

— THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF *Ucla* ATHLETICS —

BRUIN BLUE

FALL 2015

Family MATTERS

IT'S MORE THAN JUST FOOTBALL
FOR JIM & SHANNON MORA

The RIGHT to DREAM

Abu Danladi's
Amazing Path to
UCLA Stardom

INSIDE:

the
VOICE

BROADCASTER

BILL ROTH

IS A BRUIN

GUERRERO

The Insider's View

PLUS:

How Reily Buechler's
NBA Dad Shaped
Her Career



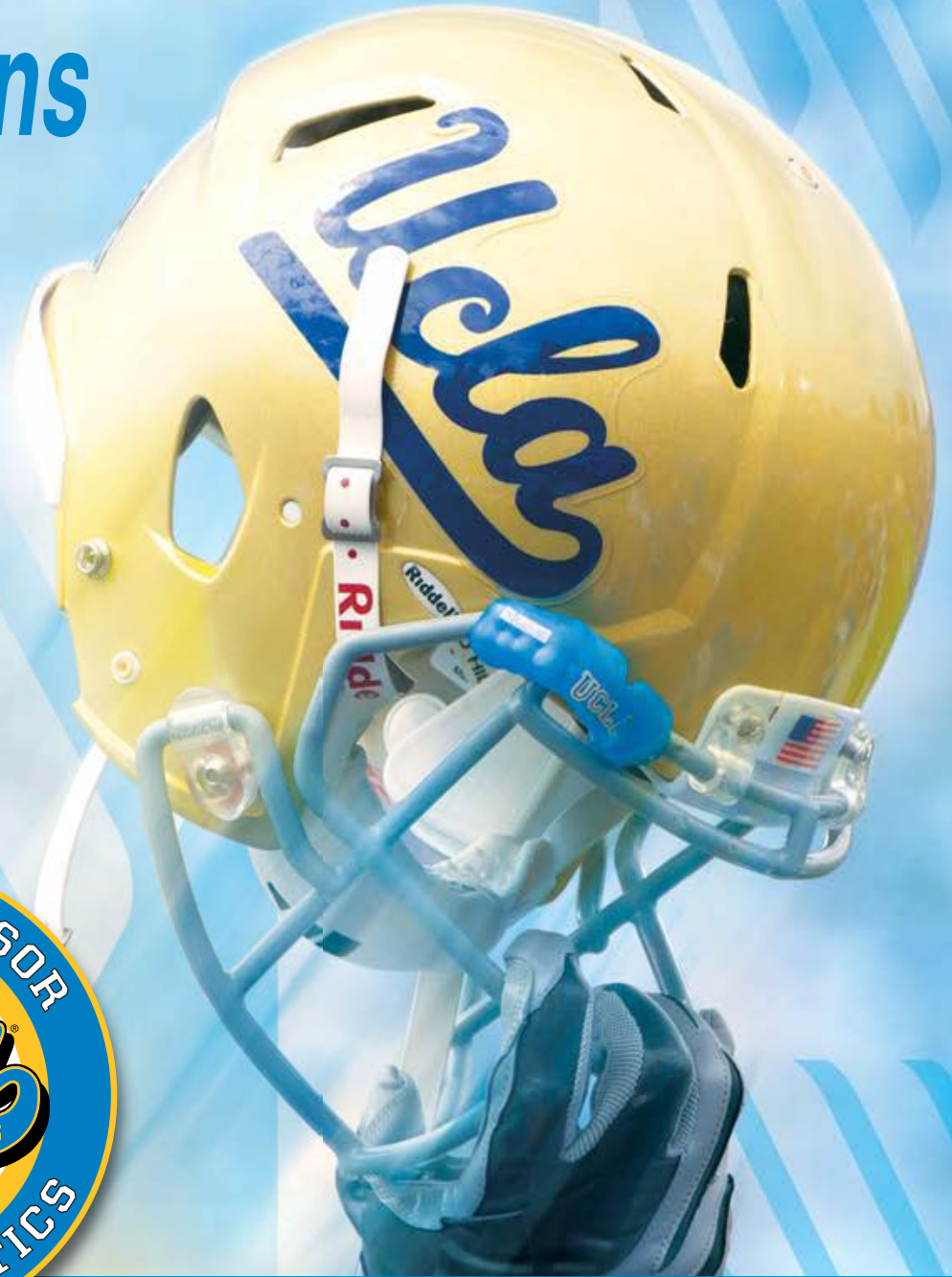
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THE INSIDER'S VIEW

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Wins and losses. At the end of the day, some say that's all that matters. One game. One win. One loss.

In the professional ranks, we have seen one win or one loss become the difference between a coach receiving a contract extension or being handed a pink slip.

One loss can tarnish a player's entire career. One win can define a legacy.

Every four years we watch a tenth of a point turn silver into gold or, sadly, gold into silver. An Olympian can go from virtual unknown to endorsement king in the blink of an eye — that is, if they win.

But how do you define victory? What exactly is a win? Is it really as black and white as the final score?



DAN GUERRERO

In 2014-15, UCLA enjoyed one of the finest all-around athletic years of any Division I institution, placing second in the Learfield Sports Directors' Cup and in the top 10 of the Capital One Cup for both men and women. Football, playing the nation's hardest schedule, posted a second consecutive school record-tying 10-win season en route to a top 10 national finish, while men's basketball made its second consecutive appearance in the Sweet 16. All told, four Bruin teams entered the postseason as the No. 1 overall seed (baseball, women's soccer, men's and women's water polo), seven earned top 5 national finishes and 12 concluded their seasons ranked in the top 10.

The Bruin men's water polo team won UCLA's record 112th NCAA Championship in the fall, and three teams finished second nationally — men's soccer fell to Virginia on penalty kicks, women's water polo lost by a single goal scored on a penalty shot in the game's final 11 seconds, and women's tennis battled to the very end of their championship match.

Think about that — penalty kicks, a final-second penalty shot and groundstrokes down the stretch landing just beyond the end-line. Those are the differences between winning and losing on the scoreboard, between raising a trophy high above one's head or thinking about what could have been and, ultimately, between becoming a media darling or a critic's target.

Of the student-athletes on those three national runner-up teams, 14 received their diplomas this past June. In all, 134 student-athletes at UCLA walked across the stage in Pauley Pavilion in 2015, having successfully completed this chapter of their lives; ready to embark upon their next adventure.

Not one of them lost, regardless of what the scoreboard read following their final game. Quite to the contrary, they managed to earn a degree from one of the most academically demanding institutions in the entire world. They competed athletically at the very highest level and helped maintain UCLA's standing as the preeminent athletics program in the country.

This is the embodiment of victory.

Writing this message in July due to editorial deadlines, promo after promo for the upcoming ESPY Awards are running on ESPN with some regularity. One of the highlights of last year's awards that ESPN has been re-airing and recently caught my eye is the late Stuart Scott's memorably moving speech in which he discusses his battle with cancer.

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COVER PHOTO BY LAUREN PRESSEY

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF UCLA ATHLETICS

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I'm not sure anyone has captured the sentiment of winning versus losing better than Stuart when he explains in his speech, "I'm not losing. I'm still here, I'm fighting. I'm not losing. But I've gotta amend that. When you die, that does not mean that you lose to cancer. You beat cancer by how you live, why you live and in the manner in which you live."

These poignant words extend well beyond the sphere of illness and apply to life in general as well as the world of sports — all the more fitting given Stuart's indelible legacy at ESPN. How you live and the manner in which you live ultimately delineate the line between winning and losing.

No scoreboard can determine this.

Intercollegiate athletics are a microcosm of this circle of life. The participants never lose, no matter what the final score says. It's about the journey, their journey. And nowhere is the journey more magical than at UCLA.

Father Time may be undefeated, but so too is the Bruin spirit.

Champions are made here, both on and off the field, win or lose.

I can't wait to see what the 2015-16 season has in store for us. I can't wait to be part of the journey. And to each and everyone one of you, thank you for allowing us to be a part of your journey.

Go Bruins!

