

During Rick Neuheisel's first few months as head coach at his alma mater, he has helped create an almost immeasurable level of energy and excitement around the UCLA football program. On September 1, he will begin his first season as the UCLA head football coach and he is looking forward to building something special.

"I expect us to be exciting on offense," said the Bruin head coach. "We have experienced players at key positions and they will benefit from working with Norm Chow, one of the top offensive coordinators in the history of college football, as well as our other outstanding coaches – Bob Palcic, Wayne Moses and Reggie Moore. We are going to have good balance between the running and the passing games. We laid a foundation in the Spring and we will build upon it this season.

"Defensively, our players will benefit from the return of DeWayne Walker as coordinator, as well as Chuck Bullough and Todd Howard – all in their third years on the staff -- and the addition of Tim Hauck. The defensive players are familiar with DeWayne's system, which has proven to be very effective, and despite the loss of several seniors, we should continue to field one of the top defenses in the Pacific-10 Conference.

"Our special teams should be solid with the return of all of our kickers and several players with return experience. I feel that we hired one of the top special teams coaches in the nation in Frank Gansz, Jr. and that he will make these units even better."

The schedule for Neuheisel's first season is challenging. Six of the 12 opponents finished in the final Associated Press poll. Seven of the opponents won at least nine games and eight played in a bowl game. Four of UCLA's seven Rose Bowl opponents won at least nine games in 2007.

Offensively, UCLA returns a good nucleus of experienced players. Ben Olson has started 10 games over the last two seasons and passed for 1,040 yards and seven touchdowns in 2007. The Bruins averaged 151.0 yards rushing a year ago and four of the top five tailbacks return. Senior Kahlil Bell led the team with 795 yards and five touchdowns despite being sidelined for the balance of the year with a knee injury suffered in the first quarter of the season's eighth game. Juniors Chane Moline, Christian Ramirez and Craig Sheppard all gained valuable experience a year ago. Redshirt freshman Raymond Carter, who missed the season with a knee injury, will also compete for playing time. The Bruins have experience at fullback with junior Trevor Theriot.

UCLA also has experience at the wide receiver position. Sophomore Dominique Johnson ranked third on the team a year ago with 25 receptions and tied for the team lead with four receiving touchdowns while junior Terrence Austin made 17 catches. Senior Marcus Everett, who made 31 receptions in 2006, played in just four games due to an ankle injury and received a substitute year of eligibility. Add in senior tight end Logan Paulsen, who has made 39 receptions in the last two seasons, and junior Ryan Moya (22 career catches) and the Bruins should be solid in this area.

On the line, UCLA returns two players who started eight games each in 2007, junior tackle Micah Kia and senior center Micah Reed, who started at guard a year ago.

Defensively, UCLA returns five starters, plus a 2006 starter and several other key performers from a unit that ranked 29th nationally in total defense (343.2) and scoring defense (22.3) and 14th in rushing defense (109.2).

Among the returning starters are junior linebacker Reggie Carter, who made 62 tackles, including 12.0 for loss; junior cornerback Alterraun Verner, the team's top returning tackler (75) who also intercepted four passes; senior linebacker Kyle Bosworth, who ranked just behind Verner with 74 tackles; defensive end Tom Blake, who made 3.0 sacks among his 32 tackles, and defensive tackles Jess Ward, a junior, and Brian Price, a sophomore, who started 11 games between them. In addition, senior tackle Bringham Harwell (20.5 career tackles for loss), who started 12 games in 2006 but missed all but two games last season due to injury, returns to the line.

## OFFENSE

### QUARTERBACK

The Bruin quarterback position features two players who started eight games a year ago – one redshirt senior and one redshirt junior, plus a redshirt freshman and a junior college transfer.

Redshirt senior **BEN OLSON** (6-4, 230) enters Fall camp as the frontrunner at the quarterback position. He should be fully recovered from a broken bone in his right foot, suffered on the next-to-last day (April 24) of Spring Practice.

Last season, he started five of the first six games (he missed one due to a concussion) before being sidelined with a partial tear of the LCL in his left knee. He returned

late in the year, playing the second half against Oregon and a couple of late series versus USC.

Olson, who possesses excellent arm strength, completed 71 of 147 passes (four of 15 in the parts of two games following his injury) for 1,040 yards, seven touchdowns and six interceptions. He threw for 286 yards and five touchdowns at Stanford, a season-high 290 yards at Utah and 220 yards and two touchdowns at Oregon State.

