

2007 UCLA SPRING OUTLOOK

UCLA, WITH VETERAN EXPERIENCE RETURNING FROM A YEAR AGO, IS READY TO SHINE IN 2007

A year ago, the UCLA football team won its final three regular-season games, finishing in fourth place in the Pacific-10 standings and earning its fourth straight bowl bid under head coach Karl Dorrell.

It also set the table for what should be an exciting and successful 2007 season.

Coach Dorrell and his staff will welcome back a wealth of experience as the nucleus of this year's team. The starting contingent includes 10 players on each side of the ball who started the majority of games at their positions. In addition, there are several other players on both offense and defense with extensive starting experience. A total of 24 scholarship seniors populate the 2007 roster.

The schedule also figures to generate excitement. Five of UCLA's home games feature opponents who played in bowl games following the 2006 season. Overall, UCLA will face eight schools coming off a bowl-game appearance, including all three non-conference opponents.

Offensively, UCLA averaged 330.1 yards -- 200.3 in the air and 129.8 on the ground a year ago. The Bruins welcome back plenty of productive firepower, including players who caught 11 touchdown passes last season and rushers who accounted for over 1,600 yards and 11 more scores. Seven offensive linemen with starting experience return, led by senior right guard Shannon Tevaga, who has started 31 straight overall; senior Chris Joseph, who started all 13 games at guard in 2006; senior Noah Sutherland, who has 16 career starts at tackle; and redshirt sophomore Aleksey Lanis, who started 12 games last season. Senior tackle Brian Abraham has started 10 times in his career, including nine in 2005.

Some of the key skill players returning include senior tailback Chris Markey, the first Bruin to lead the team in rushing (1,107 yards) and receiving (35 catches) since 1962; senior Marcus Everett, who ranked second on the team with 31 catches, including a team-high five touchdown receptions; junior tight end Logan Paulsen, who made 27 catches to rank fourth on the squad; senior Brandon Breazell, who hauled in 21 passes, four of which were touchdowns, and averaged 18.5 per catch; and senior fullback Michael Pitre, who has made over 30 receptions in his career. In addition, senior wide receiver Joe Cowan returns after missing all of last year due to injury. He made 32 receptions in 2005.

Also returning are two quarterbacks who started all 13 games between them. Junior Ben Olson started the first five games before injuring his knee against Arizona and junior Pat Cowan started the final eight games of the season. Cowan passed for 1,782 yards and 11 touchdowns, completing 52.5 percent of his passes (145 of 276), while

Olson passed for 822 yards and five touchdowns, completing 63.7 percent of his passes (79 of 124).

Defensively, UCLA showed great improvement from the previous year. In 2006, it limited its first five opponents to 300 or less yards on offense and held seven teams to less than 300 yards overall. UCLA concluded the season ranked 33rd nationally in total defense, allowing 304.83 yards, down from 468.1 in 2005. The Bruins ranked fifth in the nation in third-down conversion defense (28.4%).

On the ground, UCLA tied for ninth nationally (tied for first in the Pac-10) in rushing defense, allowing 91.08 yards in 2006 after yielding 232.8 in 2005. The last time the Bruins averaged fewer yards allowed on the ground was in 1985 (71.25). They also allowed just nine rushing touchdowns, the fewest since 1987, when they allowed just seven in 12 games.

Among the 10 returning starters are All-America senior defensive end Bruce Davis, who tied for fourth nationally and first in the Pac-10 with 12.5 quarterback sacks and was second in the Pac-10 with 17.5 tackles for loss; hard-hitting senior strong safety Chris Horton, who led the Bruins with 95 tackles; senior middle linebacker Christian Taylor, who ranked second with 83 tackles and third with 13.5 tackles for loss; and senior free safety Dennis Keyes, UCLA's third-leading tackler (79) in 2006.

Senior Trey Brown, one of the top cover corners in the nation, who has started 30 consecutive games and led the team with four interceptions a year ago, and senior Rodney Van are both back, giving UCLA four returning starters in the secondary. Also back are cornerbacks Alterraun Verner, a Freshman All-American in 2006, and junior Michael Norris, who missed last season due to injury.

At linebacker, sophomore Reggie Carter, who earned Freshman All-America honors in 2006, and senior Aaron Whittington both return alongside Taylor, as does junior John Hale, who has started 10 games in the last two years.

In addition to Davis on the front four, UCLA returns senior tackles Brigham Harwell and Kevin Brown, both of whom started 12 games a year ago, as well as senior end Niokla Dragovich, junior tackle Chase Moline and junior end/tackle Kenneth Lombard, all of whom have started games over the past two seasons.

"As a program, we are ready to move forward," said head coach Karl Dorrell. "I feel we are at the point where we have the talent and the depth in the program to do something special.

"Last season, we made tremendous strides defensively and we are going to build on that unit's success. The competition

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for playing time at several positions promises to be intense and the returning starters are going to have to continue to perform to hold off the younger players in the program.

"Offensively, we have made some changes that I feel will help us maximize our offensive potential. We are looking forward to taking a long look at both the veterans and the newcomers during Spring Practice and building a very productive unit.