Dan Guerrero



FORMER UCLA MEN'S TENNIS PLAYER **JEAN-JULIEN ROJER** (RIGHT) AND PARTNER HORIA TECAU TOOK HOME THE MEN'S DOUBLES TITLE AT WIMBLEDON ON JULY 11, DEFEATING JAMIE MURRAY AND JOHN PEERS, 7-6(5), 6-4, 6-4 AT THE ALL ENGLAND CLUB IN LONDON. IT MARKED THE 43RD GRAND SLAM TITLE WON BY A UCLA PLAYER AND FIRST MEN'S DOUBLES TITLE AT A MAJOR FOR THE BRUINS SINCE 2009 (MARK KNOWLES).

PHOTO BY JULIAN FINNEY, GETTY IMAGES



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FALL SPORTS

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AUG 29	VIRGINIA	6 PM
AUG 30	LMU	5 PM
SEPT 23	USC	7:30 PM
OCT 2	WASHINGTON	8 PM
OCT 4	WASHINGTON STATE	11 AM
OCT 16	ARIZONA	6 PM
OCT 18	ARIZONA STATE	1:30 PM
NOV 4	COLORADO	7:30 PM
NOV 6	UTAH	7 PM
NOV 12	OREGON	8 PM
NOV 15	OREGON STATE	TBA
NOV 27	STANFORD	TBA

MEN'S SOCCER

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME PT
AUG 29	NEW MEXICO	4 PM
SEPT 13	UCRIVERSIDE	5 PM
SEPT 18	CAL POLY	7 PM
SEPT 21	UCSANTABARBARA	7 PM
SEPT 25	VCU	4:30 PM
SEPT 27	UCIRVINE	7 PM
OCT 12	SANDIEGO STATE	7 PM
OCT 16	STANFORD	8 PM
OCT 19	CAL	6 PM
NOV 6	OREGON STATE	2 PM
NOV 8	WASHINGTON	5 PM

WOMEN'S SOCCER

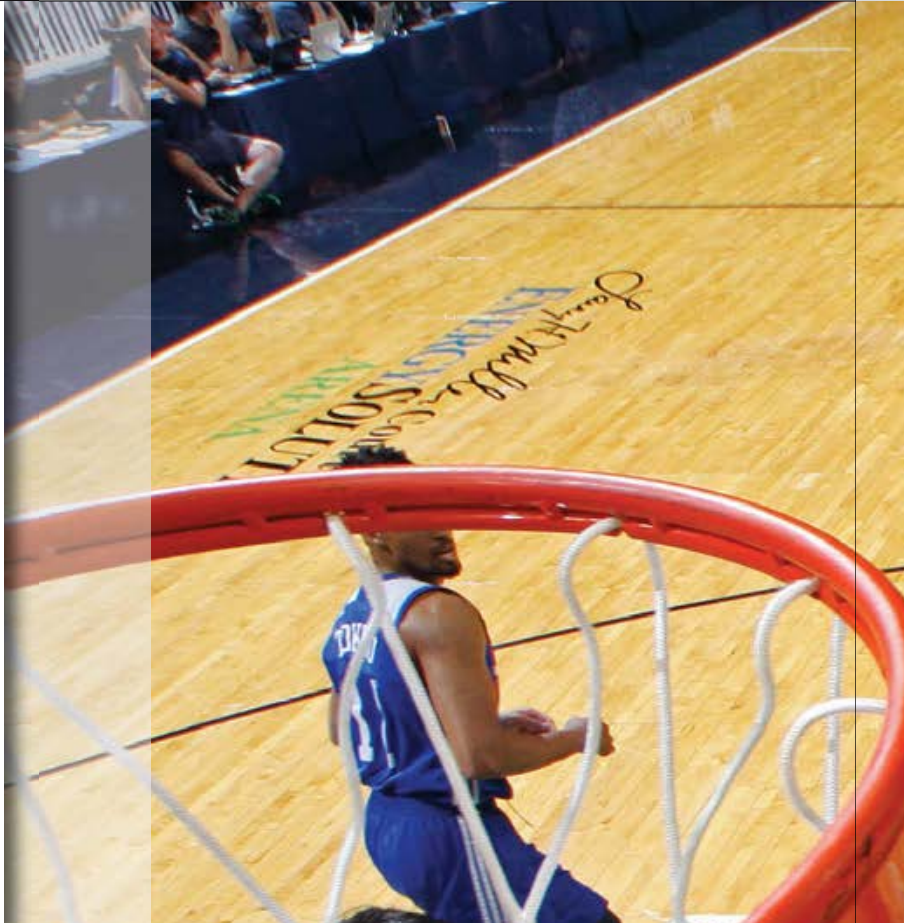
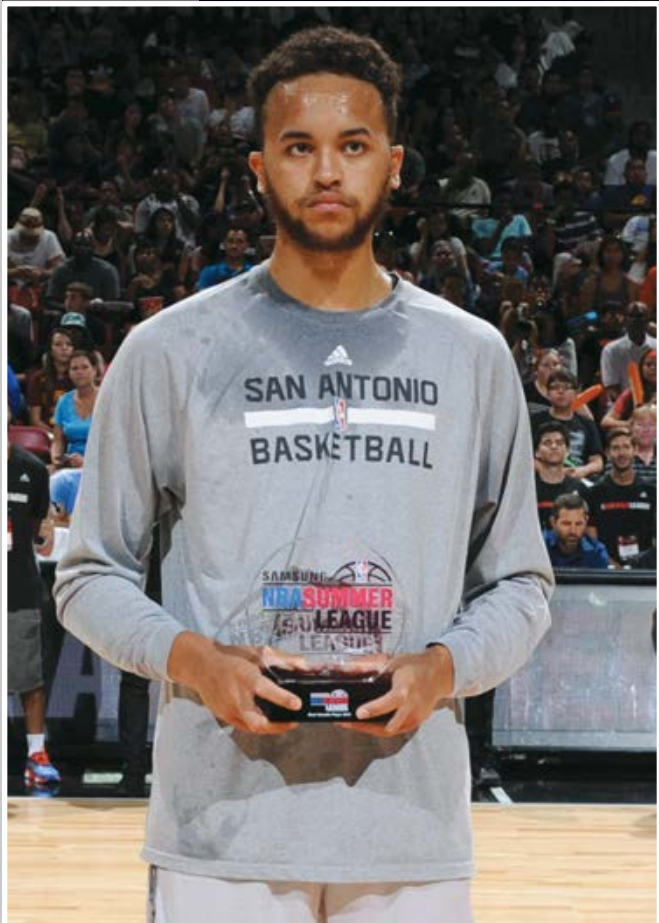
DATE	OPPONENT	TIME PT
AUG 30	WISCONSIN	4 PM
SEPT 4	VIRGINIA	7 PM
SEPT 6	TEXAS	7 PM
SEPT 17	PEPPERDINE	7 PM
SEPT 25	OREGON	8 PM
OCT 9	ARIZONA	7 PM
OCT 11	ARIZONA STATE	1 PM
OCT 23	COLORADO	6 PM
OCT 25	UTAH	1 PM
NOV 6	USC	6 PM

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KYLE ANDERSON

BRUIN ON THE RISE





HEADING INTO HIS SECOND NBA SEASON, FORWARD **KYLE ANDERSON** AVERAGED 18.9 POINTS AND 6.6 REBOUNDS IN 10 GAMES FOR THE SAN ANTONIO SPURS AND WAS NAMED MOST VALUABLE PLAYER OF THE SAMSUNG NBA SUMMER LEAGUE.

INSET: ANDERSON ACCEPTS HIS MVP AWARD PRIOR TO THE CHAMPIONSHIP GAME IN LAS VEGAS, WHERE HE TOTALED 15 POINTS AND SEVEN REBOUNDS IN A 93-90 VICTORY OVER THE PHOENIX SUNS.