As a sophomore in 2006, Olson started the first five games before being sidelined by injury. He totaled 822 yards passing on the year and threw for five scores while completing 63.7 percent of his passes. In the opener, he threw for a career-best 318 yards against Utah.

Redshirt junior **KEVIN CRAFT** (6-5, 205), a transfer from Mt. San Antonio College, enrolled for 2008 Spring Quarter and was able to gain valuable experience in Spring Practice, injecting himself into the quarterback race. Last year at Mt. San Antonio College, he was the California Offensive Player of the Year, completing 313 for 511 passes (61.3%) for 4,231 yards, 44 touchdowns and 10 interceptions. He also played in nine games at San Diego State in 2006, starting five contests. He completed 57% of his passes (69 of 121) for 737 yards and four touchdowns.

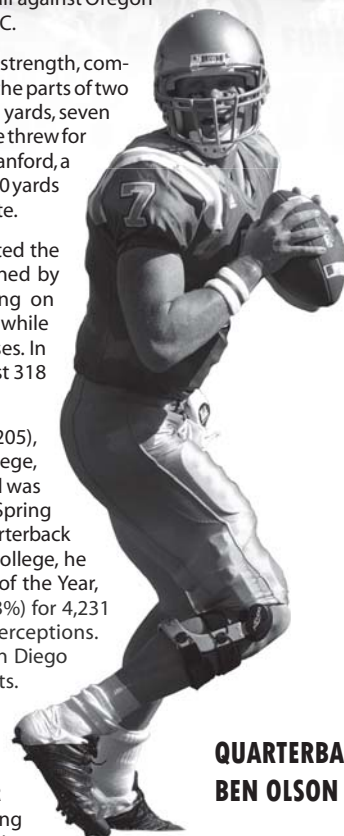
Redshirt freshman **CHRIS FORCIER** (6-3, 195) also played well during Spring drills and figures to compete for playing time. Forcier made several road trips last year due to injuries at the position although he did not appear in a game. In 2006, he earned prep All-America honors while throwing for over 2,300 yards and 23 touchdowns at San Diego's St. Augustine High School.

Redshirt junior **OSAAR RASSHAN** (6-4, 215) appeared in four games a year ago, starting three. A fine all-around athlete, he made his debut as a quarterback at Arizona following Patrick Cowan's injury and rallied the Bruins from 20 points down to within a touchdown. He started the next two games, playing the entire contest in a 24-20 loss to Arizona State and the first half in the victory over Oregon. He also started and played three of the first five series versus BYU in the Las Vegas Bowl. On the year, he completed 17 of 45 passes for 259 yards and netted 109 rushing yards on 30 attempts.

Redshirt senior **PATRICK COWAN** (6-5, 218) figures to miss the 2008 season due to a torn anterior cruciate ligament in his left knee. He suffered the injury on the next-to-last day of Spring Practice (April 24). Cowan started five games a year ago as well as the final eight games of the 2006 season. In fact, the five games in which he started were the only 2007 games in which he played due to a left hamstring injury in Fall camp, a partial tear of his right MCL in his first game of the year (Washington), a concussion and slight collapse of the right lung at Arizona and a left knee injury late in the USC game. On the year, he completed 72 of 135 passes for 696 yards with four touchdowns and two interceptions.

In the fall, prep All-American **NICK CRISSMAN** (6-3, 215) will join the competition. He was ranked among the nation's top prep quarterbacks while throwing for 2,048 yards as a senior at Edison High in Huntington Beach, CA. UCLA also signed **KEVIN PRINCE** (6-2, 210) from Crespi High in Encino, CA. Prince earned All-Region honors despite missing virtually the entire season due to injury. As a junior, he completed 112 of 197 passes (56.0%) for 1,422 yards, 12 touchdowns and just five interceptions.

"I am confident that with Norm Chow's expertise and the players we have in the program, we will play well at this position," said Neuheisel. "Ben has a great deal of experience and I expect him to have an outstanding senior year. I was encouraged by the progress Kevin (Craft) made in his first month in the program and I expect him to compete for playing time. We will also continue to develop Chris and Osaar. I would be remiss if I didn't mention how badly I feel for Patrick, who will not be able to play his senior year. He is a great young man who we want to keep involved in the program."



**QUARTERBACK  
BEN OLSON**

# 2008 SEASON OUTLOOK

## RUNNING BACK

The Bruins return four of their top five tailbacks from a season ago, plus the starting fullback. Last year, the Bruins averaged over 150 yards rushing per game.

