

2005 UCLA SPRING OUTLOOK

A year ago, UCLA continued its building process, showing huge gains in the areas of rushing, passing and special teams while continuing to lay the foundation for the program's future successes on defense.

In a year's time, the Bruins improved their rushing, passing and special teams play while a young defensive unit made steady progress. In 2004, UCLA rushed for 2,219 yards (184.9 avg.) and 18 touchdowns in 12 games. The previous season, the Bruins totaled 1,195 yards (91.9 avg.) and 11 touchdowns. The '04 Bruins recorded 22 touchdown passes for the season, almost doubling the total of the previous year (12). UCLA's net punting average of 40.7 was up from the 2003 mark of 36.5.

On defense it was a season for gaining experience as 26 players either made their first career starts or saw their first varsity action in 2004. Eleven of those players made their first career starts on that side of the ball in the first three games of the season. Over the balance of the year, four more would make their initial defensive starts. In all, nine redshirt freshmen, six true freshmen and three junior college transfers saw their first Division I action on defense in 2004.

The offense averaged 6.0 yards per play, its best since the 1998 season (6.81). Its average of 410.0 yards per game was its highest since the 1998 team compiled an average of 487.25. Its scoring average of 30.1 was its best since the '98 team put 39.7 points per game on the board.

UCLA returns 17 starters from the 2004 team — seven on offense and nine on defense, plus its placekicker — to form the nucleus of the 2005 Bruin squad. On offense, the returnees include tight end Mercedes Lewis, Mackey Award finalist who led the team with seven touchdown catches; wide receiver Junior Taylor, tied for second on the team in 2004 with 32 receptions; tailback Maurice Drew, who led the team in rushing with 1,007 yards and ranked 17th nationally in all-purpose yards; quarterback Drew Olson, who started all 12 games, but underwent knee surgery in January and will miss Spring Practice; and three offensive linemen -- center Mike McCloskey, tackle Ed Blanton and guard Shannon Tevaga.

On defense, the returning starters include All-America linebacker Spencer Havner, who led the Pac-10 in tackles with 125 stops and was a semifinalist for the Butkus and Lombardi Awards; linebacker Justin London who battled early-season injuries to finish tied for fourth on the team with 57 tackles; safety Jarrad Page, who was second on the squad with 79 tackles and tied for the team lead in interceptions; linebacker Wesley Walker, who tied for fourth on the squad with 57 tackles; cornerback Trey Brown, who finished seventh on the team in tackles; and four defensive linemen -- Kevin Brown, Justin Hickman, Kyle Morgan and C. J. Niusulu. Place kicker Justin Medlock, a semifinalist for the Lou Groza Award, and snapper Riley Jondle also return for the 2005 season.

Other key returnees include tailback Chris Markey, the team's third leading rusher (350 yards) and top kickoff returner (22.2 yards per return); wide receivers Joe Cowan, Brandon Breazell and Marcus Everett; fullback Michael Pitre, who caught 10 passes; guard Robert Cleary; linebacker Aaron Whittington; defensive backs Marcus Cassel, Eric McNeal, Rodney Van,

Chris Horton and Dennis Keyes; defensive linemen Brigham Harwell and Bruce Davis; and special teams standout Michael Norris.

Key losses from last season include running back Manuel White; wide receivers Craig Bragg, UCLA's all-time receiving leader with 193 catches, and Tab Perry, the all-time school leader in kickoff returns; offensive guard Steven Vieira, a four-year starter; offensive tackle Paul Mociler; cornerback Matt Clark, a first-team All-Pac-10 selection; safety Ben Emanuel, third on the team in tackles in 2004; and punter Chris Kluwe (fifth nationally in net punting and a Ray Guy Award finalist).

"The staff and the players are eager to get started," said head coach Karl Dorrell. "We still have a lot of hard work ahead of us as we continue to build the program. There is a solid foundation in place and we are going in the right direction.

"Defensively, we now have some valuable experience on our side. Steady progress was made on that side of the ball through the course of the season. There was marked improvement in the quality and consistency of play from our front seven toward the end of the season. We have the players in our program who can execute successfully and coaches who can maximize our players' potential.

"Offensively, we made measurable progress from our first-year totals and are very excited about our offensive possibilities in 2005. Our coaching staff and players have years of experience together in the system which will allow us to continue to improve our productivity," said Dorrell.

UCLA will again face a challenging schedule. The Bruins open the season Sept. 3 at San Diego State before returning to Pasadena for four straight home contests. Rice and Oklahoma will be in the Rose Bowl on Sept. 10 and 17, respectively. On Oct. 1, UCLA opens Pac-10 play against Washington and on Oct. 8 California comes to Pasadena.

Four of the last six games of the 2005 season will be on the road. The Bruins travel to Washington State (Oct. 15), Stanford (Oct. 29), Arizona (Nov. 5) and USC (Dec. 3). Oregon State (Oct. 22-homecoming) and Arizona State (Nov. 12) will come to the Rose Bowl. Overall, UCLA will face five schools that played in bowl games.

Here is a look at the Bruins entering Spring Practice, which begins on February 22 and concludes on March 15.

OFFENSE

Seven starters, plus several other performers who have started games, give the Bruins an excellent experience level in many key areas. The improvement on the field was evident in all areas of the offense last season.