"We have quality experience at virtually every position on both sides of the ball, but our younger players will also be given the chance to earn playing time. I expect this will be the most competitive Spring Practice during my tenure and it should raise the level of everyone's game."

OFFENSE

The Bruins welcome back all but one starter (center Robert Chai) who took the first snap in the Emerald Bowl and a wealth of experience in many key areas.

QUARTERBACK

The Bruins quarterback position features two redshirt juniors, Ben Olson and Pat Cowan, a redshirt sophomore in Osaar Rasshan, and redshirt freshman McLeod Bethel-Thompson, a walk-on, for the 2007 season.

Redshirt junior **PATRICK COWAN** (6-5, 218) came on following an injury to Ben Olson in the Arizona game, starting the final eight contests and playing in all 13 games. He threw for 1,782 yards and 11 touchdowns on the year and used his mobility to run for 108 net yards. Cowan's 145 completions ranked 17th on UCLA's single-season list.

Cowan threw his first career pass in the fourth quarter of the season-opening win against Utah. He entered the Arizona game in the first quarter after Olson had gone down with a knee injury. He proceeded to complete 20 of 29 passes against the Wildcats for 201 yards and a couple of touchdowns. Cowan made his first of seven starts at Oregon. He threw for two scores at Notre Dame and racked up 252 yards passing in a loss to Washington State. At California, he threw for 329 yards and ran for a touchdown. He threw for two scores each while leading the Bruins to wins against both Oregon State and Arizona State. He threw for 114 yards and ran for 55 yards and a touchdown in the win over USC. Cowan threw for two more scores in the Emerald Bowl, including a 78-yard scoring play to Brandon Breazell.

Redshirt junior **BEN OLSON** (6-5, 227) possesses great physical ability and displayed it in a season-opening start against Utah. Olson completed his first nine passes and totaled 318 passing yards (third-most by a Bruin in a first start) and three touchdown passes. Olson also threw for two touchdowns in a win over Rice. He threw for 219 yards versus Stanford before getting hurt in the Rose Bowl against Arizona on Oct. 7. He had completed three of his first four passes at the time of his injury (tear of the medial collateral ligament in his left knee) on UCLA's second offensive series. Olson returned to practice on Nov. 7, but did not appear in a game the remainder of the season. He totaled

822 yards passing on the year and threw for five scores while completing 63.7 percent of his passes.

OSAAR RASSHAN (6-4, 208) was rated among the nation's top prep dual-threat quarterbacks when he joined the program from Garey High School in Pomona, CA. He redshirted during the 2005 season and did not see action a year ago while helping run the scout team in practice.

Walk-on redshirt freshman **MCLEOD BETHEL-THOMPSON** (6-3, 222) will also participate in Spring drills.

"Quarterbacks need time to refine their skills and gain experience in the system," said head coach Karl Dorrell. "Last year was a season in which we needed to have results from players who did not have much experience at the collegiate level. Both Patrick and Ben did a nice job for us given the circumstances. They each showed they have the qualities necessary to lead a football team. Both players know they must compete at a high level on a daily basis in order to lead our offense and we are looking forward to watching them continue to grow during Spring Practice.

"Ben has a strong arm and great overall ability. Patrick showed us last year that he has the physical abilities necessary to be a great quarterback at this level. Osaar has worked hard to improve his throwing skills and comprehension of the offense. His progress was noticeable during the course of the year. He is an outstanding athlete and it will be interesting to gauge his state of readiness this Spring."

RUNNING BACK

The Bruins return their six rushers from a season ago, including the top four running backs on that list.

One of the better backs in the Pac-10, senior **CHRIS MARKEY** (5-11, 204) rushed for 1,107 yards in 2006 to rank 11th on UCLA's single-season list. He became the 11th Bruin to rush for over 1,000 yards in a season, a feat which has been accomplished just 18 times. The Louisiana native also led the Bruins in receiving with 35 catches for 261 yards and became the first UCLA player since Kermit Alexander in 1962 to lead the team in both rushing and receiving. He ranked fourth in the Pac-10 and 32nd nationally in rushing yards (85.15 per game) and eighth in the Pac-10 in all-purpose yards (105.92).

Markey concluded the season with 1,377 all-purpose yards to rank No. 14 on that single-season list. He is the 14th Bruin to rush for at least 2,000 yards in a career and finished his junior season with 2,018. He will enter his senior campaign with 3,454 career all-purpose yards which ranks 10th (tied) on that UCLA list. He also has 60 career receptions to rank 33rd on that list and is second only to Maurice Drew among running backs.

Redshirt senior **DERRICK WILLIAMS** (5-10, 211), another talented runner, totaled 96 yards on the ground last season. He also led the Bruins with 13 kickoff returns for 340 yards and a 26.2 average. Williams accounted for 165 all-purpose yards last season against Washington State and 193 all-purpose yards in the Emerald Bowl game.

True junior **KAHLIL BELL** (6-0, 205) ranked second on the team in rushing with 239 yards in seven games. He rushed

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for 102 yards in the game against Rice, the second-highest total of his career. He scored two fourth-quarter touchdowns at Oregon. He suffered a sprained left ankle at Notre Dame and did not play against Washington State, Cal, Oregon State and Arizona State due to the injury. He missed the last two games of the season due to a suspension.