DUNK PHOTO BY MELISSA MAJCHRAZAK/NBAE/GETTY IMAGES AND INSET PHOTO BY GARRETT ELWOOD/NBAE/GETTY IMAGES



Behind the Scenes with UCLA Athletics

Follow the Bruins on Social Media. #GoBruins



@uclawbb Jordin Canada earned the first gold medal for #UCLA at the @wugusa scoring nine points in the women's #basketball finals. #GoBruins



@uclambb is working hard this off-season preparing for the 2015-16 season. #GoBruins



Congratulations to the 2015 FIFA Women's World Cup Champions @ussoccer_wnt and to our #Bruins @sydneyleroux, @Laurenholiday12 and Jill Ellis! #GoBruins



@uclamwp head coach Adam Wright and Danny McClintick helped #UCLA win the inaugural #CrossTownCup with four victories over USC in the 2014 season. #GoBruins

#4sUpFriday #BruinRevolution.



Tatum Souza of @uclatrackandfield was the flag bearer for Team USA at the opening ceremony of the World University Games in Korea. #GoBruins #wugusa



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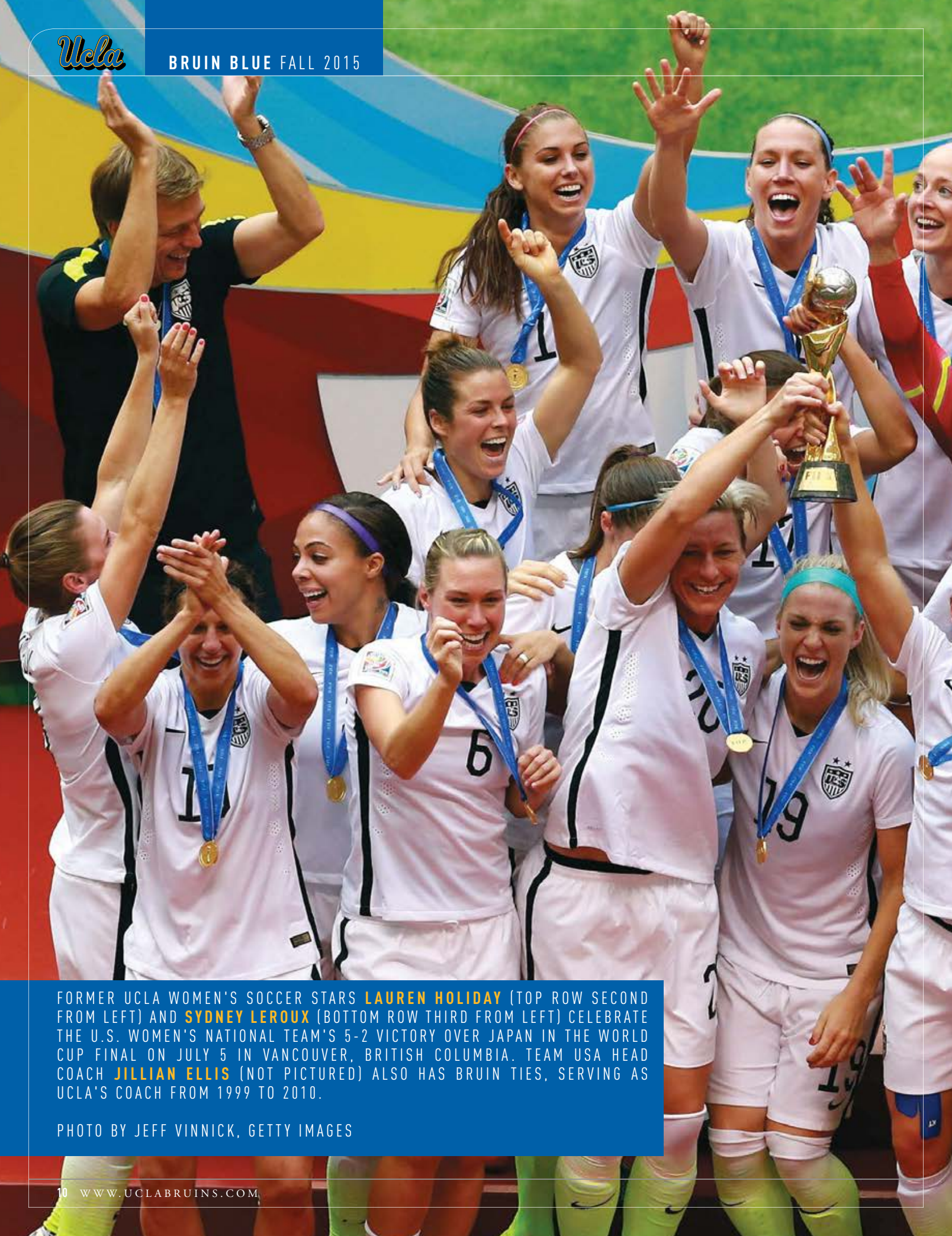
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FORMER UCLA WOMEN'S SOCCER STARS **LAUREN HOLIDAY** (TOP ROW SECOND FROM LEFT) AND **SYDNEY LEROUX** (BOTTOM ROW THIRD FROM LEFT) CELEBRATE THE U.S. WOMEN'S NATIONAL TEAM'S 5-2 VICTORY OVER JAPAN IN THE WORLD CUP FINAL ON JULY 5 IN VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA. TEAM USA HEAD COACH **JILLIAN ELLIS** (NOT PICTURED) ALSO HAS BRUIN TIES, SERVING AS UCLA'S COACH FROM 1999 TO 2010.

PHOTO BY JEFF VINNICK, GETTY IMAGES





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FAMILY MATTERS

IT'S MORE THAN JUST FOOTBALL FOR JIM & SHANNON MORA

By Mark Whicker

How do you measure a coach's impact? Maybe it's by how hard it is to remember what things were like before him. Jim Mora enters his fourth year at UCLA with a program that bears little resemblance to the one that greeted him. The Bruins have gone to three consecutive bowl games, winning each of the last two, posted back-to-back school record-tying 10-win seasons and have recorded 29 total victories, including three straight against crosstown rival USC. UCLA football is once again a major player nationally in recruiting while consistently in the conversation of teams contending for a national title. Assistant coaches under Mora get paid as competitively as any in the nation, on-campus facilities were painted black to reflect the Bruins' tougher persona and the program's crown jewel, the Wasserman Football Center, broke ground this past August.

But this only tells half the story. For Mora, it is all about family. And what his family has accomplished off the field is equally impressive, if not more so.

You see, this is also the fourth season that Shannon Mora has been in town.

Running the Jim Mora Count On Me Family Foundation that bears her husband's name, Shannon puts together all the programs that benefit children from low socio-economic backgrounds, mentally and/or physically challenged children and children at risk not just in California, but across

"I SAW WHAT A COLLEGE ATMOSPHERE WAS LIKE. YOU KNOW, YOU CAN HAVE MORE OF AN IMPACT ON A YOUNG MAN'S LIFE HERE. IN THE NFL, THEY ALREADY HAVE PEOPLE THEY LISTEN TO, AND THE CONCRETE HAS HARDENED ON THEIR PERSONALITIES."

— UCLA HEAD COACH JIM MORA

three other states as well. Couple this role with playing mom to the Moras' four children and the other hundred or so who play football for Jim, and it's a wonder where she finds the time — not to mention the energy.

"She hosts the breakfasts for recruits and their families when they come visit," Mora said, sitting at the end of the Manhattan Beach pier one fine June morning. "She's the host for everybody on the weekends. She's on the sidelines. She does a million things to help our program."

"My title is president of the foundation, but she's the one who runs it. Our mission statement is pretty broad; it's about helping kids. We try to keep it broad so if anything comes to our table we can evaluate whether we want to participate. When we remodeled our house, there was a garage that we turned into an office, and we hired four or five employees for that."



THE MORA FAMILY (FROM LEFT CLOCK-WISE) RYDER, COLE, SHANNON, LILLIA, JIM, TREY AND OTIS THE BLACK LAB.

Shannon is up there every day, grinding away.

"I'm not really sure how she does it all. Shannon is very independent. She's not a needy wife, but a compassionate one. I think we're a good team."

The Mora clan becomes a beneficiary, too. Cole, the oldest son and a soccer player at Claremont McKenna, went home to Seattle last summer for an internship with a non-profit organization. Lillia, the only daughter, who currently attends school behind enemy lines at USC where her friends either don't realize or don't care what her dad does, helped out at the foundation's golf tournament this past May and afterwards hugged her mom and said, "This is amazing. I didn't know you did all this."