QUARTERBACK

Senior **DREW OLSON'S** (6-3, 217) prospects for the 2005 season are somewhat in doubt as he continues to rehabilitate from the major knee surgery he underwent in January. The surgery repaired two damaged ligaments in his left knee, injured during the second quarter of the bowl game versus Wyoming.

A year ago, Olson started all 12 games and began to take the next step. On the year, he completed 196 of 341 passes

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(57.5%) for 2,565 yards, 20 touchdowns and 13 interceptions. He ranked fourth in the Pac-10 in passing efficiency (132.39) and his 20 touchdown passes ranked fifth on UCLA's all-time single-season list. Only Cade McNown (25 in 1998 and 24 in 1997), Troy Aikman (24 in 1988) and Tom Ramsey (21 in 1982) have thrown for more scores in a single season. Olson's 2,671 yards of total offense ranked sixth on that single-season list.

During the 2004 season, Olson tied a school record with eight touchdown passes in a two-game span. He has 26 career starts in his three previous seasons at UCLA and has appeared in 33 games overall. His career total of 422 completions ranks No. 4 in UCLA history. In addition, his 5,334 passing yards rank No. 5 on that UCLA list. He also ranks No. 7 in career total offense (5,174 yards).

It is hoped that his rehabilitation process will have accelerated his level of health to the point where he can take part in summer workouts and have a chance to be ready for action in Fall camp. Olson possesses outstanding leadership qualities and demonstrated continued growth in his knowledge of the offensive system during the course of the 2004 campaign.

Senior **DAVID KORAL** (6-3, 218) gained valuable game experience coming off the bench for Olson in Las Vegas Bowl against Wyoming. He completed seven of 12 passes for 89 yards, including touchdowns of 17 and 25 yards to Craig Bragg. The pass attempts and completions were the first of his Bruin career. He had seen earlier action in the games against Arizona and Stanford, but had not attempted a pass.

Koral entered UCLA in January of 2004, transferring from Santa Monica College. During the 2003 season, he completed 155 of 281 passes (55.2%) for 2,202 yards, 18 touchdowns and six interceptions and was ranked the No. 8 junior college quarterback in the nation. As a prep senior at Palisades High in 2000, he was ranked No. 6 among quarterbacks in the West and earned All-America honors from PrepStar magazine. He passed for 4,057 yards and 44 touchdowns as a senior and threw for 4,902 yards, including a national prep record 764 yards in a game versus Van Nuys Grant, and 57 touchdowns as a junior.

Fourth-year junior walk-on **BRIAN CALLAHAN** (6-0, 191) will also compete for playing time. A very intelligent young man who possesses a vast football background (his father is the head coach at the University of Nebraska), he served as a backup the past two years but has not yet appeared in a game.

Redshirt freshman **PATRICK COWAN** (6-4, 210), who earned All-Region honors at St. John Bosco High in 2003, joined the program last August. He spent the 2004 season running the scout teams during the practice sessions and has shown a rapid level of development. As a prep senior, he threw for 1,101 yards and five touchdowns in a run-oriented offense. He is the brother of junior wide receiver Joe Cowan.

Redshirt freshman **BEN OLSON** (6-5, 235) figures to get a long look from the coaching staff during Spring Practice. B. Olson entered UCLA this past January. Olson has been on a school mission for the past two years after redshirting as a true freshman in 2002 at BYU. He has not seen action in a

competitive game since his senior prep season in 2001 at Thousand Oaks, CA High School. Coming out of high school at that time, he was considered the top signal caller in the nation. During his prep career, he completed 421 of 702 passes for 6,401 yards and 54 touchdowns. As a senior in 2001, he threw for 2,989 yards and 32 touchdowns.

Redshirt freshman walkon **TYLER HOLLAND** (6-4, 210) will also be in the mix. Holland joined practices at the start of classes in the Fall of 2004 and worked on the scout team.

"Drew was a key for us last year," said head coach Karl Dorrell. "We were happy with his growth in the position last season. We did a much better job of putting him in position to be successful and he delivered with some positive results. Some of his numbers compare favorably with the top quarterbacks ever at our school. He will be a good student and teacher of this offense during his rehab process this Spring. We are hopeful that he will continue his maturation and become an even better quarterback when he returns to full health.

"David played well considering it was his first on-field exposure to this offensive system. We expect him to be more comfortable with it the second time around and give us another capable performer at the position. Brian understands the offense extremely well and he will have a chance to compete for a backup role. Patrick showed us last year that he has the physical abilities necessary to be a successful quarterback at this level. He just needs time to refine his skills and gain experience in the system. Ben will certainly get a close look during the Spring. He has been out of competition for an extensive period of time and it will be interesting to see where he is at and try to get him where he needs to be in order to compete for playing time."

RUNNING BACK

Junior **MAURICE DREW** (5-8, 198) enjoyed a very productive 2004, becoming just the 10th Bruin to rush for at least 1,000 yards (1,007) in a season. A sprained ankle prevented him from perhaps having one of the most outstanding seasons ever by a UCLA running back. Despite missing almost the entire Washington State and USC games and not playing at Oregon, Drew still ranked 17th in the nation and third in the Pac-10 in all-purpose yards (146.0) and also ranked third in the Pac-10 in rushing (91.5). At the time of his injury, he ranked second nationally in all-purpose yards.