Redshirt senior **MICHAEL PITRE** (6-0, 244) from El Modena High School in Orange, CA, won the fullback job in 2004 Fall camp and has been a steady performer throughout the last three seasons. He helped keep the chains moving last season when he made a career-best 16 receptions for 132 yards. He made four catches against both Rice and Arizona.

Sophomore **CHANE MOLINE** (6-1, 238) saw duty primarily as a short-yardage back last season and racked up 101 yards in 33 carries. His five touchdowns tied for the team lead overall and ranked first among rushers. Moline also caught five passes for 40 yards.

Several walk-ons could add depth at the running back positions, including redshirt sophomore tailback **RYEN CAREW** (5-9, 190) who saw some action on special teams, and redshirt sophomore fullback **TREVOR THERIOT** (6-0, 226), who also appeared in a few games in 2006. Redshirt sophomore tailback **CRAIG SHEPPARD** (6-1, 210), who was on the team two seasons ago, and redshirt freshman tailback **JUSTIN FAREED** (5-11, 190) will also compete for reps during Spring Practice. Redshirt senior **CHAD MOLINE** (6-0, 238), who has spent the last two years at linebacker, appearing in one game on special teams, will also be looked at as a fullback.

"In the backfield, we return several quality performers who are capable of producing the results we need to keep this offense on the upswing," said Dorrell. "We have multiple backs who are dangerous as runners, receivers and returners.

"Chris is an exciting player to watch. He has taken on a larger role each season he has been in the program and has been up to the challenge. Bell is a capable rusher and receiver, while Moline gives us a bigger back who can help complete our attack with added experience. Derrick did a nice job when we called his number and should help us again this year. Pitre gives us experience at the fullback position. This Spring will be an opportunity for the others to really show us what they are capable of delivering on the field as we look for more quality depth at the position."

WIDE RECEIVER

This position returns a strong nucleus in starters Marcus Everett and Brandon Breazell and welcomes back Joe Cowan from injury. Several young players will get a long look this Spring as this position lost some of its depth due to the loss of seniors Andrew Baumgartner, Junior Taylor and Matt Willis.

Two true seniors, **MARCUS EVERETT** (6-1, 196) and **BRANDON BREAZELL** (6-0, 156), will each look to continue to build upon their accomplishments of last season.

Everett started eight games and led the wide receivers (second to Chris Markey overall) 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 career total of 72 receptions, ranking No. 23 on that list. He enjoyed a big game at Notre Dame with a career-high tying six catches for a career-best 102 yards, including a career-long 54-yard scoring play. Everett enters the 2007 season having caught a pass in 18 straight games.

Breazell started 10 games a year ago and ranked fifth on the team with 21 catches. His 389 receiving yards ranked second on the squad, his four receiving touchdowns ranked second and his 18.5 average was the best on the team among players with more than two receptions. He produced 16 first downs and four touchdowns with 17 of his catches. After scoring on a 78-yard play in the Emerald Bowl, five of Breazell's seven career touchdown receptions have measured at least 23 yards --- 46, 23, 56, 35, 78 --- and he has also scored on kickoff returns of 42 and 45 yards.

Redshirt senior **JOE COWAN** (6-4, 220) suffered an injured knee (posterior cruciate ligament) in practice on August 8th and missed the entire 2006 season. In 2005, he ranked second on the squad with 35 receptions for 469 yards and three scores. He started all 12 games in 2005 and had nine multi-catch games. His best game came against Arizona State when he snared three balls for 109 yards, including a 91-yard touchdown.

True junior **GAVIN KETCHUM** (6-4, 201) has a chance to establish himself as part of the regular receiver rotation for 2007 with a strong Spring effort. He appeared in all 13 games last season 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.

True sophomore **TERRENCE AUSTIN** (5-11, 162) will get a long look from the coaching staff during Spring ball. A year ago, he battled inexperience and nagging injuries as he tried to move up the depth chart. He appeared in nine games and made two catches for 29 yards. Austin also saw action as a punt returner and posted a 13.8 average on his eight returns, including a 79-yarder against Washington.

Another true sophomore **JEREMY MCGEE** (5-10, 178) will also try to play his way into the rotation. McGee, who possesses good speed, switched from defense to offense during the season but saw most of his action on special teams, averaging 18.5 yards on 11 kickoff returns.

Redshirt junior **RYAN GRAVES** (6-1, 166) saw action as a punt returner last season, returning eight kicks for a 7.9 average. He will also compete for playing time at receiver this season. Redshirt sophomore **JAMIL TURNER** (6-1, 204) also figures to be in the receiver mix during Spring Practice.

True sophomore **DOMINIQUE JOHNSON** (6-4, 209) caught the eye of the coaches early in Fall practice last season

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with his size and ability to catch in traffic. He has good size and speed and will look to use his first Spring Practice to battle back from nagging injuries.