True senior **KAHLIL BELL** (6-0, 219) was on his way to an outstanding season before suffering a torn ACL in his right knee in the year's eighth game at Washington State. He did not participate in Spring ball but should be ready for camp in August. Possessing a nice combination of power and speed, Bell had already rushed for a team-high 795 yards and five touchdowns at the time of his injury. His average of 99.4 yards per game would have ranked fifth in the Pac-10 if he had played enough games. Bell rushed for 195 yards versus Stanford, 142 versus California, 109 against Washington and already had 67 on four attempts when he was injured at WSU. He also made 13 receptions out of the backfield. He started five games on the year.

Redshirt freshman **RAYMOND CARTER** (5-11, 208) will also figure into the tailback race. He was expected to earn playing time in 2007 but tore the ACL in his right knee on the second day of Fall camp. He was limited to non-contact drills during Spring Practice and is expected to be ready for Fall camp. In his final two seasons at Crenshaw High, Carter rushed for over 2,500 yards.

True junior **CHANE MOLINE** (6-1, 232) ranked third on the squad with his 196 rushing yards. Moline appeared in 11 games, starting once, and did his best work in short-yardage situations. He figures to compete for playing time at tailback but could also see time at fullback following a productive Spring.

True junior **CHRISTIAN RAMIREZ** (6-3, 212) also figures to see action at the tailback spot. He made the move from safety in the Fall of 2007 and saw limited action, rushing for 98 yards on 19 attempts (5.2 average). Ramirez, who possesses good speed and a long stride, gained 55 yards on five attempts at Stanford and 26 yards on four carries in the Las Vegas Bowl.

Redshirt junior **CRAIG SHEPPARD** (6-1, 195) made some key contributions a year ago and will also compete for playing time. A walk-on who rejoined the team in 2007, he rushed for 133 yards and two touchdowns on 28 attempts. He ran for 56 yards and a touchdown versus Arizona State and added 49 yards and the game's only touchdown in the win over No. 9 Oregon.

Redshirt junior **TREVOR THERIOT** (6-0, 237) filled the role of starting fullback a year ago and did a good job, especially as a blocker. He also made three receptions and played well on special teams. He enters Fall camp as the starter. Redshirt sophomore **TOBI UMODU** (6-0, 236), who made the move from defense this past Spring, figures to provide depth at fullback.

Three very talented freshmen will join the competition in Fall camp. They include: **DERRICK COLEMAN** (6-0, 218) from Troy High in Fullerton, CA; **AUDRE DEAN** (6-1, 210) from Katy (TX) High; and **MILTON KNOX** (5-9, 200) from Birmingham High in Lake Balboa, CA. All three earned prep All-America honors and give the Bruins a bright future in this area.

"If he is fully recovered, Kahlil has the potential to be one of the best backs in the Pac-10," Neuheisel said. "He possesses good strength and speed. Raymond showed during the Spring that he has the ability to be a game-breaker. I was pleased with the development of Chane and Christian and feel we have good depth at tailback. I also liked what I saw from Trevor at the fullback spot. All that being said, the backfield is a spot where a freshman could come in and contribute this season."

## WIDE RECEIVER

This position returns several players with experience, but the coaches will be looking for one of them to become a breakout performer.

Redshirt sophomore **DOMINIQUE JOHNSON** (6-3, 206) developed well throughout the 2007 season and finished the year as the team's third-leading receiver. A tall target with good hands, he started twice and made 25 receptions for 322 yards and tied for the team lead with four receiving touchdowns. He made at least three receptions on five occasions.

True junior **TERRENCE AUSTIN** (5-10, 165) gained valuable experience in 2007. He earned more playing time as the season progressed and finished the year with 17 receptions for 248 yards. Austin also averaged 10.0 yards on 31 punt returns with a long of 68 yards.

The receiving corps is bolstered by the return of redshirt senior **MARCUSE EVERETT** (6-1, 205). He figured to be one of the team's top receivers a year ago, but an ankle

sprain against Utah allowed him to appear in just one additional game and he qualified for a medical substitute year of eligibility. He did make 10 receptions before being sidelined for the year. As a junior, he started eight games and led the wide receivers with 31 receptions for a career-best 450 yards and 14.5 average. He led the team with five receiving touchdowns and tied for the overall team lead with five touchdowns. He also led the team in receiving yardage and first downs by reception (21). Everett enters his senior year with a total of 82 receptions, ranking No. 23 on UCLA's career receiving list.