Although compact in size, he is a very strong runner with outstanding speed. In the game at Washington, Drew set a school record when he rushed for 322 yards and established another record with five touchdowns. Only two players in Pac-10 history (Reuben Mayes of Washington State and Ricky Bell of USC) ever rushed for more yards in a single game. His total of 384 all-purpose yards that afternoon was the best mark in the country and a Pac-10 single-game record.

Drew finished the season as the team's leading rusher with 1,007 yards and eight rushing touchdowns. He also caught 18 passes for 262 yards and three more touchdowns. Drew returned 10 punts for a 15.2 yard average, including a 68-yard scoring dash against Stanford. He had seven kickoff returns for a 26.4 average.

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In 2003, he became the first freshman since DeShaun Foster (1998) to lead the team in rushing, his 582 yards ranking No. 3 in school history among true freshmen.

In addition, Drew also averaged 26.6 yards on 20 kickoff returns to rank second in the Pac-10 and 14th nationally. He recorded touchdown returns of 99 yards versus USC and 91 yards against Oklahoma.

Sophomore **CHRIS MARKEY** (5-11, 195) ran for 350 yards on 66 carries and a touchdown to rank third on the team as a true freshman. The Louisiana native returned 18 kickoffs for 399 yards and a 22.2 yard average, which ranked seventh in the Pac-10. Markey also caught eight passes on the year for 105 yards. His total of 854 all-purpose yards (77.6 avg.) ranked 17th in the Pac-10. He was named to The Sporting News' Pac-10 All-Freshman team.

Markey had a breakout game at Oregon. He started for the injured Drew and rushed for 131 yards and led the team with five receptions for 84 yards. In all, he accounted for 238 all-purpose yards and was named the Pac-10 Offensive Player of the Week.

Markey had earned All-America honors at Jesuit High in New Orleans, where he rushed for 2,745 yards as a prep senior in 2003, the most ever by a prep back in the New Orleans area.

Redshirt sophomore **DERRICK WILLIAMS** (5-10, 203), another talented runner, saw limited action in 2004. More of a power runner, he carried twice against San Diego State. On special teams, he forced a fumble on a kickoff versus California and recorded his first kickoff return at Arizona State. Williams, a Super Prep All-American from St. John Bosco High School in Bellflower, CA ran for 1,104 yards in 2002.

Redshirt sophomore **MICHAEL PITRE** (5-11, 232) from El Modena High School in Orange, CA, was one of the pleasant surprises a year ago, winning the fullback job in Fall camp. Pitre, who missed all of the 2003 season with a neck condition, established himself as an outstanding blocker, clearing the way for the Bruin tailbacks. He appeared in 11 games and earned honorable mention All-Pac-10 honors. Pitre caught 10 passes for 128 yards and a touchdown and carried twice for four yards.

Third-year sophomore **JIMMY STEPHENS** (6-2, 235) will compete for playing time behind Pitre. A year ago, Stephens made steady progress while seeing limited game action. Several walk-ons could add depth at the running back positions, including redshirt junior **KRIS KILEY** (6-0, 232), redshirt sophomore **BEN IDEMUNDIA** (6-0, 222) and redshirt freshman **JUSTIN SIEBER** (5-11, 190).

"We return some quality performers in our backfield," said Dorrell. "Our running attack was much improved in 2004 and can be even better in 2005.

"Maurice is an exciting player to watch and he is only going to get better. Drew, Markey and Pitre give us experience in the backfield and we expect Jimmy and Derrick to provide quality depth."

WIDE RECEIVER

This area has a mixture of experience and potential. The coaching staff will be looking to identify players on the rise as Spring drills get underway.

True senior **JUNIOR TAYLOR** (6-1, 198) tied for second on the team with 32 receptions and 463 receiving yards (14.5 avg.) while starting in 11 games last season. His average of 38.6 yards per game ranked 19th in the Pac-10 while his 2.67 receptions per game ranked T-22nd. He recorded two touchdown catches, a 29-yard scoring grab in the Las Vegas Bowl and an 83-yard catch-and-run at Oregon, the seventh-longest in school history. His 70 career receptions rank 21st on the all-time school list.

Blessed with fine speed, Taylor scored a touchdown the first time he touched the football as a Bruin on a 49-yard reverse. In 2003, he started two of his 13 games and ranked third on the squad in receiving yardage (302) and fourth with his 24 receptions.

True junior **JOE COWAN** (6-4, 211) caught 13 passes for 228 yards and one touchdown a year ago. He made two starts in 2004 and led the team with five catches for 95 yards at California, including a 46-yard scoring grab. Cowan, who reminds some observers of former standout Danny Farmer, will look to take the next step and begin to expand his role on the team beginning this Spring.

Two true sophomores, **MARCUS EVERETT** (6-1, 186) and **BRANDON BREAZELL** (6-0, 154), will each look to take advantage of the experience they gained as freshmen when both players earned starting assignments. Everett started four games in 2004 and finished the year with nine catches for 110 yards. He made four catches against Arizona for 45 yards and two first downs. Everett earned All-America honors at West Hills (CA) Chaminade High, making 61 catches for 1,359 yards and 16 touchdowns in 2003 as a prep senior. Breazell started the San Diego State game. He made two receptions for 15 yards in 2004, both in the contest at California. In 2003, Breazell earned All-Region acclaim while making 57 receptions for 1,043 yards and 16 touchdowns as a senior at Edison High in Fresno, CA.