"Joe, Marcus and Brandon are each capable of being a go-to receiver for us," Dorrell said. "It will be good to have Joe, a big target with experience, back into action. We look forward to his return in terms of both production and leadership. Marcus is a solid performer who makes the big catch and Brandon has the speed to be a big-play threat. Gavin gives us another tall target on the outside. Terrence and Jeremy will each look to make their experiences from last season work for them as they approach a new year with a great opportunity to increase their roles on the team. All of our young guys will get plenty of chances this Spring to show the staff how they can help the team."

TIGHT END

The Bruins welcome back their top tight ends from a year ago, giving them quality competition at the position.

Two true juniors, **LOGAN PAULSEN** (6-5, 247) and **RYAN MOYA** (6-2, 234), each have proved capable of being a featured performer at this position. In 2006, 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.

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

Redshirt junior **WILLIAM SNEAD** (6-5, 255) made the switch to tight end from defensive end during practices prior to last season's Stanford game (game four). On the first reception of his career, he scored a 38-yard touchdown at Notre Dame. Snead had two receptions on the season but gained valuable experience at his new position.

Redshirt sophomore **ADAM HEATER** (6-5, 255) saw limited action last season. Heater was recognized by Tom Lemming as one of the nation's top 20 tight end prospects after making 10 catches for 120 yards and three touchdowns for Snohomish, WA High School as a prep senior in 2004.

Two redshirt junior walk-ons, **TYLER HOLLAND** (6-5, 245) and **TRAVIS MARTIN** (6-4, 235), both of whom moved from another position to tight end in 2005, are also in the mix.

"Logan, Ryan and William have seen the bulk of the time for us at this position and each have the ability to help us," Dorrell said. "This Spring will be a great opportunity for one or more of them to take the necessary steps to become the next great UCLA tight end. Adam, Tyler and Travis will also have their opportunities this Spring."

OFFENSIVE LINE

The offensive line started just one senior (center Robert Chai) a year ago and will return 13 of the 14 players listed on the Emerald Bowl depth chart who have almost 90 combined starts between them. One of the goals of the Spring is to look at some veterans at different positions in an attempt to get the top five players on the field at the same time.

True senior right guard **SHANNON TEVAGA** (6-3, 316) is considered one of the top offensive guards in the West, if not the entire nation. Tevaga is equally adept at run blocking or protecting the quarterback. He has started 31 straight games, and played virtually every snap in 2006. He earned honorable mention All-Pac-10 acclaim a year ago and should contend for greater honors in 2007.

True senior **CHRIS JOSEPH** (6-5, 282), who started all 13 games last season at weak guard, will open the Spring at the vacant center position. A year ago, he was named a first-team ESPN The Magazine Academic All-American. In addition, he earned first-team All-Academic District VIII and All-Academic Pac-10 honors for the second year in a row.

Redshirt senior **NOAH SUTHERLAND** (6-5, 299), a converted defensive lineman, also returns. A year ago, he started all 13 contests at weak tackle and did a fine job. He started three games (Oregon State, USC, Northwestern) in 2005 at offensive tackle, showing plenty of promise, and won the full-time job last Fall. He got his first chance on the offensive side of the ball during the Spring of 2005.

Redshirt sophomore tackle **ALEKSEY LANIS** (6-6, 316), a 2004 prep All-American from Los Angeles' Crenshaw High School, started 12 of 13 games a year ago, missing the bowl game to a fractured left arm, and enjoyed an outstanding season. For his efforts, he was selected second-team Freshman All-America by CollegeFootballNews.com and Scout.com. He also was selected to The Sporting News Pac-10 All-Freshman team.

True senior tackle **BRIAN ABRAHAM** (6-6, 307), a former prep All-American, saw action in a reserve role for most of last season. He started and played the entire Emerald Bowl in place of the injured Lanis and also played the second half of the Rice and Oregon games and saw spot duty in other contests as well as special teams duty. In 2005, Abraham started nine games at strong tackle.

True sophomore tackle **MICAH KIA** (6-5, 304) appeared in all 13 games a year ago, mostly on special teams, and gained valuable experience. He also saw action at tackle in three games and figures to compete for playing time and a possible starting berth on the left side. Redshirt junior **TONY LEE** (6-4, 281) has battled knee injuries throughout his career. If he is healthy, he is also expected to contend for playing time at that spot. Redshirt junior **SCOTT GLICKSBERG** (6-4, 252) also figures into that competition. Last season, he appeared in multiple tight end formations and on special teams.

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Redshirt junior **AARON MEYER** (6-2, 288) figures to compete for the vacant center position. He saw action in five games in 2006, working at center and on special teams. In 2005, he played virtually the entire contest versus Oregon State.

Redshirt senior **P.J. IRVIN** (6-5, 305), who saw most of his duty on special teams in 2006, and redshirt junior **NICK EKBATANI** (6-4, 285), a transfer from Los Angeles Harbor College who saw spot duty at the guard position in 2006, will compete for playing time at guard. Another competitor at guard will be redshirt sophomore **NATHANIEL SKAGGS** (6-4, 296). In practices prior to the 2005 Sun Bowl, he moved to the center position from the defensive line following a series of injuries to Bruin centers, started and played the entire game. He was handicapped early last season with a hand injury and never saw action. Redshirt junior **MICAH REED** (6-4, 306), a contributor on special teams a year ago, will also be in the mix.