Redshirt junior **GAVIN KETCHUM** (6-5, 209) also qualified for a medical substitute year of eligibility due to a stress fracture suffered in the year's fourth game (he had five catches at the time of his injury) that developed into a full fracture. In 2006, he appeared in all 13 games at wide receiver or on special teams and caught five passes for 57 yards. Ketchum played in all 12 games as a true freshman in 2005 and made three starts while totaling 11 catches.

Redshirt senior **RYAN GRAVES** (6-1, 174) and redshirt junior **JAMIL TURNER** (6-1, 206) both played in reserve roles a year ago and should compete for playing time. Graves made three catches on the year while Turner made one. True freshman **TAYLOR EMBREE** (6-4, 185), who enrolled at UCLA in January 2008 after greyshirting last season, will also figure in the competition for playing time, following a productive Spring Practice.

Redshirt freshmen **RYAL JAGD** (6-3, 195) and **DAVID MARTINI** (6-1, 208) and redshirt juniors **MIKE ANGELO** (6-1, 192) and **ALEX PEARLSTONE** (6-0, 182) -- all walkons -- could also add depth at the position.

Freshmen **JERRY JOHNSON** (6-3, 208) from Venice (CA) High, **ANTWON MOUTRA** (6-3, 187) from Culver City (CA) High and **NELSON ROSARIO** (6-4, 202) from El Camino High in Oceanside, CA will attempt to inject themselves into the rotation in Fall camp. All three possess great size and speed for the position.

"We have some quality experience that will enable us to play well in this area," said the head coach. "However, I will be looking for some of our freshmen, both the incoming group and Taylor, to make an impact this season."

## TIGHT END

The Bruins welcome back their top tight end from a year ago, plus one from 2006, giving them quality competition at the position. The top two returnees have over 60 career receptions between them.

True senior **LOGAN PAULSEN** (6-6, 258) enjoyed a solid season a year ago. He started every game, blocked well and made 12 receptions for 144 yards, including a 36-yard catch-and-run late in the Las Vegas Bowl. As a sophomore, Paulsen started 12 games and ranked fourth on the team with his 27 receptions. He had 331 receiving yards (third on the squad) and averaged 12.3 yards per reception. He made five catches in the season-opener versus Utah and had four receptions each in games against California and USC.

## WIDE RECEIVER DOMINIQUE JOHNSON

12 catches for 126 yards (10.5 average). He had four catches versus Stanford and Arizona. In 2005, Moya made 10 catches as a freshman for 153 yards and two scores.

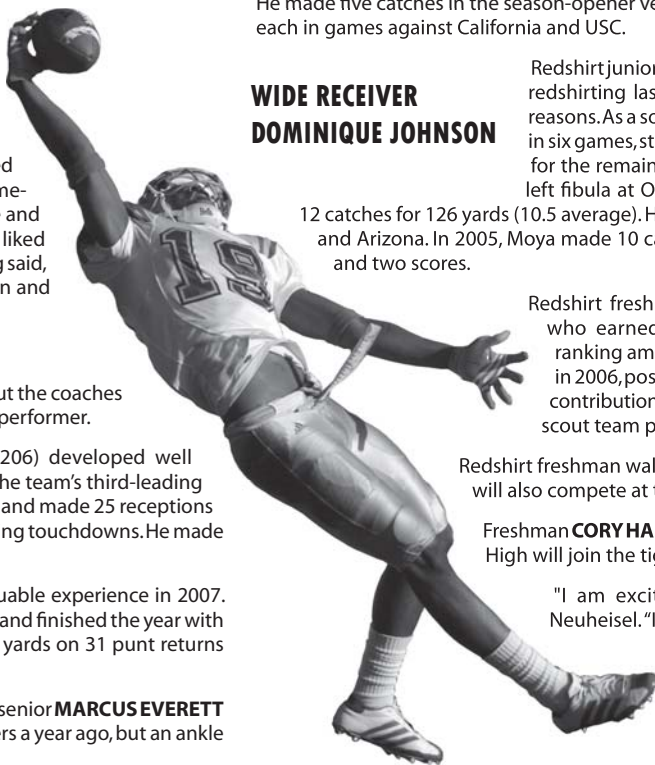
Redshirt junior **RYAN MOYA** (6-4, 238) returns after redshirting last year due to injury and personal reasons. As a sophomore in 2006, Moya saw action in six games, starting three, before being sidelined for the remainder of the season with a fractured left fibula at Oregon. Prior to his injury, he made

Redshirt freshman **NATE CHANDLER** (6-3, 260), who earned prep All-America honors while ranking among the nation's top five tight ends in 2006, possesses the size and speed to make a contribution this season. He earned the offensive scout team player of the year award for 2007.