Two redshirt sophomores will also be competing for playing time at the receiver positions. **MATTHEW SLATER** (5-11, 192) saw limited action last season, but is a hard worker. He spent the 2003 season practicing with the regulars, although he never appeared in a game. In 2002, Slater, who possesses sprinter speed, made 39 receptions for 707 yards as a prep senior at Servite High School in Orange, CA in 2002. **ALEX GHEBRESELASSIE** (6-2, 183) also has upside and will be looking to break into the rotation this season. A 2002 Prep Star All-American at Bonita Vista High School in Chula Vista, CA, he averaged close to 20 yards per catch during his prep career.

Redshirt freshman **RYAN GRAVES** (6-1, 164) worked with the scout team last season. As a prep senior in 2003, he made 62 receptions for 1,271 yards and 15 touchdowns and earned All-America acclaim.

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Redshirt junior **ANDREW BAUMGARTNER (6-0, 195)**, redshirt junior transfer **JOSH MARTIN (5-11, 185)**, and redshirt freshman **STEVE MELTON (5-11, 187)** — all walk-ons — will also compete for playing time this Spring.

"Junior has made some big catches for us," Dorrell said. "He has the speed to create and go the distance and he also makes the tough catch. He started to take his game to another level during the latter half of the season and we need him to continue that progression. Joe, Marcus and Brandon each now have enough experience under their belts to use this Spring to show they are ready to become a go-to type of receiver. We will be closely monitoring their improvement and anticipate them being ready to make a statement.

"I am excited about the overall potential of our young receivers and we are looking forward to helping them to further develop throughout this Spring."

TIGHT END

The Bruins welcome back perhaps the best returning player at his position in the nation in senior tight end **MARCEDES LEWIS (6-6, 255)**. Lewis was one of three finalists last season for the John Mackey Award, presented annually to the premier tight end in the country. He is the lone returnee among the finalists.

Lewis led the Bruins with seven touchdown catches in 2004. He caught 32 passes overall, tied for second on the team in that category, for 402 yards. In addition, Lewis produced a team-best 25 first downs with his receptions. His 32 receptions last season ranked fifth-best among Bruin tight ends since 1980.

Lewis' 11 career touchdown catches stand as a UCLA record by a tight end. He ranks No. 4 on UCLA's career tight end receiving list and is 23rd overall on the school career receptions list.

In 2003, he ranked second to Craig Bragg with 30 receptions for 377 yards and three touchdowns. In 2001, Lewis was regarded as the top high school tight end in the nation and made 44 receptions for 710 yards and 11 touchdowns for the CIF Division I champions from Long Beach Poly.

Fifth-year senior **KEITH CARTER (6-4, 246)** adds valuable depth to the position. He appeared in all 12 games last season but did not make a reception. During 2003 Spring Practice, he suffered a dislocated and fractured right hip in a motorcycle accident. It appeared that he might return near the end of the '03 season, but additional surgery ended that hope. In 2002, Carter earned extensive playing time in each of the last 10 games (four starts) as both a second tight end and fullback/H-back, making five receptions.

Redshirt junior **J.J. HAIR (6-5, 242)** saw action in nine games last season, making two receptions for 15 yards and performing well as a blocker. In his final two seasons (2000 and 2001) at Capistrano Valley High, Hair totaled 43 receptions for over 700 yards and three touchdowns.

Senior transfer **MATT RANEY (6-3, 239)** will also look to get in the mix as a reserve tight end. As a sophomore at Phoenix College in 2003, he made 27 receptions for 402 yards and was rated the No. 10 junior college tight end in the nation.

WILL PEDDIE (6-5, 252), a fourth-year junior walk-on, saw his first career action last season and will also compete for playing time.

"Mercedes Lewis made marked improvement in all areas last season," Dorrell said. "He began to put it all together and started to get the most out of all of his considerable tools. With another year of hard work, he is capable of having an even better season this year.

"Keith gives us an experienced player behind Mercedes that we can rely on for a steady performance. We will continue to work with J.J., Matt and Will to give us more options at the position."

OFFENSIVE LINE

Offensive line coach Tom Cable employs a system using strong and weak side performers as opposed to left and right side players. That system helped the Bruins to double its total rushing yardage in a season's time. It produced a school record 322 yard rushing game by Maurice Drew at Washington and lowered by over 30 the number of sacks surrendered from the 2003 to 2004 season. In addition, five players who started games in 2004 return for the 2005 season.

Redshirt senior **ED BLANTON (6-9, 345)**, a two-year starter had a string of 22 straight starting assignments snapped when injury forced him to come off the bench at Oregon. After playing weak tackle in 2004, he will switch to the strong side during Spring Practice. Blanton possesses outstanding size and has worked hard to improve his strength and footwork over the years. He is ready for a big season.

Redshirt senior center **MIKE MCCLOSKEY (6-5, 274)** is one of the best in the nation at his position. A year ago, UCLA rushed for at least 200 net yards in six of the 10 games in which he played and McCloskey earned second-team All-Pac-10 honors. In 2002, he won the starting center job in Fall camp and never relinquished it, starting all 13 games and earning second-team Freshman All-America honors for his efforts. In fact, he started 18 straight games prior to fracturing his left ankle against Washington in the fifth game of 2003.

