (OSU Softball) - new lights, hitting facility, branding, surface upgrades, video board, new sound system
 - b. Goss Baseball Hitting Building (in progress)
 - c. OSU Gymnastics Training Facility
 - d. Soccer Bleachers
 - e. Women's Basketball Locker Room
 - f. P. Wayne Valley Sports Performance Center renovation
 - g. Gill Plaza renovation
 - h. Whyte Track and Field bleachers and enhancements
- Projects in consideration:
 - a. Field Sports Building
 - b. Facilities Masterplan revisit
 - c. Valley Football Locker Room & Performance Table refresh

Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24) Fundraising Accomplishments

- Continued focus on supporting the priorities in the facility master plan
- FEARLESS: Women of Oregon State Athletics fundraising initiative was launched in the spring of 2023. This effort is creating opportunities for donors to make current use gifts for areas of strategic investment in support of women's athletics exclusively.
- To keep pace with an evolving industry, Our Beaver Nation is now making efforts and including mention of Name, Image and Likeness (NIL) opportunities in their conversations with donors.
- Continue to build a 'culture of philanthropy' in athletics, centered around Dam Proud Day each spring.

OPPORTUNITIES, THREATS & NATIONAL TRENDS

The landscape of intercollegiate athletics has seen significant change and disruption in the last year. While every department in the country has been impacted, Oregon State has been disproportionately impacted by conference realignment. Since August, university and athletic department leadership have worked in constant collaboration, leaning into our guiding principles, to find the best path forward for our student-athletes, athletic department and the university.

In the short term, scheduling alliances were necessary to provide a solution for competition during the upcoming year. However, we anticipated lower revenues than we were earning via the Pac-12 conference and some unavoidable financial hardships were forecasted. A strategy was built around funding from public and philanthropic sources, which has been and will continue to be communicated directly via the university, as well as widely covered by the media.

In addition to realignment, there have been several changes implemented as a result of the work of the NCAA Transformation Committee. The objective of the Transformation Committee is to improve the experience of the student-athlete by putting forth recommendations, for example, specific mental health resources for student-athletes.

The ability for student-athletes to profit from their Name, Image and Likeness (NIL) was not new this year but continues to evolve nationally and at the state level. Student-athletes can participate in avenues including but not limited to endorsement deals, sponsoring sport camps, giving autographs, etc. This has added steam to the nationwide efforts in courts and agencies to reclassify student athletes as employees.

The transfer portal is another recent change that presents challenges for athletic departments as it impacts retention of current student athletes and recruiting efforts. During realignment, the department was significantly impacted by the transfer portal as the conference affiliation and competitive schedules student athletes anticipated being in place for the duration of their time with Oregon State had changed. The execution of our guiding principles is a key factor in our ability to retain many of our student athletes, despite the impact of conference realignment, but we must acknowledge that in some cases, our opportunities to both retain and recruit have become more challenging.

Given all that has occurred since August, it is hard to predict what the landscape of collegiate athletics will look like in the future. The only thing that seems sure is that more change is coming. While the speculation and questions loom, we will continue to monitor the landscape and actively engage where needed, as our focus remains on finding the best path forward and seizing the right opportunity at the right time for Oregon State.

All these changes have created a dramatically different landscape within intercollegiate athletics and one in which we must be nimble, adaptable, collaborative and relentless. As we continue to navigate these challenges, there are still many incredible opportunities for our student-athletes to prosper and be successful on and off the fields of play. We are very proud of what they are accomplishing and optimistic for what is to come.

NEXT STEPS

The Academic Strategies Committee will discuss the student-athlete briefing at its May 16, 2024 meeting.