Redshirt freshman walk-on **GLENN RAUSCHER** (6-3, 228) will also compete at this position.

Freshman **CORY HARKEY** (6-4, 240) from Chino Hills (CA) High will join the tight end battle in August.

"I am excited about our tight ends," said Neuheisel. "I believe that Logan has the ability to be a key performer for us, both as a receiver and a blocker. I was impressed with Ryan's ability to catch the ball and I feel Nate has great potential."





## OFFENSIVE LINE

The offensive line returns two players who each started eight games a year ago. The key to this unit will be the come-through performances by inexperienced players as both starters and reserves. Progress was made during the Spring but this unit must continue to develop.

True junior tackle **MICAH KIA** (6-6, 300) started eight games at left tackle a year ago and should be ready to become one of the better tackles in the Pac-10. He possesses outstanding physical tools and should benefit greatly from having played on a regular basis in 2007.

Redshirt senior **MICAH REED** (6-4, 309) enters Fall camp as the starter at center. A good athlete who earned a scholarship last Fall, Reed started eight games at guard a year ago, the final seven on the right side, and did a fine job. He worked hard during the Spring to learn the nuances of the center position.

Redshirt sophomore **DARIUS SAVAGE** (6-4, 325) enters Fall camp as the frontrunner at left guard. Though he lacks experience on the offensive line (virtually all of his action last year was on special teams), he has the skill and strength to be a solid performer.

Redshirt junior **NICK EKBATANI** (6-4, 295) and redshirt senior **SCOTT GLICKSBERG** (6-4, 300) will continue to compete for the right guard position. Ekbatani, who redshirted last year after seeing spot duty at guard in 2006 following his transfer from L.A. Harbor College, missed a portion of Spring Practice due to an ankle sprain. Glicksberg moved to guard this Spring after spending the last two seasons adding depth in multiple tight end formations and on special teams. He worked with the first line most of the four-week session. Redshirt sophomores **SONNY TEVAGA** (6-3, 320) and **ANDY KEANE** (6-2, 290) and redshirt senior **AARON MEYER** (6-1, 292), who saw action at center in 2006 but did not appear in a game last year, figure to add depth at guard.

Redshirt sophomore **SEAN SELLER** (6-5, 290) emerged from the Spring as the frontrunner for the right tackle spot. Seller possesses good skills but has no game experience. Redshirt sophomore **BRANDON BENNETT** (6-4, 310) and redshirt freshman **MIKE HARRIS** (6-5, 305) figure to battle Seller for that position and to add depth at tackle.

Redshirt sophomore **JAKE DEAN** (6-4, 295) and redshirt junior **ADAM HEATER** (6-5, 270), who moved from tight end to the line during Spring drills, will add depth at center.

Two freshmen – **JEFF BACA** (6-4, 280), from Mission Viejo (CA) High, and **CONNOR BRADFORD** (6-5, 270), from Palmdale (CA) High – will join the Bruins in August.

"The Spring was a developmental process for this area and I feel we made significant progress," Neuheisel said. "I am confident that our top unit of Micah Kia and Sean at tackle, Micah Reed at center and Darius and either Scott or Nick at guard will give us a solid performance throughout the season. However, we need to continue to develop depth in this area."

## DEFENSE

UCLA returns five starters plus several other performers with starting experience on a defense that could be quicker to the football than last year's unit and is now in its third season with the same scheme.

### DEFENSIVE LINE

This unit returns one full-time and two part-time starters from a year ago, plus a starter from the 2006 season.

Redshirt senior **BRIGHAM HARWELL** (6-2, 290) returns to action after being sidelined for the final 11 games of the 2007 campaign and receiving a medical substitute year of eligibility. He brings added experience to the interior of the Bruin defense. He enjoyed a solid campaign in 2006, ranking fourth on the squad with 6.5 tackles for loss, totaling 31 tackles for the year and starting 12 of 13 games. Harwell had a huge game in the victory over Oregon State, making a career-tying six tackles, including four solos.

True sophomore **BRIAN PRICE** (6-1, 294), who possesses the size, strength and speed to be an impact performer, will open Fall camp as the starter at the tackle spot opposite Harwell. Despite playing in just the final 10 games of the year, he finished with 7.0 tackles for loss among his 14 stops. A second-team Freshman All-American, he started five of the last six games a year ago.