Third-year junior **ROBERT CHAI (6-3, 275)** stepped in for McCloskey at center in 2003 and started the final eight games of the year. He also started two games in 2004 in place of McCloskey. However, Chai will miss Spring Practice after undergoing knee surgery following the season.

True sophomore **SHANNON TEVAGA (6-3, 303)** spent most of the first six weeks playing on the FG-PAT squad before moving into the starting lineup at strong guard at Arizona State (game seven). He did a fine job and went on to start the final six contests of the 2004 season. He earned third-team Freshman All-America honors and first-team Freshman All-Pac-10 acclaim from The Sporting News.

Fifth-year senior **ROBERT CLEARY (6-7, 299)** figures to be a candidate for a starting guard position. Last year, he earned a starting assignment in Fall camp and made his first career start at weak guard in the season-opener against Oklahoma State. He started the first six games of the season before assuming a role as a key reserve versus Arizona State. He also started at Oregon.

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Redshirt sophomore **BRIAN ABRAHAM** (6-6, 279), a former prep All-American, is one of several young linemen who figures to battle for playing time and a possible starting berth. Abraham played on the PAT-FG team last season and saw limited snaps with the offense against Stanford, Arizona and Washington State.

True sophomore **CHRIS JOSEPH** (6-4, 267) impressed the coaching staff during last year's Fall camp and will compete for playing time at tackle. He played on the PAT-FG team in the first five games of 2004 before he suffered a partially torn knee ligament in practice. Joseph, who also played some offensive snaps against Arizona, is not expected to be ready to take part in full practices during the Spring.

Redshirt sophomore **P.J. IRVIN** (6-4, 304) saw his first game action in 2004 against Arizona. He is expected to battle for playing time at the guard spots. He earned 2002 All-America acclaim, from PrepStar magazine, at Agoura High School.

Redshirt freshman **AARON MEYER** (6-3, 285) caught the attention of the coaches while performing on the scout team in 2004 and will also get a long look at the guard positions. Redshirt freshman **SCOTT GLICKSBERG** (6-4, 263) spent last season as a scout team player on both sides of the ball. This Spring, he will compete for playing time at offensive guard. Redshirt sophomore transfer **MARC VILLAFUERTE** (6-3, 305) also figures to see action at guard after redshirting in 2004, following his transfer from Santa Ana College.

Redshirt sophomore **NOAH SUTHERLAND** (6-4, 262), a converted defensive lineman who saw action in eight games a year ago, will get his first chance on the offensive side of the ball (guard) during Spring practices.

Several non-scholarship players, including redshirt sophomore center **BRIAN RUBINSTEIN** (5-11, 262), redshirt sophomore **JAMAAL RHODES** (6-3, 318) and redshirt freshman **MICAH REED** (6-4, 294) will also be in the mix.

"This was a priority area for us last season and it responded well to the challenge," said Dorrell. "Now, we must continue to build on the positives from last season. We did a much better job in protecting our quarterback and clearing the way for our running backs. I believe that with several players having starting experience and a full season under their belts playing in coach Cable's system, we are capable of being even more effective as a unit.

"Mike and Ed have been multiple-year starters for us and will anchor the line. Shannon came on last season to give us a very solid effort, especially for a true freshman. Cleary is a hard worker and took advantage of an opportunity to insert himself in the starting lineup in 2004. We will take a long look at several young players this Spring who will need to step up for us in 2005."

DEFENSE

A young defense showed steady improvement as its gained experience in 2004. That experience factor will be counted on to help produce improved results on the field during the 2005 campaign.

DEFENSIVE LINE

The 2004 season began without a single defensive lineman having a starting assignment to his credit. A total of 14 linemen saw the action during the course of the season. For 10 of those 14 players, it marked the first game experience of their UCLA careers.

True junior **KEVIN BROWN** (6-2, 285), who possesses both strength and quickness, made his first career start on the defensive line in the opener against Oklahoma State and recorded a career-best five tackles. Brown went on to lead all defensive linemen with 25 tackles from his tackle position. His five sacks led the team and his 8.5 tackles for loss tied for the team lead in that category as well. As a true freshman in 2003, Brown was contributing regularly on the defensive line when, for the good of the team, he agreed to move to offensive guard. He started the same week as the move and ended up starting three games on offense at the end of the season.

At the left end position, senior transfer **KYLE MORGAN** (6-3, 254) saw action in all 12 games a year ago, starting 10 times. Strong and athletic, Morgan, who starred at Pearl River College in Poplarville, MS, and was rated the No. 5 junior college defensive end in the nation, tied for second among the linemen with his 24 tackles. He recorded 17 solo stops, 3.5 tackles for loss and 1.5 sacks. Morgan finished the year with a career-best five tackles in the Las Vegas Bowl.

True junior **JUSTIN HICKMAN** (6-1, 260), who made 60 tackles in 2003 at Glendale (AZ) College, appeared in 10 games and started eight times in 2004. He totaled 22 tackles, four tackles for loss and 1.5 sacks. He was the only lineman to start the first five games of the year, the first two at left end and the rest on the right side. He then underwent surgery on his left knee and missed two games. Hickman came back against Washington State and went on to start against Oregon, USC and Wyoming.