Redshirt sophomore **JUSTIN BROWN** (6-6, 272), spent last season as a member of the scout team and will look for playing time at tackle during Spring practice.

This will be an important Spring for five redshirt freshmen -- guards **SONNY TEVAGA** (6-4, 351) and **BRANDON BENNETT** (6-4, 352), centers **JAKE DEAN** (6-4, 288) and **ANDY KEANE** (6-2, 271), and tackle **SEAN SELLER** (6-4, 282) -- as they look to begin to take the next step in their progression. All five were prep All-Americans in 2005 and were able to gain experience and strength while redshirting in 2006.

"We have developed a high level of experience at this position and really need to excel in this area this season," said Dorrell. "We have a number of talented players who will compete for playing time and possible starting positions this Spring. We also have an exciting group of younger players we are looking forward to coaching during Spring Practice to develop them for the future."

DEFENSE

Ten defensive starters are set to return from a unit that limited seven of 13 opponents to 300 or fewer yards of total offense. In fact, only two seniors are missing from last year's Emerald Bowl defensive two-deep -- All-America defensive end Justin Hickman and reserve linebacker Eric McNeal.

Headlining the list of returners are All-America defensive end Bruce Davis and second-team All-Pac-10 strong safety Chris Horton (SS). Cornerback Trey Brown was named honorable mention all-conference and cornerback Alterraun Verner was chosen the Pac-10 Co-Freshman of the Year.

DEFENSIVE LINE

Redshirt senior **BRUCE DAVIS** (6-3, 237) stepped into the national spotlight last season when he was named first-team All-American by CollegeFootballNews.com and SI.com after starting all 13 contests and recording 47 tackles. An outstanding pass rusher, Davis ranked fourth (tied) nationally and first (tied) in the Pac-10 with his 12.5 quarterback sacks -- he is first nationally among returnees in 2007. Davis' 17.5

tackles for loss ranked 18th nationally and second in the Pac-10 behind former teammate Hickman. He also tied for sixth in the conference with three forced fumbles. Davis' totals ranked third on UCLA's single-season sack list and ninth on the single-season tackles for loss list.

UCLA also returns both starting tackles from a year ago. Redshirt senior **KEVIN BROWN** (6-2, 293) returned to action at defensive tackle in 2006 (12 starts) after sitting out the entire 2005 campaign to recover from ankle surgery. He finished the season with 24 tackles and ranked fifth (tied) on the squad with 6.0 tackles for loss. Brown had big games at Notre Dame and against Washington State where he was credited with four tackles in each contest.

True senior **BRIGHAM HARWELL** (6-2, 286) had a solid campaign in 2006, plugging the middle of the Bruin defense from his tackle position. He ranked fourth on the squad with 6.5 tackles for loss, totaled 31 tackles for the year and started 12 of 13 games. Harwell had a huge game in the victory over Oregon State, making a career-tying six tackles, including four solos. He recorded three tackles for loss in that game, including one sack and one forced fumble. Harwell came up big against USC, making three tackles and breaking up one pass. He also combined with Chris Horton to stop USC on a fourth-down play in the first quarter that helped set the defensive tone for the day.

Redshirt junior **KENNETH LOMBARD** (6-1, 261) will again contribute at end and tackle. A year ago, he was selected to the ESPN The Magazine/CoSIDA Academic All-District VIII squad and was also named to the Pac-10 All-Academic first team for the second straight season. Lombard saw action in the first 11 contests (two starts) and was credited with 15 tackles, three tackles for loss and one sack. He had a big game in the shutout versus Stanford, making two tackles and recovering a fourth-quarter fumble and returning it five yards for a touchdown. Lombard missed the USC game due to a left knee injury and underwent surgery prior to the Emerald Bowl.

True junior tackle **CHASE MOLINE** (6-2, 280) will compete for playing time at tackle this Fall. A year ago, he appeared in 10 games, missing the Stanford, Arizona and Oregon games due to back problems. He totaled eight tackles, two sacks and four tackles for loss on the season. Moline underwent surgery to remove a portion of a disk from his back and will not participate in any contact during Spring Practice.

Redshirt senior **NIKOLA DRAGOVIC** (6-3, 256) will compete for the open defensive end position. In 2006, he saw action in all 13 games after missing the bulk of the 2005 campaign due to knee surgery (he started the first four games prior to his injury). He finished with six tackles, one tackle for loss and one fumble recovery.

Redshirt junior **TOM BLAKE** (6-4, 275), a walkon transfer from UC Davis who redshirted last season, will compete with Dragovich for playing time at left end.

Redshirt sophomores **CHINONSO ANYANWU** (6-4, 212) and **KOREY BOSWORTH** (6-1, 234) will compete for playing time behind Davis at right end. Anyanwu, who appeared

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in two games last season, possesses good pass-rushing skills. Bosworth saw action in all 13 games last year on special teams and totaled seven tackles while practicing at linebacker.