The second of three boys, Ryder, plays high school lacrosse and is currently being courted by all the major programs. In a bit of a role reversal for Jim, this summer he and Shannon found themselves traveling back east to listen to the Harvards, Yales, Browns and Marylands of the world pitch them on why their son would be the perfect fit for their program.

Last but not least, Trey is the volunteer assistant coach — the one who looks at game tape on the computer and comes up with a game plan in his notebook for Jim every week. Now 12, he has officially played football for half of his life — since age six, do the math — and, as Jim jokingly refers to him, is 'the last hope' for carrying on the Mora football playing tradition.

"He's the baller of the family," Shannon said. "He plays everything. He

might be small, but he sticks his nose in there. I guess he's got the Mora genes that way."

Doing everything is, well, just what the Moras do.

If it all sounds chaotic and uncontrollable, serving as a football coach embedded into his world from dawn until midnight while playing the role of dad and philanthropist, just know that Jim wouldn't have it any other way. He knows nothing different; it's how he grew up.

His dad, Jim E. Mora, was an NFL head coach for 15 years, turning around both the New Orleans Saints and Indianapolis Colts from perennially losing franchises to perennial playoff contenders. Having made 10 stops in eight different states during his 40-year coaching career, it was in Boulder, Colo., while paying his dues as an assistant coach for the Buffaloes, where his son, Jim, began playing the game.

"We had our own teams, named after the streets where we lived — the Judson Jaguars, the Ithaca Indians," Mora said. "We'd get out there and 'pad up,' get our helmets and our pants and everything else. Then we'd knock the crap out of each other. There were so many teams. We'd go down to Table Mesa Park, and when your game was over you'd leave all your stuff, everything but your pants, and the next team would put them on."

Growing up the son of a coach, Mora is well aware of the unique family dynamic that's created in this profession, so when his assistant coaches need

FAMILY MATTERS

IT'S MORE THAN JUST FOOTBALL FOR JIM & SHANNON MORA

to watch their kids play baseball, volleyball or perform at the school play, they are free to do so. When the Bruins practice on one field, it's not uncommon to occasionally see the coaches' kids playing on the adjacent one. Mora sometimes can't believe he's letting that happen, except that he enjoys it.

"Our guys have to play football in front of 85,000 people, so they should have to be able to focus through that," he laughs.

This type of perspective doesn't just happen overnight. Mora's path to UCLA has taken a number of twists and turns along the way, none more so than in his first NFL head coaching job with Atlanta. In his first year with the franchise, Mora, then one of the NFL's youngest coaches, led the Atlanta Falcons to the 2004 NFC Championship game.

Two short years later, Mora was let go by Atlanta not long after jokingly telling his friend, Hugh Millen, that he would love to coach the University of Washington, his alma mater. The problem was that he was a guest on Millen's radio show, something that Mora still beats himself up for to this day — but not for the reasons one would think.

"It didn't just affect me, it affected my staff, and, overall, I think there were 40 kids who had to move, had to leave their school and other friends, because I did that," Mora said.

As fate would have it, Mora really would return to his alma mater, after a two-year stint with the Seattle Seahawks as an assistant and then as the team's head coach, to ultimately find his path.

While coaching his children and working as a broadcaster following his time with the Seahawks, Mora made the fateful decision to join friend Mark Pattison on a skiing trip to Crystal Mountain. One blown-out knee later — ACL, MCL, PCL, meniscus, "you name it, it was gone," said Mora — he found himself back home.

"The people at Washington said I could rehab there, since I'd played there," Mora said. "Sark (coach Steve Sarkisian, now at USC) couldn't have been better to me. I was in their meetings, even. I got to hang out and do therapy every day for months, and I saw what a college atmosphere was like. You know, you can have more of an impact on a young man's life here. In the NFL,



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FAMILY MATTERS

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they already have people they listen to, and the concrete has hardened on their personalities.”

Despite his time hanging around a college program, now fully healed, Mora returned to NFL life as an analyst for the NFL Network.

When the UCLA job opened up, however, everything changed.

Offered the head coaching position while on the road with the network, Mora called home to get Shannon's input. After all, she was running the foundation in Seattle, and Seattle was home. Shannon had been a Husky as well, a cheerleader who, after running past Jim at a frat-sorority mixer, prompted him to immediately tell a friend, “I'm going to marry that girl.” While recalling that story, he said, grinning, “And I did, although it took about 10 years.”

Shannon listened to Jim on the phone, analyzing the pros and cons along with him. She had seen Jim staring at the walls, and the writing on them was pretty plain to see. Known for her plain talk, Shannon bluntly stated, “You want to coach, right? Well, put your big-boy pants on. Let's go for it.”

That was that. End of discussion. And the Moras have never looked back.

Perhaps the most unexpected and rewarding part about the move south to Los Angeles has been the new doors it has opened for the Count On Me Foundation. Having long been prominent supporters of the Special Olympics, with their involvement originally inspired by Shannon's older

sister, who was born with Down Syndrome, the Moras hosted and walked into the Coliseum with the athletes from Nepal in the World Games' Opening Ceremonies earlier this summer in Los Angeles. With events held on UCLA's campus, medals given out and dreams fulfilled, it just seems like this was all meant to be in the Moras' eyes.

Having expanded into North Carolina and still functioning in Atlanta and Seattle, Count on Me currently supports 43 organizations with its fund-raising efforts while also initiating its own programs. From one of Shannon's favorites, the Holiday Shop, where hospitalized children get to choose gifts for their siblings, parents and friends from mini-stores set up by the volunteers — to the Count on Me Tailgate, in which children gather in special rooms at hospitals such as Mattel Children's Hospital to watch college and pro games together — to the Bus 2 The Bowl program, which gathers underprivileged or at risk youth and treats them to an all-expenses paid trip to the Rose Bowl for home football games, giving back is what this game is all about.

At the end of the day, it takes two big personalities to navigate this coaching life.

“But the thing we've always emphasized in our house is that coaching is something Jim does,” Shannon said. “It's not who he is.”

With that type of perspective, everyone wins.



JIM MORA INSTRUCTS DURING ONE OF THE MANY YOUTH FOOTBALL CLINICS HE HOSTS AT UCLA.



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CHIP OFF *the* OLD BLOCK

HOW REILY BUECHLER'S NBA FATHER SHAPED HER CAREER

By Michael Ventre

Just over a month after Reily Buechler was born on May 8, 1996, her father, Jud, won the first of three NBA championships as a member of the Chicago Bulls. Of course, she was much too tiny to celebrate. There's a chance she may have giddily danced around the living room after Jud's Bulls won again in '97 and '98, but that could just be because she was a happy toddler, or because she was moved to do so by Barney the Dinosaur.

In fact, Reily didn't really become aware of just who her father was and what place he had in professional sports — he was a reserve small forward on a team that boasted the likes of Michael Jordan, Scottie Pippen and Dennis Rodman, et al., and in total spent 12 seasons in the NBA — until much later, even though the family picked up and moved during her young life from Chicago to Detroit to Phoenix to Orlando.

"My parents didn't really flaunt the whole NBA thing with me I don't think," recalled the outside hitter for UCLA's women's volleyball team. "They never really told me why we were moving. I knew my dad played basketball but I didn't really know exactly why.

"When we moved back from Florida — he was on the Magic and then he retired that year when I was in second grade and we moved back to California — that's when I realized when people would say, 'Wow your dad played in the NBA' and I was like, 'Yeah I guess he did play in the NBA.' When other kids realized how important he was, that's when I realized how important he was as well."

Jud Buechler the basketball player had relatively little influence over his daughter Reily. But Jud Buechler the dad and Jud Buechler the volleyball player? In those regards, the native of Poway was a major player.

Jud Buechler was a basketball star at the University of Arizona, but also an All-American volleyball player. He introduced Reily to both sports, but volleyball just seemed to emerge naturally as the leader for her affection.

"When I was younger we would go to the beach all the time (26th Street in Del Mar) and just pass the beach volleyball around," she said. "My whole family played, so it was just in the blood. We'd either go down to the beach or in the backyard or go down to the gym. There was always a volleyball around."