Redshirt senior **TOM BLAKE** (6-4, 265), who started eight games a year ago, owns the most starts among the defensive end candidates. In his first year of action after transferring from UC Davis, he had 3.0 sacks and 6.5 tackles for loss among his 32 stops. He also recovered four fumbles. He is the starter on the right side entering Fall camp.

Redshirt junior **KOREY BOSWORTH** (6-1, 230) was effective in his first season as a defensive end. Appearing in all 13 games, including three starts at left end, he totaled 34 tackles, including 2.0 sacks and 8.5 for loss, second only to Reggie Carter among returnees. He is the starter on the left side.

True junior **JERZY SIEWIERSKI** (6-2, 294), redshirt sophomore **JEFF MILLER** (6-5, 265), true senior **CHASE MOLINE** (6-2, 255), redshirt junior **JESS WARD** (6-4, 288) and redshirt senior **NATHANIEL SKAGGS** (6-4, 294) will all compete for playing time at the tackle positions.

Siewierski appeared in every game a year ago, gaining valuable experience, and made 13 tackles, including 3.5 for loss. Miller saw limited action last season and was sidelined part of the year with a sports hernia. Both played well during Spring Practice.

Moline did well during Spring Practice after missing the final eight games due to head, neck and back problems. He played in just five contests. Ward started six games last year in place of Harwell before being sidelined with a knee injury that required surgery. He did not participate in Spring drills and could be cleared for contact prior to the start of the season. He made 18 tackles, including 3.5 for loss, in 2007. This Spring, Skaggs shifted to defensive tackle, his original position, after spending the last few years on the offensive line. He appeared in every game last year as a special teams performer.

Redshirt junior **CHINONSO ANYANWU** (6-4, 225) will compete for playing time at the end positions. Anyanwu, who possesses good pass-rushing skills, played in the final five games of the year (six overall) and recorded a sack among his two tackles.

Two redshirt sophomores -- **DAVID CARTER** (6-5, 265) and **REGINALD STOKES** (6-3, 254) -- and redshirt freshman **JUSTIN EDISON** (6-3, 250) figure to add depth at the end positions. Carter played in three games a year ago and made three stops, including one sack. Stokes and Edison did not have the opportunity to play in 2007 but gained important experience during Spring Practice.

Two talented freshman defensive ends -- **DAMIEN HOLMES** (6-3, 250) from Colton (CA) High and **DATONE JONES** (6-5, 250) from Compton (CA) High -- will add to the competition in Fall camp. Both were rated among the nation's top 10 prep players at their position.

"In Brigham and Brian, we have an outstanding tackle tandem capable of disrupting an opponent's running game," said the head coach. "Both of them are big-time performers. When you combine them with Tom and Korey at end, you have a fine defensive front. We also have some experienced depth, especially at tackle, and we could also get some help from the incoming freshmen."

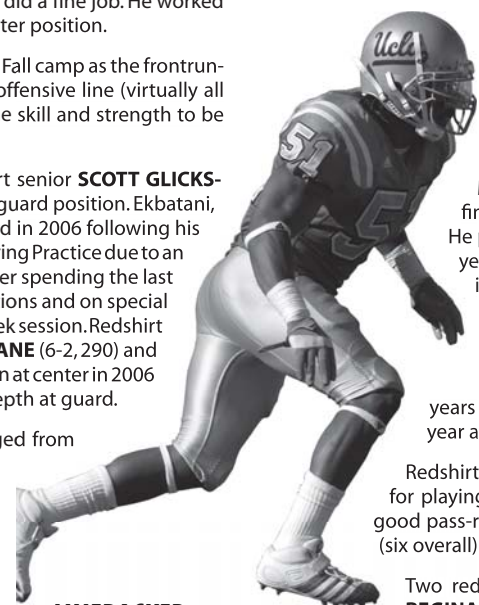
### LINEBACKER

Two returning starters highlight the linebacking corps.

Redshirt junior **REGGIE CARTER** (6-1, 225) is ready to become one of the top linebackers in the Pac-10 Conference. This Spring, he moved from the weak side to the middle, taking Christian Taylor's place as the heart of the defense and did a nice job of adjusting to his new role. Strong, fast and aggressive, Carter made 62 tackles a year ago, including 12.0 for loss -- third on the squad and first among returnees. He made a career-high 10 tackles in the opener at Stanford and made at least five tackles in eight of his 13 games. He even underwent arthroscopic knee surgery during a bye week and did not miss a game.