Fourth-year senior **C.J. NIUSULU** (6-2, 280) is the most experienced of the linemen. He was set to make his first start in the 2004 opener, but was sidelined by a knee injury. He went on to appear in nine contests and start seven times. Niusulu totaled 24 tackles (tied for second among the linemen), 2.5 tackles for loss and 0.5 sacks. A strong, aggressive performer, he saw extensive action as the first tackle off the bench in 2003. He appeared in all 13 games and accounted for 26 tackles, including 5.0 for losses.

True sophomore **BRIGHAM HARWELL** (6-1, 259) will again contend for playing time and starting assignments at defensive end. Harwell, who has tremendous potential, played in all 12 games in 2004, starting four times. On the year, he registered 22 tackles and 2.5 tackles for loss. He started for the first time at California and made five tackles. Against Washington State, he started and scored UCLA's first touch-

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down of the game when he recovered a fumble in the end zone. Harwell recorded 68.5 career quarterback sacks at Los Altos High as a prep senior in 2003.

Redshirt sophomore **BRUCE DAVIS** (6-3, 240) made his first collegiate start in his first college game against Oklahoma State in 2004. He also started at Illinois before coming off the bench in the final 10 games of the season. Davis finished with 17 tackles, 3.5 tackles for loss and was second on the team with 2.5 sacks. The son of Bruce Davis, Sr., who played for UCLA from 1975-78, he came to Westwood from Clear Creek High School in League City, TX. He should compete for playing time at right end during Spring drills.

Redshirt sophomore **WILLIAM SNEAD** (6-4, 228) shifted to defensive end from linebacker last season and appeared in all 12 games as a key reserve. Snead made six tackles, including one sack, in 2004. As a prep senior at Skyline High in Oakland, CA in 2002, he earned All-Region acclaim while making 96 tackles, including 11 sacks and 36 tackles for losses.

True sophomore **CHRIS JOHNSON** (6-3, 293) figures to compete for playing time at the defensive tackle spots. Johnson played in the final nine contests of the year, making his debut against San Diego State game. He totaled five tackles on the year, including one sack and one tackle for loss. Johnson earned All-Region honors at John Curtis Christian High in River Ridge, LA in 2003.

True sophomore **KENNETH LOMBARD** (6-1, 280) saw extensive action at defensive tackle in the 2004 opener against Oklahoma State. He then started at Illinois, becoming the first true freshman defensive lineman to start a game since Ken Kocher and Anthony Fletcher each did it in the 1999 Rose Bowl against Wisconsin. Lombard also started the game at Washington, but suffered a shoulder injury that sidelined him for the remainder of the season and required surgery in December. It is expected that he will be granted a substitute year of eligibility for medical hardship by the Pacific-10 Conference this Spring. Lombard, a prep All-American, made 68 tackles as a high school senior at St. John Bosco in 2003.

Redshirt sophomore **NIKOLA DRAGOVIC** (6-3, 249) saw action in nine games at defensive end in 2004. He had five tackles, including one sack and one tackle for loss. Dragovic who spent the 2003 season on offense working on the line and at fullback, is again expected to compete for playing time at end.

Redshirt junior **KEVIN HARBOUR** (6-4, 255) underwent reconstructive knee surgery (torn ACL in his left knee) on May 12, 2004 and did not appear in a game last season. He has been cleared to participate in Spring practices and will battle for playing time at both the end and tackle positions. He saw limited snaps in five contests at defensive end in the 2003 season.

Redshirt freshman **NATHANIEL SKAGGS** (6-4, 257) did an outstanding job on the scout team after switching from offense to defense a year ago and could earning playing time at defensive tackle in 2005. A number of walkons — redshirt sophomore **SCOTT KEARNEY** (6-1, 281), redshirt sophomore **PHILIP RAUSCHER** (6-4, 265), redshirt freshman

TRAVIS MARTIN (6-4, 226) and redshirt juniors **MARKO DRAGOVIC** (6-2, 246) and **BRIAN RUZIECKI** (6-3, 270) could also be in the mix.

"The defensive line was almost completely rebuilt last season. Our young men proved they were up to the challenge and showed steady improvement over the course of the year. We expect that year of experience will lead to better consistency in 2005," said Dorrell.

"Our tackles will be much improved. Kevin was making plays on a consistent basis toward the end of 2004 and could become a big-play defender for us. C.J. was solid, but is capable of much more. Chris came on as the season progressed and earned playing time down the stretch. Kenneth and Kevin are both coming off of injuries and we will look to evaluate their progress in the Spring.

"The end positions took shape during the season with Kyle, Justin and Brigham emerging as the leaders. Bruce, William and Nikola each had their moments and showed plenty of promise last season. We will look carefully to gauge the level of improvement each of these players will make during the Spring."

LINEBACKER

UCLA returns all three starters from a year ago at the linebacker positions.

Senior inside linebacker **SPENCER HAVNER** (6-4, 236), a three-year starter, led the Pac-10 in tackles last season with 125 stops. He tied for the team lead with 8.5 tackles for loss, including one sack. He recorded two interceptions, returning one pick for a touchdown against San Diego State. His 125 tackles in 2004 ranked 10th (tied) on UCLA's single-season list. Havner's career tackle total of 303 ranks 11th on that list and he is 21st on the career tackle for loss (27.0) list. A 17-tackle performance at Illinois was the best by a Bruin since Robert Thomas totaled 18 stops at Washington State in 2001.