Jud said he got his daughter started seriously with volleyball around age 9. "She was a very tall kid, one of the tallest in her class," he said of Reily, who today stands 6-foot-1. "When I retired from playing basketball we moved back to San Diego and I got her involved in a club team (for 10-year-old girls). Only three girls showed up. So we put her on the 11-year-old team. I wouldn't say we let her float into (volleyball), but we didn't take her kicking and screaming either."

Reily said she realized early in her days at Torrey Pines High School that not only was she was playing at a high level, but that she could take her game to the next level.

"I think it was when I was on this really good team when I was a sophomore in high school," she remembered, "and we had all the best



REILY BUECHLER LEARNED TO PLAY VOLLEYBALL FROM HER FATHER, ALL-AMERICAN JUD BUECHLER.

players. I was playing with Maddy Kerr (who plays for Cal), Steve Kerr's daughter, and another girl on the volleyball team here (at UCLA), Ryann Chandler. We all clicked very well and we started winning all these tournaments. We were going to the Junior Olympics and winning games. I said to myself, 'I can be with these girls and stay steady with them.'

"You look around when you're 16 years old and you see (coaches from) Washington and UCLA and Stanford. That's when you realize this is kind of serious," she added. "You say to yourself, 'This is where the big dogs play; this is where I need to actually improve and step up.'"

When it came time to decide on a college choice, it was really no contest, even though there were two prominent Wildcats lurking in her family (mom Lindsey was a star on the Arizona women's volleyball team).

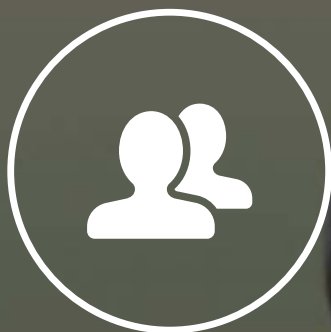
"I couldn't even get her to take a visit to Arizona," Jud explained. "She went to a UCLA camp when she was about 12 years old. It was the youngest age group that they would let stay overnight. She came back from that and said it was just amazing. She always wanted to go there, even from that point on. Even though she was recruited by a number of schools, we couldn't get her to go on other visits. I played basketball there (at Arizona), and her mother played volleyball there. But she wanted to blaze her own trail.



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"My choice came down to UCLA and Arizona, so I almost went to UCLA," Jud added. "She kind of had that focus that that's where she wanted to go to school."

Said Reily: "When I walked onto the campus of UCLA you realize, 'Wow, this is an unbelievable school.' It's absolutely beautiful. It's an amazing location in Westwood. It's 15 minutes away from the beach, fairly close to my family; (the family home is) only an hour and a half south of here. The academics are incredible. There are really good girls on the team. I was excited to be in a program that was accepting and wanted to win national championships."

But the transition from high school to college athletics comes with a serious adjustment period. Michael Sealy, head coach of the UCLA women's volleyball team, said generally one of the biggest issues with incoming players is accepting the fact that there will be setbacks along the way.

"I think more and more with this generation they have high expectations for themselves," Sealy said. "That's an amazing strength, but also an amazing weakness, not having patience for not being perfect at that moment. Reily has really been working hard at being OK when things don't go exactly right."

"It's not just Reily, but our team in general, in not being so critical of themselves. Not overthinking in a technical way. She has amazing abilities and she's getting really good at letting errors go and locking into the next play. She's much more conscious now."

Jud Buechler knows exactly what the coach means.

"For most of her career there wasn't a lot of failure," he explained. "She had one of the best high school careers anyone has ever had in San Diego County. So when you go to the next level, you're running into the same caliber of athlete and talented players. I've had to talk her through that — her mother did, too — because I had to deal with that. When you go to that next step, all of a sudden you're not as dominant, not as confident, because it's the next level, and that's kind of a shock to most kids going to college."

"It was easy for me to counsel her on that," Jud added. "This generation, like Coach Sealy said, they're all perfectionists, they all want it to go perfect all the time. That's not how sports work. Your true character shows when you struggle, when you've had a bad match, and how you respond to that."

The message must have been received, because Reily had a stellar freshman campaign last year, which resulted in her being selected All-Pac-12 Honorable Mention and was named to the Pac-12 All-Freshman team. She played in all 34 matches and was second among the Bruins with 2.92 kills and 3.18 points per set.

And in case you were wondering, Jud isn't the kind of Little League parent that harangues coaches for not playing his kid or for not using her right, or picks fights with other parents in the stands. He's always maintained a keen interest in his daughter's life and athletic career, but he's been the opposite of overbearing.

"Jud has been very hands-off," Sealy said. "He lets her figure out stuff on her own. I've known Jud a long, long time. His stepbrother is one of my best friends."



REILY BUECHLER HAS ENJOYED THE MENTORSHIP OF HER FATHER THROUGH HER VOLLEYBALL CAREER AT UCLA.

Growing up, Reily said Jud was a loving father, but when it came to coaching her in volleyball, he pushed her in a positive way to be the best she could be.

"He's really easy going," Reily said. "All the other girls on the team absolutely love him. He's just like a big old teddy bear. But if you have a coach who is your father, he's obviously going to be a little tougher on you than the other girls because he knows you can take it, because it's him and you're close. He was tough on me, but it was evenly distributed with the other girls as well."

Reily said Jud goes to all her matches, even the ones in far-flung corners of the Pac-12 like Pullman, Wash. "He's still very involved," she said. "He loves watching me play volleyball. He loves watching the girls I grew up playing with, especially me and the others who are close to his heart."

"I still train with him when I'm home for the summer and fall," she added. "He's always there."

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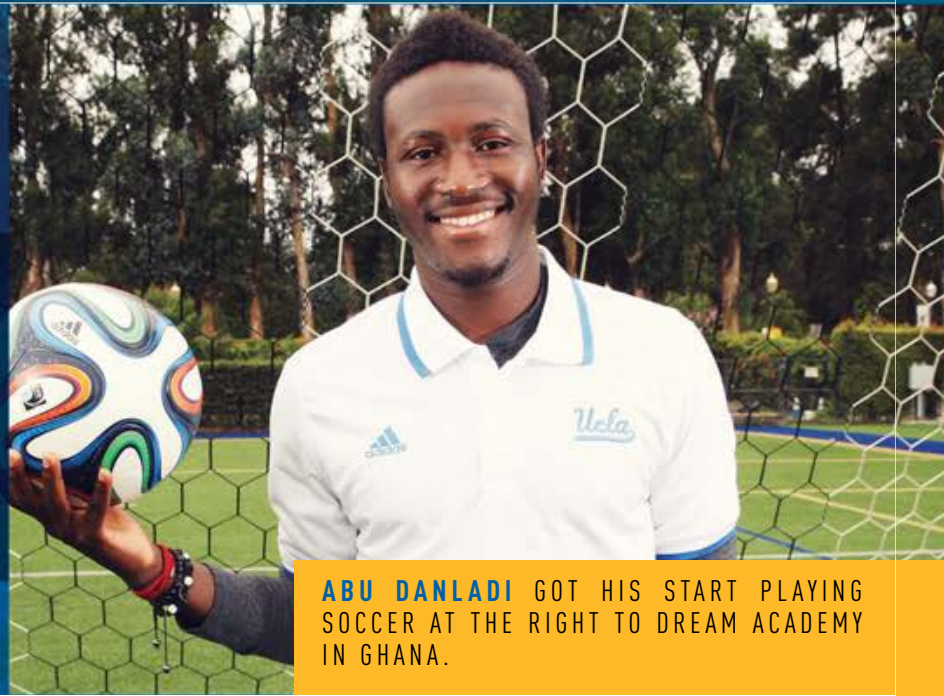
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THE RIGHT TO DREAM

ABU DANLADI'S AMAZING PATH
TO UCLA STARDOM



ABU DANLADI GOT HIS START PLAYING SOCCER AT THE RIGHT TO DREAM ACADEMY IN GHANA.