True senior **KYLE BOSWORTH** (6-1, 235) enters the season as the starter at weakside linebacker. Last season, he started seven of the final 10 games on the strong side. A physical performer, he made 74 tackles to rank fifth on the squad and second only to Alterraun Verner among returnees. He recorded 19 tackles at Washington State, the most by a Bruin in almost two decades, and added 12 versus BYU in the Las Vegas Bowl and eight at Oregon State.

True senior **JOHN HALE** (6-4, 230) played well during Spring drills and should enter Fall camp as the starter on the strong side (he had an arthroscopic procedure



**LINEBACKER  
REGGIE CARTER**

# 2008 SEASON OUTLOOK

COACHES & STAFF

2008 BRUINS

OPPONENTS

2007 IN REVIEW

UCLA RECORDS

BRUINS IN THE NFL

TRADITION/HISTORY

GENERAL INFO

on his right knee following Spring Practice). Most of his action was on special teams (he did play 31 defensive snaps in the win over California) a year ago and he finished with 12 tackles. In his first two seasons, he started a total of 10 games and made 36 tackles.

Redshirt junior **JOSHUA EDWARDS** (6-1, 230) missed Spring Practice due to a fractured right cheekbone but should compete for playing time at weakside linebacker this Fall. In his first season of action, he saw limited time on defense, playing mostly on special teams, but demonstrated good speed and athletic ability. He finished with nine tackles. Redshirt sophomore **MIKE SCHMITT** (6-0, 225), who redshirted last year after transferring from junior college, should add depth at the position.

Redshirt freshman **STEVE SLOAN** (6-3, 235) will compete for playing time in the middle. Sloan did not see action during his first season in the program but demonstrated a linebacker's toughness during practice. Two walk-ons, redshirt freshman **JORDAN WOOLBRIGHT** (6-1, 227) and redshirt sophomore **MICHAEL LUTU** (6-1, 231), could add depth at that spot.

One of the prize members of the 2007 recruiting class, redshirt freshman **AKEEM AYERS** (6-2, 238) figures to add depth behind Hale at strongside linebacker. Ayers is a fine all-around athlete who has impressed with his potential.

Three talented freshmen -- **DONOVAN CARTER** (6-1, 227) from Birmingham High in Lake Balboa, CA, **PATRICK LARIMORE** (6-3, 230) from Hart High in Newhall, CA, and **SEAN WESTGATE** (5-11, 205) from Oak Park (CA) High -- will join the linebacker corps in August.

"I really like our starting unit," said Neuheisel. "Reggie is a gifted player who has found a home in the middle of the defense. Kyle and John have demonstrated their abilities over the past few years. This is a tough, hard-nosed aggressive group. We need to develop some depth here and Joshua, Mike, Steve and Akeem all figure to contribute this season, as could some freshmen."

## SECONDARY

The Bruins return one starter plus several other players with game experience in the secondary. Spring practice helped to develop the depth at this position.

True junior cornerback **ALTERRAUN VERNER** (5-11, 180) is now the leader of the secondary. A first-team Freshman All-American in 2006, he started 11 of 13 games a year ago, including the final nine. His 75 tackles ranked fourth on the squad and first among 2008 returnees. In addition, he ranked 11th nationally in passes defended -- four interceptions and 15 passes broken up. He has made six interceptions during his two seasons and has returned three of them for touchdowns, including one last year to clinch the win over California. He made at least six tackles in seven of his 13 games. He is also an Academic All-America candidate.

Redshirt senior **MICHAEL NORRIS** (5-9, 182) enters Fall camp as the starter at the cornerback spot opposite Verner. He appeared in every game a year ago, starting once in a dime package, and played both at cornerback and on special teams, making 13 tackles. He missed the entire 2006 season due to a knee injury but played in all 12 games in 2005 on special teams and in the nickel package, making 18 tackles.

True senior **BRET LOCKETT** (6-2, 208) has established himself as the starter at strong safety due to his performance during Spring Practice. A year ago, he saw action in nickel packages and on special teams (he started the final game versus BYU) and demonstrated the ability to play the position well in 2008. On the year, he made 12 tackles and broke up two passes.

Redshirt junior **AARON WARE** (6-0, 192) enters Fall camp as the frontrunner at free safety. Ware has excelled on special teams the past two seasons and possesses the most experience of the safety candidates. Last year, he made seven tackles and also caused a fumble on a kickoff return.

Redshirt freshman **COURTNEY VINEY** (5-8, 157), who possesses fine cover skills, flashed his potential on the scout team a year ago and was named defensive scout team player of the year. Redshirt senior **CHRIS MEADOWS** (5-11, 182), who moved from the secondary to wide receiver midway through last season, is back on defense. He made five tackles on special teams in his first season with the team. Viney and Meadows will compete for playing time at the cornerback positions.