Havner earned first-team All-America acclaim from cbssportsline.com and collegefootballnews.com after ranking among the national leaders in tackles for most of the season (he finished second in the nation in solo tackles-7.64 and T-seventh in total tackles-11.36). He was named second-team All-America by the Walter Camp Football Foundation. Havner was one of 12 semifinalists for both the Butkus and Rotary Lombardi Awards in 2004.

Havner moved inside after playing the outside position in 2003. That year, he ranked third on the squad with 82 tackles, including 6.5 for losses. He tied for the team lead with three interceptions and he also blocked two field goals. A first-team Freshman All-America selection in 2002, he made 96 tackles and returned two of his three interceptions that season for touchdowns to tie an NCAA record for linebackers.

True senior inside (middle) **JUSTIN LONDON** (6-1, 235) sprained his right ankle in Fall camp and was not at full strength until the middle of the 2004 season. A dynamic combination of speed, quickness and power, London saw action in 10 games, starting eight times. He finished the year tied for fourth on the team with 57 tackles, including 44 in the

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final five games. London was third on the team in tackles for loss, with seven, and added two sacks.

In 2003, he started eight games and ranked second on the squad with 98 tackles. His average of 7.5 tackles per game ranked eighth in the Pac-10. He tied for second on the team with 8.5 tackles for losses and also tied for the team lead with three interceptions.

Senior **WESLEY WALKER** (6-3, 222) appeared in all 12 games last season, starting 11 contests, while seeing action at both inside and outside linebacker spots. He tied for fourth on the team with 57 tackles and had 5.5 tackles for loss (fifth on the team) and 1.5 sacks (tied for fourth). A good all-around athlete, he appeared in all 13 games in 2003 and made 15 tackles as a key reserve.

Redshirt sophomore **AARON WHITTINGTON** (6-2, 195) competed with Walker for playing time on the outside position in 2004. He saw action in eight contests and started the Illinois game, registering a season-best eight tackles. He finished the year with 18 tackles and was named to The Sporting News All-Pac-10 Freshman team. This Spring, he will compete for playing time at an inside linebacker position behind Havner.

Junior **DANNY NELSON** (6-1, 239), a transfer from Arizona Western College, saw action in eight games in 2004. He started the season-opener against Oklahoma State at the middle inside linebacker spot in place of London and made seven tackles. On the year, Nelson totaled 12 tackles. He suffered a fractured left clavicle against Stanford (game eight) and missed the remainder of the year. He earned JC All-America honorable mention in 2003.

True sophomore **FRED HOLMES** (6-1, 231) figures to compete with Walker for playing time at outside linebacker. Holmes, a standout on special teams, appeared in 11 contests last season, missing only the bowl game. He totaled six tackles, including one tackle for loss. He was an All-Southeast selection at John Curtis Christian High in River Ridge, LA as a prep senior in 2003.

Redshirt sophomore **CHRISTIAN TAYLOR** (6-0, 210), will also compete for playing time. A non-scholarship transfer from the Air Force Academy, Taylor played well on the scout team a year ago. Two walkons, redshirt freshmen **JAMEL GREER** (6-0, 228) and **NICKY RODRIGUEZ** (5-10, 215), will attempt to add depth at the position.

"Linebacker is a position of experience among the starters but not much depth," said Dorrell. "All three starters had off-season arthroscopic procedures and will be limited during Spring Practice. A return to health and a measure of consistency will go a long way to making our defense much better in 2005. We would like to see some of the younger players take a step up during Spring Practice to help us develop some depth."

SECONDARY

The Bruins return several players with experience in the secondary and will begin the process of looking to replace Ben Emanuel, a three-year starter at safety, and Matt Clark, a first-team All-Pac-10 cornerback, during Spring Practice. Both cornerback positions will be open for competition this

Spring and with safety **JARRAD PAGE** (6-2, 220) playing for the Bruin baseball team, the competition for playing time at safety will also be interesting to watch.

Page (6-2, 220), a true senior, is set to start for the fourth straight season at strong safety after earning honorable mention All-Pac-10 honors last year. In 2004, he ranked second on the team with 79 tackles, including two tackles for loss. Page tied for the team lead with three interceptions and was second with seven pass break ups. He ranked T-17th in the Pac-10 in tackles (6.6) and T-12th in interceptions (0.25). He is once again playing baseball this Spring and will not participate in football practices.

In 2003, Page started all 12 games in which he played. He finished the year with 55 tackles, including 5.5 for losses, and tied for the team lead with three interceptions, returning one for a score. In 2002, he earned first-team Freshman All-America honors, becoming a starter in his fourth game as a Bruin. He started the final 10 games of the 2002 season, becoming the first UCLA true freshman safety since Kenny Easley to start that many games.

Redshirt sophomore **CHRIS HORTON** (6-1, 195) will get a long look at the vacated free safety spot during Spring Practice. He saw action in nine games a year ago and earned a reputation as a playmaker, both on defense and on special teams. Horton recorded 27 tackles, including 0.5 tackles for loss. He also had an interception and blocked two punts. As a prep senior in 2002, Horton was an All-Region selection and made over 100 tackles at De La Salle High School in New Orleans.

DENNIS KEYES (6-1, 192), another talented redshirt sophomore, will compete for playing time at strong safety. Keyes appeared in eight games in 2004 and recorded 10 tackles. A Super Prep All-American and the L.A. Daily News Player of the Year in 2002, Keyes made 88 tackles as a senior at Birmingham High School in Van Nuys.