By Michael Ventre

Everybody has the right to dream. But not everyone always has the means to pursue a dream. When star UCLA striker Abu Danladi was a 12-year-old boy living in the city of Takoradi, Ghana, he heard about an organization called Right to Dream, which offered opportunities in both academics and soccer to young people. When he heard about a Right to Dream tryout in the area, he desperately wanted to go.

"I was in Ghana playing for a club team in my neighborhood," he explained. "There was a tryout. My coach told us about it and said it was going to be a team tryout, and everybody was really excited that our team would go play against other teams.

"But at the last minute, we got ready to go to the tryout and our coach told us it's not a team tryout anymore, more like individuals. So if you have money you can go, but if not you can do whatever you want. But he doesn't have the money to pay for everyone to go."

Fortunately for Danladi, a friend of his had a little money and offered to use

"AFTER THE WHOLE TWO-DAY TOURNAMENT WITH OVER 1,000 PLAYERS, I WAS THE ONLY ONE SELECTED TO GO TO THE RIGHT TO DREAM ACADEMY FROM MY REGION. IT WAS A REALLY GREAT FEELING."

it to buy one bus ticket for one seat. For two kids. Danladi sat on his friend's lap for the hour and 20 minute ride to the Right to Dream tryout.

"He doesn't even play soccer," he said of his friend. "He was just being a good friend and trying to help me out.

"None of my family knew I was gone," he added of his mother and father, four brothers and one sister. "It was just two boys taking a risk."

When they arrived, the tryout wasn't as advertised. Coaches from the surrounding areas brought their whole teams there. So it wasn't really for individuals after all.

But that didn't stop Danladi. He hopped into a line and participated anyway.

"The coach was like, 'You can join, but all my players have to play first.' So I had to wait in line. One of his players got hurt. I got put in the game and played for five minutes. I did really well.

"After the whole two-day tournament with over 1,000 players, I was the only one selected to go to the Right to Dream academy from my region. It was a really great feeling."

Call it confidence or chutzpah or just plain belief, but at 12, Danladi was convinced that he could go to that tryout and compete and stand out in a large crowd of other talented athletes, which is not common for one so young.

"I thought, 'What could go wrong?' he explained. "The worst that could happen is I go there and I don't get selected. I come back home and continue living my life. At the same time, I knew that I played against teams and I played against my friends and people had been giving me feedback since I was little. They talked to my brothers and would say, 'Your little brother is a good player and he has the talent to do great things.'"

His initial euphoria over being selected gave way to tears — albeit briefly — when he traveled the seven hours from his home to the Right to Dream academy. He was a 12-year-old kid, this was a new adventure and he knew nobody on it.

"When I went to Right to Dream, I was probably homesick for two weeks because I didn't know what to expect," he recalled. "I had never been to an academy. I had never left home. I had been in the same area for 12 years, and now I was leaving to go to the academy. I was in a car for a really long time and didn't know where I was going.

"When I got there," he added, "I got to meet all the guys who were doing the same thing as me. They left their homes, too. We were talking to each other, being really friendly. We played soccer together. The soccer part was great. I really enjoyed playing with guys who were good players who actually want to do this for a living. It was a great experience."

Danladi spent four and a half years at Right to Dream, working on his soccer game but also raising his academic abilities, which needed improvement. "When I was in Ghana I didn't get the chance to go to school full-time because every time I went to school I had to drop out because of fees," he said, "because of financial problems most of the time."

Then another dream opportunity came along. He was recruited to play and study at the Dunn School, a small private boarding institution in Los Olivos,



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“ I CAME DOWN TO UCLA AND LOOKED AT HOW THE TEAM PLAYED, AND THAT WAS JUST HOW I WANTED TO PLAY. JORGE (SALCEDO) IS A GREAT PERSON AND COACH. HE’S A COACH WHO CARES ABOUT HIS PLAYERS. ”

just outside Santa Barbara, that had welcomed previous athletes from Ghana.

“The first time being at Dunn was different for me,” he said, “being at a school with all white people. I thought, ‘This is crazy. Who am I?’ But everybody was very nice, very friendly, willing to come to you and talk to you. They really wanted to learn about where you were from. They wanted to learn about what you want to do. The teachers were really willing to help you out when you were in need of help. That was really big.”

Danladi played for the Dunn School and eventually also played for a club team in Santa Barbara. His reputation grew. More attention came his way.

“After my sophomore year, beginning of my junior year, I started getting interest from colleges,” he said. “There were a lot of colleges emailing my host dad (Abu lived with Cris Avery and his wife, Helena, who is on the staff at Dunn) saying, ‘Oh, we’re really interested in Abu. We want him to come visit.’ They’d show up at my games and tournaments.

“There were showcases with my club,” he continued. “That’s when coaches came down to see me play and became really interested. They were telling me I could fit in their program somehow and help their team out.”

It also didn’t hurt his cause that Abu was named Gatorade National Boys Soccer Player of the Year after his 2013-14 season at Dunn.

Nick Carlin-Voigt, an assistant coach with the UCLA men’s soccer team and one of the top recruiters in the nation, began showing up at Abu’s performances.

“Nick came to my games and spoke to me,” Danladi said. “He’s a great guy, humble and honest. That’s the type of person I wanted to be around. He actually told me what I needed to work on, what they would need from me as a player to join their program.

“I came down to UCLA and looked at how the team played, and that was just how I wanted to play,” he added. “(Head coach) Jorge (Salcedo) is a great person and coach. He’s a coach who cares about his players as people and how they carry themselves. The coaches showed me the school through the recruiting process. ‘It’s California. Perfect weather.’”

Last season for the Bruins, Danladi scored five goals and posted six assists, receiving numerous All-Freshman honors and being named All-Pac-12 Honorable Mention, as UCLA marched to the College Cup (men’s Division I NCAA soccer final) before falling to Virginia, 0-0 (4-2 in penalty kicks).

Although the Bruins lost Leo Stolz (MAC Hermann Trophy winner as national player of the year), Earl Edwards Jr. and Aaron Simmons from last

year, they continue to have high hopes for the upcoming campaign. And a more experienced Danladi will benefit their efforts tremendously.

“He’s one of the most electric and dynamic players we’ve had at UCLA,” said Salcedo, a former UCLA All-American entering his 12th season as the Bruins’ head coach. “He has really every physical attribute that you need to have to be a prominent and prolific goal scorer. Abu is quick, fast and strong, and he has a great tenacity and desire to score goals. He’s someone who next year could be one of the top strikers in the whole country if we can keep him healthy, keep him fresh and ready for games. He’ll have a really good year.”

Last season Abu struggled with a badly pulled hamstring that he suffered early in the season. Then he reinjured it later in the year.

But it’s a credit to his buoyant personality that he managed to have a productive year nonetheless. Salcedo said he’s just that kind of kid, and part of his positive makeup is likely the result of coming from humble beginnings and struggling and working hard to get to the dream situation he’s currently in.

“The thing about Abu that’s impressive is that he’s a very talented player, but it’s also his perspective and outlook on life and the way he appreciates what he has and where he’s at,” Salcedo explained. “He appreciates the little things that maybe aren’t so easy to come by.

“He has a real charming personality,” Salcedo continued. “He’s charismatic, he has an infectious laugh, a great smile and I think guys appreciate him and like him, like his personality. Obviously everybody comes from different backgrounds, and we don’t always fully understand how to get to where we get to in life. But I think guys appreciate what he’s accomplished so far.”

Salcedo said he thinks Danladi has the potential to be “a fantastic professional player” and could even someday — if he becomes an American citizen — play for the U.S. national team.

Danladi said he has only been able to go home to Ghana once in the past four years. But he calls his mom and dad and siblings regularly. And someday he’d like to use his stature in the game of soccer to provide breaks to youngsters in Ghana looking for a chance at a better life, like the one he has now.

“It’s getting better there. Right to Dream even has a girls program now,” he said. “People are knowing the benefits of trying to help other people. That’s my goal, too, because being here I got the opportunity to come here, and a lot of people want to be in my shoes right now. So I have to make sure I share that and make other people get the kind of opportunities someone gave me.”