Redshirt freshman **GLENN LOVE** (6-4, 207) will compete for time at the free safety position. He has good size and is fully recovered from hip issues that sidelined him a year ago.

Two non-scholarship performers figure to add depth at the safety positions. Redshirt sophomore **GARRETT RUBIO** (5-9, 189) will compete for playing time at strong safety while redshirt sophomore **MICHAEL CIACCIO** (6-0, 174) will line up at free safety.

A quintet of prep All-Americans will join the secondary competition in Fall camp **TONY DYE** (5-11, 185) from Santiago High in Corona, CA, **JOHNATHAN FRANKLIN** (5-10, 186) from Dorsey High in Los Angeles, **AARON HESTER** (6-0, 180) from Dominguez High in Compton, CA, **RAHIM MOORE** (6-2, 185) from Dorsey High in Los Angeles, CA, and **E.J. WOODS** (6-1, 205) from Crespi High in Encino, CA, form one of the top groups of defensive backs to ever enter UCLA in the same class and have a bright future as individuals and as a unit.

"Despite the loss of three 2007 starters, I was encouraged by our development during Spring Practice," Neuheisel said. "Alterraun is a fine cover corner, as evidenced by his play the last two years, and Michael did a good job at the opposite corner spot. Bret played well at strong safety and Aaron established himself as the front-runner at free safety. We have some other young players, such as Courtney and Glenn, who will push for playing time, as could some of the incoming freshmen. I am excited about our prospects in the secondary."

## SPECIALISTS

Redshirt senior **AARON PEREZ** (6-4, 225) returns for his senior year as one of the better punters in the nation and in UCLA history. In 2007, he averaged 42.3 yards per kick, ranking second in the Pac-10 and 29th nationally. UCLA also ranked 16th in the nation in net punting 37.7 yards. His 91 punts tied UCLA's single-season record and his 3,853 yards were just 55 shy of another mark. His career average of 41.78 ranks 10th on the UCLA career list. In addition, he also did a fine job in his first season as the holder on UCLA's place kicks.

Redshirt sophomore **KAI FORBATH** (6-0, 196) quickly established himself as one of the top place kickers in the nation in his first season of competition. Forbath converted 25 of 30 field goal attempts, including 25 of 27 in one stretch. His 25 field goals set a UCLA and Pac-10 freshman record and rank No. 3 on UCLA's single-season list while his 105 points were the most ever by a Bruin freshman and eighth (tied) on that UCLA single-season list. Nationally, he ranked third (tied) in field goals per game (1.92) and sixth (tied) in field goal percentage (.833) among players with at least 1.50 field goals per game.

Redshirt junior **JIMMY ROTSTEIN** (5-11, 173) averaged just under 60 yards on his 68 kickoffs in his first season as a regular and figures to improve upon that average in 2008. True sophomore **CHRISTIAN YOUNT** (6-1, 257) did an outstanding job in his first year as the team's long snapper and figures to be a fixture for the next few years. Walkon redshirt sophomore **P.J. TOBYANSEN** (5-11, 223) adds depth at long snapper and redshirt sophomore walkon **DANNY REES** (6-3, 179) figures to again serve as the primary backup to Perez.

In the Fall, prep All-America kicker **JEFF LOCKE** (6-1, 185) from Mountain Ridge High in Glendale, AZ, will join the Bruins.

True junior **TERRENCE AUSTIN** (5-10, 165) averaged 10.0 yards on 31 punt returns a year ago and enters Spring drills as the veteran in the returns department. Redshirt senior **RYAN GRAVES** (6-1, 174) averaged 7.9 yards on eight punt returns in 2006. Redshirt freshman **COURTNEY VINEY** (5-8, 157) could also add depth in this area. True junior **CHRISTIAN RAMIREZ** (6-3, 212) and Austin also figure to get the first look at returning kickoffs, although several other candidates could emerge in Fall camp. Ramirez averaged 18.3 yards on three returns as a sophomore.

"Special teams is a very important unit of the football team and I want us to excel in this area," Neuheisel said. "I feel we have outstanding kickers. Aaron and Kai are among the best at their position and Jimmy does a good job on kickoffs. It all starts with Christian Yount's long snaps and Aaron also does a good job as the holder on our place kicks. We will continue to develop our return and coverage units during the Fall and I expect us to play well in these areas."

## CORNERBACK ALTERRAUN VERNER