Fourth-year junior **ERIC McNEAL** (6-2, 209) played in all 12 games as a reserve safety and special teams player a year ago. He finished ninth on the team with 28 tackles and had one interception while playing both safety and, in the nickel defensive packages, a linebacker/safety. In 2003, he earned most of his playing time on special teams but made seven tackles, including two for losses, in the Silicon Valley Classic.

True junior **MIL'VON JAMES** (6-0, 196) will compete for playing time at free safety during the Spring. James has seen most of his action during his first two seasons on special teams because of his speed and coverage ability. As a senior in 2002 at Los Angeles' Fremont High, he made over 95 tackles.

Redshirt sophomore **TREY BROWN** (5-10, 187) and true sophomore **RODNEY VAN** (6-1, 166) are expected to compete for playing time at one of the cornerback positions. Brown started the final five games of last season at the corner opposite Clark. He totaled 46 tackles (seventh on the team), including five tackles for loss. He also made two interceptions, returning one for a score at Oregon. In 2003, Brown was named the defensive scout team Player of the Year. The son of former UCLA standout running back Theotis Brown, he

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earned All-Region honors as a senior in 2002 at Blue Valley Northwest High School in Overland Park, KS.

Van saw action in all 12 games last season and totaled 12 tackles and one forced fumble. Although he saw most of his action on special teams, he had four tackles at California after playing most of the second half at cornerback. Van earned All-America acclaim while making 84 tackles at Long Beach's Poly High as a senior in 2003.

The battle at the other cornerback spot is expected to be between redshirt senior **MARCUS CASSEL** (6-0, 182), redshirt junior **JEBIAUS BROWN** (6-1, 183), true sophomore **MICHAEL NORRIS** (5-11, 175) and redshirt freshman **BYRON VELEGA** (5-10, 180).

Cassel, the most experienced of the candidates, started the seven games of 2004 at one converback position and has always been a steady contributor on special teams. He totaled 33 tackles a year ago and also recovered two fumbles. J. Brown, who has good physical tools, missed the 2003 season due to a concussion, and saw action in one game in 2004. Norris was an All-Area selection at Oakland's Skyline High as a senior in 2003. He appeared in all 12 games last season for the Bruins and utilized his speed on special teams, recording seven tackles. Velega, a prep teammate of Rodney Van at Long Beach Poly, earned All-Region honors while making 60 tackles and four interceptions as senior in 2003. He redshirted a year ago.

Two walkons, redshirt sophomore **OLUKAYODE OREGDUGBA** (6-1, 187), who was a regular on special teams, and **CHARLIE SCHUH** (6-1, 197) will each look to increase their role on the team during the Spring.

"Chris, Dennis, Eric and Mil'Von have each have shown plenty of promise and, with Jarrad missing Spring drills (baseball), now is their time to step up. We need to identify the best candidates for the cornerback positions and will open up both of these slots to competition. This will be an area of intense battles all through the Spring and perhaps even into Fall. Overall, we still need to raise our level of consistency in the secondary and that will certainly be a goal during this Spring," said Dorrell. "While we have yet to settle on a starter at either corner, I am excited about the strides several of our young defensive backs have made."

SPECIALISTS

Junior **JUSTIN MEDLOCK** (6-0, 185) has quickly established himself as one of the better kickers in the country. A semifinalist for the Lou Groza Award a year ago, he connected on 15 of 20 field goal attempts in 2004 and ranked second in the Pac-10 in field goal percentage (.750). He was the team's leading scorer (87 points) and ranked fourth in the Pac-10 in kick scoring (7.25) and field goals per game (1.25). He also became the first Bruin to boot two field goals of at least 50 yards in the same game and the first Bruin to kick three field goals of 50 or more yards in a season. Only John Lee, with four, has kicked more field goals of at least 50 yards in a career.

Medlock enters the season already in seventh place (tied) on UCLA's career field goal list (29). His career percentage of

.744 is third among Bruins with at least 21 career field goals. He ranks 16th on the career scoring list with 155 points.

Redshirt junior **RILEY JONDLE** (6-3, 200) returns for his third straight season as the snapper for punts and field goals but the Bruins will be looking for a new holder due to the loss of punter Chris Kluwe.

Junior **MAURICE DREW** (5-8, 198) averaged 15.2 yards on 10 punt returns, a mark which would have led the Pac-10, but was two returns shy of qualifying. He also returned seven kickoffs for a 26.4 yard average. Sophomore **CHRIS MARKEY** (5-11, 195) had 18 kickoffs returns for 399 yards and his 22.2-yard average ranked seventh in the Pac-10.

The Bruins will be without Chris Kluwe who did a fine job the last two seasons as the punter. In 2004, he was a finalist for the Ray Guy Award as the top punter in the nation.

Redshirt freshman **AARON PEREZ** (6-2, 200) will replace Kluwe as the Bruin punter. A prep-All-American at Charter Oak High as a senior in 2003, he averaged 42.7 yards per kick and placed 11 kicks inside the 20-yard line.

"We tightened up our special teams play considerably last season and must keep improving this season," Dorrell said. "In Justin, we have an experienced placekicker who could be among the best in the country. We have dependable return men who have performed well in the past. We must use this Spring to establish our new punter and holder on placements."