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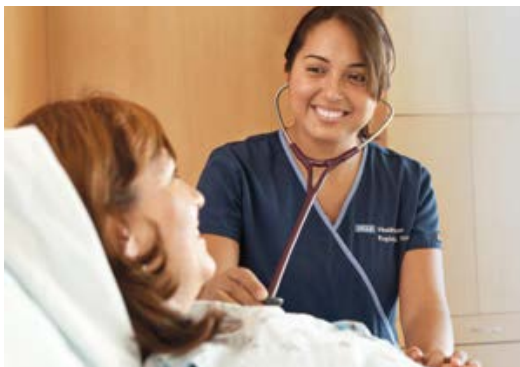
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Most people in your line of work aren't fortunate enough to be at the same place for 27 years. Talk about what kept you at Virginia Tech for so long.

It was a very unique and special time at Virginia Tech. The athletics program made the move to the Big East and eventually the ACC. I had the honor of working with football coach Frank Beamer, who has become the winningest active coach in football and a true legend in the sport. During my tenure there, Virginia Tech went to 21 straight bowl games, including eight BCS Bowls and an appearance in the National Championship game. And I had the chance to call the games of Michael Vick and so many other remarkable players. It was a very exciting time.

What ultimately played into your decision to make the move to UCLA after such a long and storied career in Blacksburg?

Well, as I've said, if I ever was going to leave Virginia Tech, it would be for a very special and unique place, and UCLA is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. UCLA attracts the best faculty, students, coaches and athletes. It has an unmatched tradition with more NCAA titles than any other school in history and a commitment to building championship teams and championship people. That was very attractive and exciting for me. And with the Rose Bowl and Pauley Pavilion, UCLA has two of the most iconic venues in sports. Jim Mora and Steve Alford are building such successful programs. And Dan Guerrero has made a commitment to that success. I think it's just a great time to be a Bruin. From a personal standpoint, I have family members throughout Southern California and the Los Angeles area

who I'm eager to re-connect with on a consistent basis and we've been able to do that this summer. So that was a major factor too. There have been some great broadcasters here over the years at UCLA as well. I mentioned to Dan that it's similar to being the conductor of the Boston Pops. There's a tremendous honor and responsibility for the person holding that baton in Boston, and there's an honor and responsibility to hold the microphone in Westwood. I feel very fortunate to have been given this opportunity by IMG and the UCLA administration.

You graduated from the famed Newhouse School of Communication at Syracuse University, a program which has turned out many big names including Mike Tirico (ESPN), Bob Costas (NBC) and Marv Albert (CBS) to name a few. Why has that program been so successful in producing such successful broadcasters?

I think Syracuse University's reputation initially attracts people who want to get into the sports broadcasting field. So there's a head-start simply because people are aware of the school's track record. The Newhouse academic programs and the opportunities for students to get on the air are remarkable. The campus radio station, WAER-FM, allows undergraduates to broadcast football and basketball games, host talk shows and anchor sportscasts. All of us who have come through that program have had the opportunity to gain valuable experience there, to learn and grow and push each other. And then following graduation, the network of alumni in the business is strong, both on the air and behind the scenes, which helps many of us in our career paths as well.



BILL ROTH & MEN'S BASKETBALL COACH STEVE ALFORD FOLLOWING ROTH'S WELCOME CEREMONY IN PAULEY PAVILION ON APRIL 24.

When did you know that you wanted to get into radio, and who are some of the broadcasters you admired when coming up in the business?

Oh, being a broadcaster for a team is really all I wanted to do since I was about 9 years old. I really enjoy building relationships with players, coaches and fans. In terms of broadcasters I've admired, I would put Vin Scully at the top of my list for so many reasons. I enjoyed Jack Buck, who called St. Louis Cardinals games, many of the broadcasters in my hometown of Pittsburgh, and two people you mentioned, Bob Costas and Mike Tirico. I feel like I learn something new every time I listen to Bob and Mike call a game.

How would you describe your style of broadcasting, and what are some of the things that Bruin fans can look forward to hearing when listening to basketball and football broadcasts?

We all got together earlier this spring — Matt Stevens and Wayne Cook, who I'm so excited to work with on the football broadcasts, and Tracy Murray, who will be with me on the basketball calls. We want to have exciting, descriptive and accurate broadcasts. Most of all, we want to build a really good 'broadcast team.' We hope Bruin fans are just as proud of their broadcast team as they are of their teams on the fields, courts and pools. I like to have a very conversational broadcast that's a comfortable listen for everyone who joins us during the course of a game. We want to have a classy broadcast that represents this school. That would be the main goal.

You grew up in Pittsburgh, Pa. How much were you aware of UCLA's athletic tradition while living on the East Coast?

Very much so. UCLA is a national program, and I remember seeing so many games and incredible players on TV at Pauley and the Rose Bowl over the years. It was really exciting to finally walk into both venues this spring, see the banners and really feel the tradition.

Since accepting the job in April, what are some of the things you have done to prepare for the upcoming season?

Well, I've tried to meet as many people in the Bruin family as I could, both inside athletics and many of our fans and alums. We had a great turnout in Dana Point back in June for the Bruins at the Beach event, and it was exciting to spend the evening with some former players and Orange County Bruins. In terms of this year's team, I have visited with some of our coaches and I've read a lot. I joked earlier that, in a way, I feel like I'm prepping for the GRE, as I'm essentially reading everything I can get my hands on as we get set for kickoff in September.

Moving from a town like Blacksburg (pop. 43,609) to Los Angeles has to be a huge transition. How are you acclimating to life in LA?

It's been really invigorating. Having so much family out here helps. And I've spent a lot of time on the West Coast over the years. My sister lived in Laguna Beach for over 25 years, and I spent a lot of time visiting her and my family in Encino and Calabasas over the years. So I was somewhat familiar with the area and how great it is. I will say that the Waze App has been HUGE in helping me navigate through the LA traffic. It's such a privilege to be here and I'm so thankful to IMG and the UCLA administration to have received such a warm welcome into the Bruin family.

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DAVID & JANET ELLIS NOW GIVE BACK TO THEIR ALMA MATER THROUGH THE ATHLETICS' COURTESY VEHICLE PROGRAM.

They have a symbiotic relationship — one could even say a mutual love affair — with UCLA. They both received their education and made many friends there, and have an ongoing, long relationship with the Athletics Department, among other departments, at the university. In fact, they even met at UCLA, right at the front desk at Sproul Hall. But Janet and David Ellis still have a lot more miles to travel on their UCLA road, and intend on doing so for as long as they can.

Janet and David are similar in many ways, yet began their respective lives and affiliation with UCLA quite differently. David is from Orange County and didn't exactly decide on UCLA for purely academic reasons.

"One of the main reasons I came to UCLA was the basketball program," said David. "I chose this school because of basketball. It was the only university I applied to, and when I got here I wanted to major in business, but found out that [UCLA] didn't have a business major, so I majored in Econ. My first year at UCLA was the last year that [Coach] Wooden coached and won his 10th national championship. So basically, I chose UCLA because of basketball."

Janet, on the other hand, hails from the Bay Area and frankly, didn't even know UCLA had a basketball team.

"I grew up in northern California and wanted to go away for school," said Janet. "I had never visited UCLA and the first time I saw it was when I came

down for orientation. I was 18 years old and fresh out of high school. It was the only university I applied to."

Their approaches to attending UCLA may have been different, yet they left with the same result: both are true blue, dyed-in-the-wool Bruins. In fact, so are a lot of their family members.

"We can count 10 relatives who have graduated from UCLA," said Janet. "There's David's older brother, my brother and sister, my brother-in-law, my uncle, my nephew, and our sons, John and Joey. And the two of us make 10."

The Ellises insist that these are the family members who went to UCLA "so far." Both Janet and David declare that when they have grandchildren, they are expecting them to attend UCLA.

"I don't want to say we brainwashed our kids, but they grew up hearing all of our UCLA stories and wearing UCLA gear from a young age," added Janet. "We never dressed them in red."

Like many of their stories, David and Janet's story of how they met originated early in their UCLA lives.

"I worked at Sproul Hall overseeing the front desk for orientation," David recalled. "It's not like it is now with students having card keys that they just swipe; then we would watch the front door to see who was coming in and out. We used to play vinyl records while watching the door."