Redshirt sophomore **JESS WARD** (6-3, 294) and true sophomore **JERZY SIEWIERSKI** (6-3, 297) both gained valuable experience a year ago and should push for additional playing time this season. Ward played in seven contests and was credited with five tackles, 0.5 tackles for loss and 0.5 sacks. Siewierski saw action in five contests and recorded one tackle.

A bevy of talented young linemen -- redshirt freshman tackle **DAVID CARTER** (6-3, 259), redshirt freshman end **JEFF MILLER** (6-6, 254), redshirt freshman end **DYLAN RUSH** (6-3, 246), redshirt freshman tackle **DARIUS SAVAGE** (6-4, 333) and redshirt freshman end **REGINALD STOKES** (6-3, 246) -- all of whom earned prep All-America honors in 2005, will push for playing time behind their experienced teammates. All but Savage will get a close look from the defensive staff during the Spring (Savage will be participating in track and field).

"Our defensive improvement a year ago started up front," said Dorrell. "We played with improved technique, strength and focus while developing some depth along our front line.

"Bruce was fabulous throughout the season, disrupting offenses and pressuring quarterbacks from his end position. Brigham gave us a consistent effort in the middle and Kevin got stronger as the season went on. Kenneth contributed at both end and tackle and Chase really battled for us on the inside. Nikola came back from his injury and worked hard to give us some depth at end. This Spring, we look for guys like Jerzy, Jess and Chinny to build on the experience they gained last season. We also have an outstanding group of redshirt freshmen who will receive a lot of coaching this Spring."

LINEBACKER

UCLA returns every player who started a game at the three linebacker positions a season ago. Christian Taylor (12 starts), Reggie Carter (12), Aaron Whittington (10), John Hale (three) and Kyle Bosworth (one) all figure to see extensive action at linebacker for the 2007 season.

Redshirt senior **CHRISTIAN TAYLOR** (6-0, 222), the quarterback of the defense from his middle linebacker spot, ranked second on the team last season with 83 tackles despite playing the latter half of the season with an ankle sprain. His totals of 4.5 sacks and 13.5 stops for loss ranked third on the team in both categories. Taylor was fifth in the Pac-10 in tackles for loss (1.04 average) and 16th in overall tackles (6.38). He tied for the team lead with nine tackles at Oregon (1.5 for loss) and led the team with 10 stops (one for loss) at Notre Dame. Against USC, Taylor once again topped the Bruins tacklers with 11, including seven solo stops.

Redshirt senior **AARON WHITTINGTON** (6-2, 215) started 10 games on the strong side a year ago and will compete

for the position again in 2007. On the year, he made 29 total tackles, including four for loss, and recovered one fumble while battling a sprained ankle during the latter half of the season. Whittington led the team in its shutout of Stanford with seven tackles, including four solos.

True junior **JOHN HALE** (6-4, 226) will compete with Whittington for playing time on the strong side. A year ago, he played in 12 contests at both outside spots, starting three of the final four games (Oregon State, Arizona State, Florida State) and also contributed on several special teams units. He totaled 16 tackles on the year, including 1.5 sacks and 2.0 tackles for loss. As a true freshman in 2005, Hale started seven games and made 20 total tackles.

Redshirt sophomore **REGGIE CARTER** (6-1, 218) enjoyed a breakout season at weak side linebacker. Carter earned first-team Freshman All-America acclaim from Rivals.com, second-team honors from CollegeFootballNews.com and scout.com and third-team recognition from The Sporting News. He appeared in all 13 games, starting 12 times. Carter made 48 tackles and had 6.0 tackles for loss and 0.5 sacks. At Arizona State, he posted a career-high seven tackles. He was credited with at least four tackles in games versus Washington, Stanford, Notre Dame, Washington State, California and Florida State.

True junior **KYLE BOSWORTH** (6-1, 225) spent most of the 2006 season on special teams, finishing with 13 tackles in 12 games. Bosworth made his first start at middle linebacker at Oregon, making two tackles. Kyle made a season high four tackles against Arizona, playing the entire second half after Taylor injured his ankle for the first time. He could also see action at the strong side spot as well as in the middle.

Redshirt sophomore **SHAWN OATIS** (6-0, 220) figures to get a long look from the coaches on the weak side this Spring. Oatis saw action in eight contests, also on special teams, and made one stop. Redshirt freshman **TOBI UMODU** (5-11, 231), will open Spring Practice as a middle linebacker and senior **FRED HOLMES** (6-1, 248), who has been hampered by injuries throughout his career, will compete at the strong side position during Spring Practice.

Several walkons will also compete for reps during Spring Practice. Redshirt junior **NICKY RODRIGUEZ** (5-10, 220) was the defensive scout of the year in 2006. Redshirt sophomore **JOSHUA EDWARDS** (6-1, 228) had to sit out the 2006 season after transferring from UC Davis. Redshirt freshman **MICHAEL LUTU** (6-1, 220) joined the squad midway through last season.