"When I came to UCLA for my orientation, I walked into Sproul Hall,"

said Janet. “The very first person I met when I entered the building was David. Not the first guy I met, but the first person I met. I was checking into my dorm and didn’t know anybody. We got married the summer between my junior and senior year after David had graduated. That was unheard of back then.”

Most of all, Janet and David couldn’t be more proud of their two sons, both of whom attended UCLA. John graduated in 2006 and continued the Bruin tradition by attending UCLA Law School, earning his J.D. degree in 2009. Joey was a student-athlete on the Bruin men’s basketball team and graduated in 2009. Joey’s UCLA connection, particularly with basketball, began at a young age.

“I took Joey to the first and second rounds [of the NCAA tournament] in Boise in 1995,” said David. “He was 9 years old, and it was the game where Tyus [Edney] made the game-winning shot in 4.8 seconds. To think that Joey saw that game then eventually played on the [Bruin] basketball team is incredible.”

“A few years after the ’95 championship, Joey was a ball boy,” added Janet. “David and I went to every game anyway and we took our kids with us. We’ve had football and basketball season tickets since we graduated.”

David and Janet don’t, however, have a “perfect score” with their children attending UCLA; their daughter, Caroline Ellis Craun, broke with tradition and graduated from the University of Oregon.

“It’s OK,” said David. “We still let her come home.”

In reality, Caroline is now learning the car business, and is working with her father at his Glendale Dodge Chrysler Jeep dealership. Formerly working at a nonprofit organization whose aim is to create opportunities for employment and leadership development for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, she is now going back and forth to Detroit to take classes to learn all parts of the car business.

The Ellis family’s relationship with UCLA is far more than having many family members who graduated from the university. In fact, David and Janet consider themselves not only a part of the university-wide Bruin family, but a part of the Athletics Department. This close-knit relationship goes back to the establishment of UCLA Athletics’ Courtesy Vehicle Program.

In this competitive age of college athletics, the Courtesy Vehicle Program has become a necessity for every NCAA Division I athletics program. It is comprised of car dealers who generously provide courtesy cars to coaches and top administrators of the Athletics Department. The program is an important part in attracting and retaining quality coaches and athletics personnel by providing a personal benefit for them. In order to attract the very best coaches and administrators, it is important to be able to offer them the use of a courtesy vehicle. In this respect, because he loves UCLA, David has gone above and beyond generosity to the program.

“Through the car program, I’ve gotten to know a lot of the people in the Athletics Department,” said David. “I’ve built relationships over the years with many people there from Development to Event Management. And of course I have relationships with those [employees] who drive my cars. It’s about having a passion for something — UCLA — that has me coming back. I just want to support UCLA.”

David is by far the longest-standing car dealer in the program. That

relationship goes back to 1981 when the Courtesy Vehicle Program was in its infancy.

“I’d been at my own dealership for about a year, and one day [then Associate Athletic Director] Glenn Toth walked into my dealership and started to explain the program to me,” David recalled. “I interrupted him before he could finish and said, ‘I’m a UCLA guy — I’m in!’ So I gave him a car [for the program] on the spot. Now the department has six cars of mine in the program.”

David comes by the car dealer business honestly. His father, Jack Ellis, started in the car business in the early 1960s, where the Ellis family owned stores serving the San Fernando Valley. Fifty years and much expansion later, David is now President of David Ellis Chrysler Jeep, Fiat of Glendale, and Glendale Dodge Chrysler Jeep.

“My father got me into the car business. I was selling cars on the weekends when I was still at UCLA,” David said. “That’s how I got my start. That and pumping gas.”

Being in the Courtesy Vehicle Program is not without benefits. Because he is the car dealer with the most cars in the program, David and Janet both have gotten to travel on several away football games, flying with the UCLA football team and coaches.

Besides going on away football trips, car dealers in the program receive credit towards their Wooden Athletic Fund membership. This affords them benefits such as priority for football and men’s basketball season tickets, invitations to sit in the Athletic Department’s suite in Donahue Pavilion for home games at the Rose Bowl, and to events throughout the year — including the exclusive Director’s Dinner — as well as complimentary admission to all UCLA olympic sport home games. They also get premium benefits such as a personalized parking space at the Rose Bowl and valet parking in Pauley Pavilion for home men’s basketball games.

“We drove to campus and pulled into [campus parking] Lot 7,” said Janet. “The spaces we were allowed to park in were all the best spots. I didn’t think we — as donors — were THAT good!”

“My relationship with the car program has blown up in the last five to ten years,” David recalled. “There used to be more dealers in the program but once the recession hit, a lot of them had to drop out. I started out with one or two cars in the program, and now I have six.

“During the downturn many car dealers had to pull their cars and I would get a call for a new car,” said David. “I would always oblige — mostly because basically I can’t say no to UCLA.

“We’re like the small hardware store in the mix with chains like Home Depot and Lowe’s, so I recently did a TV commercial to remind people that we’re a family-owned store,” said David. “So many dealerships have merged and become giant groups, where we’ve stayed ‘family friendly.’ Like a local shop, it’s nice for them to know they can come in or call me anytime. Individual dealers are going by way of the dodo. But that’s the business and the way it is now.”

It goes without saying that UCLA Athletics is appreciative of everything they have done. Whether they have a giant conglomerate or a “Mom and Pop” type store, we know that David and Janet Ellis will always be a big part of the Bruin family.



UCLA ATHLETICS COURTESY VEHICLE PROGRAM

The UCLA Athletics Courtesy Vehicle Program is a unique avenue of support that assists UCLA in retaining some of the nation's most talented coaches. We would like to thank the auto dealerships below that proudly support UCLA Athletics and our coaches. We ask that you consider one of these valued supporters of UCLA Athletics to assist you in any of your automotive needs.

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MEN'S SOCCER VS. NEW MEXICO

Last year's NCAA Runner-Up Bruins host Mountain West power New Mexico in their season opener at Drake Stadium on Aug. 29. The Lobos will have revenge on their minds, as UCLA escaped Albuquerque with a 2-1 victory last year before more than 5,000 fans at the UNM Soccer Complex.

Game Time: 4 p.m. / Tickets: \$8 Adult; \$5 Youth

WOMEN'S SOCCER VS. VIRGINIA

These two teams have knocked each other out in the postseason the last two years. The Bruins won on penalty kicks in the 2013 semifinals, eventually going on to win the title. Virginia, the 2014 NCAA Runner-Up, exacted revenge in the form of a 2-1 win in last year's quarterfinals at Drake Stadium.

Game Time: 7 p.m. / Tickets: \$8 Adult; \$5 Youth



FOOTBALL VS. VIRGINIA

This year marks the second year in a row that UCLA and Virginia have met in the season opener, with the Bruins posting a 28-20 victory over the Cavaliers last season in Charlottesville, Va. Head coach Mike London and the Hoos posted some solid wins in 2014, downing the likes of Louisville, Pitt and ACC power Miami.

Game Time: 12:30 p.m. / Tickets: 310-UCLA-WIN

WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL VS. USC

The Bruins knocked off their crosstown rival twice last season, the first time they accomplished the feat since 2009, and will look to continue their winning ways against the Trojans in the Pac-12 opener for both teams at Pauley Pavilion.

Match Time: 7:30 p.m. / Tickets: \$8 Adult; \$5 Youth



MEN'S WATER POLO VS. CAL

UCLA, the defending NCAA Champions, host perennial power California in the MPSF home opener at Spieker Aquatics Center on Oct. 24. The Golden Bears have only beaten the Bruins once in the last six meetings (since 2012).

Match Time: TBA / Free Admission



Rich Bertolucci

1959-2015

In Memoriam

UCLA Athletics lost cherished colleague and longtime friend Rich Bertolucci on July 28. Known affectionately as 'Bert,' he worked in the Sports Information Office for 34 years. He was the managing editor of Bruin Blue since its start in 2005 and passed away after battling cancer for the better part of five years. He refused to let this illness keep him from the job he loved and worked tirelessly through the 2014-15 academic year.



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