"Our linebacker position entered last season without much experience and now returns virtually intact for the 2007 season. Christian emerged as a real leader for our defense, both on and off the field. Reggie did a nice job learning on the go and has a tremendous upside. Aaron and John each made some big plays for us a year ago and we expect more of the same this season. Kyle is waiting in the wings and will continue to push for playing time. Each of them needs

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to be prepared to take what they have learned and work this Spring to take it to the next level."

SECONDARY

The Bruins return a host of talented players with plenty of experience in this area. The top nine players, including four senior starters, from last year's team form the nucleus of the secondary.

Redshirt senior **TREY BROWN** (5-9, 185), one of the top cover cornerbacks in the West, has a streak of 30 consecutive starts entering his final season. Brown led the Bruins with four interceptions from his left corner position and his 0.31 average ranked seventh in the Pac-10. He also led the team in passes defended (nine) fifth in the conference in that category (1.00). On the year, he made 47 tackles, including eight versus Arizona.

Redshirt senior **CHRIS HORTON** (6-1, 210) figures to be one of the nation's best at his position in 2007. The strong safety led the team in tackles (95) and was ranked ninth in the Pac-10 (7.31 average). He led the team in tackles in six of the year's final eight games (including ties). Horton ranked second on the team with his three interceptions and also tied for third in fumbles forced. He led the team with a career-high 12 tackles at Arizona State, including a big stop on fourth-and-goal at the Bruin one-yard line.

Redshirt senior free safety **DENNIS KEYES** (6-2, 194) teams with Horton to form one of the top safety tandems in the country. In 2006, he made 13 starts and finished third on the team with 79 tackles. He ranked 19th in the Pac-10 in tackles (6.08 average) and tied for sixth in the league in fumbles caused with three (0.23). Keyes tied for the team lead in three contests, with nine tackles at Washington State, 10 stops at California and eight tackles versus Oregon State.

True senior **RODNEY VAN** (5-11, 170) started all 13 games last season at right cornerback after being a key reserve his first two seasons. Van ranked fifth on the team with 57 tackles, making at least four tackles in 10 of those contests. He made seven stops against both Oregon and USC.

True sophomore **ALTERRAUN VERNER** (5-10, 170) figures to again compete with Van for playing time on the right side. In 2006, he was selected co-Pac-10 Freshman of the Year and was named a first-team Freshman All-American by Scripps/FWAA and CollegeFootballNews.com. He appeared in all 13 games and ranked fourth on the squad in tackles with 59. Verner made two interceptions and returned them both for touchdowns, becoming the first UCLA freshman to score twice in a season on interceptions. He made one start, when UCLA began in a nickel package versus Oregon, and totaled seven tackles. Verner posted a career-high nine tackles in games at Washington and against Florida State in the Emerald Bowl.

Redshirt junior cornerback **MICHAEL NORRIS** (5-10, 176) is set to return to the field after missing the entire 2006 season due to a knee injury (posterior cruciate ligament) suffered in pre-season camp. As a sophomore in 2005, he saw action in all 12 games on special teams and in

the nickel package, making 18 tackles. He figures to push Brown for playing time on the left side.

True junior strong safety **BRET LOCKETT** (6-2, 206) will compete for playing time after gaining valuable experience a year ago. He saw action in all 13 games, making seven tackles and one fumble recovery while playing mostly on special teams and in variations of UCLA's nickel and dime packages.

Redshirt sophomore free safety **AARON WARE** (6-0, 192) also figures to see action at safety after performing well on special teams a year ago. A member of multiple special teams units, he recorded four tackles on the season.

Redshirt senior **MATTHEW SLATER** (5-11, 192) figures to add depth at free safety, although he will not participate in Spring drills due to off-season shoulder surgery. Last season, his first on defense, he played in all 13 games as a reserve corner and special teams ace despite shoulder miseries, recording nine tackles while playing in all 13 games.

True sophomore strong safety **CHRISTIAN RAMIREZ** (6-2, 199) gained valuable game experience a year ago. As a true freshman, he appeared in 10 games as a member of multiple special teams units and was credited with two tackles.

Several walkons -- redshirt sophomore free safety **MIKE ANGELO** (6-1, 191), redshirt cornerback sophomore **MATT CALDWELL** (6-3, 182), redshirt junior strong safety **MATT CULVER** (6-2, 200), redshirt junior cornerback **CHRIS MEADOWS** (5-11, 183) and redshirt freshman **GARRETT RUBIO** (5-10, 195) -- will also compete for reps during Spring Practice.

"I am sure not many programs in the country can say they have four returning senior starters in the secondary. The players in our secondary improved greatly both individually and as a unit last season and I feel there is more room for growth in 2007.

"Trey has been solid for us for a couple of years at cornerback and is poised for a big senior year. At safety, Chris had an impressive season in his first full year as a contributor and Dennis had some outstanding games. We are certainly looking forward to having that pair for another year. Rodney did well in his first season as a starter but Alterraun will continue to battle for playing time at cornerback. Matthew, Bret, Aaron and Christian will have the opportunity to show the coaches what they can do during Spring Practice."

SPECIALISTS

Redshirt junior **AARON PEREZ** (6-4, 219) ranked fourth in the Pac-10 and 22nd in the nation in punting last season with an average kick of 42.56 yards. Eighteen of his 62 boots put opponents inside the 20-yard line. He had an outstanding performance in the USC game, averaging 48.3 yards on six kicks, including two inside the 20-yard line. His 63-yarder on the next to last play of the game was the longest of his career. Only one of his six kicks in the contest were returned for a total of zero yards.

The Bruins will have to replace a pair of four-year starters

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at placekicker and long snapper. Redshirt freshman **KAI FORBATH** (6-0, 193) and true junior **JIMMY ROTSTEIN** (6-0, 171) will compete for the placekicking job held down by All-American Justin Medlock. Candidates at long snapper include walkon redshirt senior **BRIAN RUBINSTEIN** (6-0, 265), true freshman **CHRISTIAN YOUNT** (6-1, 225), who entered school in January, and walkon redshirt freshman **P.J. TOBYANSEN** (5-11, 220). Redshirt junior quarterback **PATRICK COWAN** (6-5, 218) again figures to fill the holder assignment. Redshirt freshman walkon **DANNY REES** (6-3, 185) is the primary candidate to be the backup punter.

"Our special teams were solid for us last season. Aaron

showed continued improvement over the course of the year and helped us win the field position battle the latter half of the season," said Dorrell. "Our return men were new for the most part and got better as the season went on and that experience should benefit us in 2007. Now is the time of year for this area to improve its fundamentals.

"We will miss Justin and Riley, but we have capable people in line to take advantage of the window of opportunity at the placekicker and snapper positions. We will look to get them as much experience under pressure as we can during the Spring."

STATUS OF PLAYERS

2006 Lettermen

Returning (49)

*** Brian Abraham, OT
* Terrence Austin, WR
** Kahlil Bell, TB
* Korey Bosworth, DE
** Kyle Bosworth, LB
*** Brandon Breazell, WR
*** Kevin Brown, DT
*** Trey Brown, CB
* Reggie Carter, LB
* Patrick Cowan, QB
*** Bruce Davis, DE
** Nikola Dragovic, DE
*** Marcus Everett, WR
** Scott Glicksberg, OT
* Ryan Graves, WR
** John Hale, LB
*** Brigham Harwell, DT
*** Chris Horton, SS
* P.J. Irvin, OG
*** Chris Joseph, C/OG
** Gavin Ketchum, WR
*** Dennis Keyes, FS
* Micah Kia, OT
* Aleksey Lanis, OT
** Bret Lockett, SS
** Kenneth Lombard, DE
*** Chris Markey, TB
* Jeremy McGee, WR
* Chane Moline, TB
** Chase Moline, DT
** Ryan Moya, TE
* Shawn Oatis, LB
* Ben Olson, QB
** Logan Paulsen, TE
** Aaron Perez, P
*** Michael Pitre, FB
* Christian Ramirez, SS
* Micah Reed, OG
* Matthew Slater, CB
*** William Snead, TE
*** Noah Sutherland, OT
** Christian Taylor, LB
*** Shannon Tevaga, OG

*** Rodney Van, CB
* Alterraun Verner, CB
* Jess Ward, DT
* Aaron Ware, FS
*** Aaron Whittington, LB
*** Derrick Williams, TB

2005 Lettermen

Returning (4)

*** Joe Cowan, WR
** Fred Holmes, LB
** Michael Norris, CB
* Nathaniel Skaggs, OG

Other Returning Players (44)

Mike Angelo, FS
Chinonso Anyanwu, DE
Brandon Bennett, OG
McLeod Bethel-Thompson, QB
Thomas Blake, DE
Justin Brown, OT
Matt Caldwell, CB
Ryen Carew, TB
David Carter, DT
Matt Culver, S
Jake Dean, C
Joshua Edwards, LB
Nick Ekbatani, OG
Justin Fareed, TB
Kai Forbath, PK
Michael Ghobrial, DL
Adam Heater, TE
Tyler Holland, TE
Dominique Johnson, WR
Andy Keane, C
Tony Lee, OT
Michael Lutu, LB
Travis Martin, TE
Chris Meadows, CB
Aaron Meyer, C
Jeff Miller, DE
Chad Moline, FB
Osaar Rasshan, QB
Danny Rees, P

Nicky Rodriguez, LB
Jimmy Rotstein, PK
Brian Rubinstein, LS
Garrett Rubio, CB
Dylan Rush, DE
Darius Savage, DT
Sean Sheller, OT
Craig Sheppard, TB
Jerzy Siewierski, DT
Reginald Stokes, DE
Sonny Tevaga, OG
Trevor Theriot, FB
P.J. Tobyansen, LS
Jamil Turner, WR
Tobi Umodu, LB

Mid-Year Enrollees (1)

Christian Yount, LS

2006 Lettermen Not Returning (12)

** Andrew Baumgartner, WR
**** Robert Chai, C
** J.J. Hair, TE
*** Justin Hickman, DE
**** Riley Jondle, LS
**** Eric McNeal, LB
**** Justin Medlock, PK
*** Danny Nelson, FB
* Will Peddie, DE
** Brian Ruziecki, DT
**** Junior Taylor, WR
** Matt Willis, WR