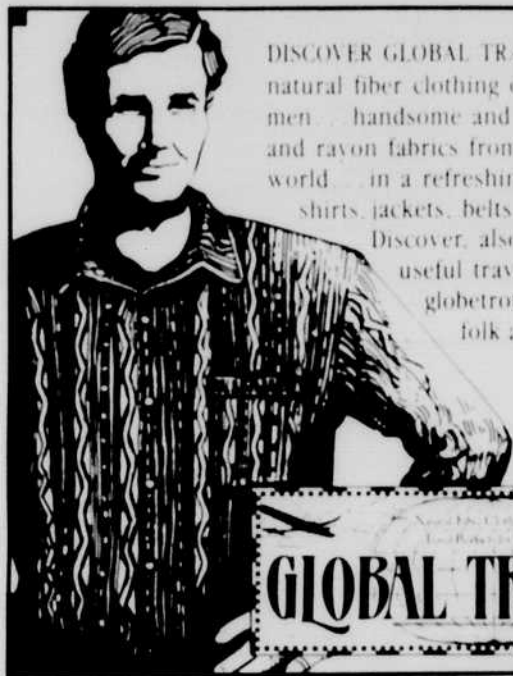


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GLOBAL TRAVELER

USC might be team to 'three-peat'

By Thomas Prowell
Emerald Editor

One day, Southern California won't be winning all the nation's championships.

It may happen sooner than you think, too. The Dodgers are also-rans. The Lakers folded up like a cardboard sunscreen when the Pistons came to play. Even with Gretzky, the Kings are no hockey powerhouse.

That leaves only the Pacific-10 Conference football teams, USC and UCLA, both of whom have to replace their starting quarterbacks, Rodney Peete and Troy Aikman, respectively.

One Southern California "three-peat" bid has been foiled already this year. Will it happen again? Here's the *Emerald's* Pac-10 predictions.



1 — USC Down at USC, they're talking not of winning the Pac-10, but of taking the national title away from Notre Dame. One can see why they're bored with the local competition — the Trojans have a 15-1 conference record over the last two seasons.

The line and secondary are both reinforced-steel tough (built for the earthquakes, naturally). USC is likely to just mercilessly grind down its opponents. Chris Hale is the league's top cornerback; Tim Ryan and Don Gibson are brutal on the line. With hulking muggers like these, who needs a QB? You could put Barbara Bush in there and she'd still lead this team to the Rose Bowl.



2 — UCLA The Bruins lost more to graduation than did the Trojans, but there's still a great team here. A bowl invitation and a Top 20 finish seem more than reasonable.

The offensive line is tops, and it'll give explosive backs Brian Brown, Shawn Wills and Kevin Williams plenty of rushing

room. A strong running game will take some of the pressure off the new QB, either Jimmy Bonds or Bret Johnson.



3 — Arizona The Wildcats are quick on both offense and defense. Offensive coordinator Kip Scherer's new passing game should give running QB Ronald Veal another weapon; last year Arizona was first in rushing, last in passing.

The home schedule also gives the 'Cats something to purr about — the school hosts both the Trojans and Bruins. Arizona will be looking to upset, and they could just do it on this field. Are you paying attention, UCLA?



4 — Oregon Over the last five years, the Ducks are exactly a .500 ballclub. Not only that, their season records for the last five campaigns are 6-5, 5-6, 5-6, 6-5 and 6-6. Does America's most mediocre sports team play at Autzen Stadium?

The Ducks will spend this year again trying to prove they can get over the hump, and they'll have to do it against a tougher slate of opponents. But the tools are there for coach Rich Brooks to snatch the grail.

Much has been made about the team returning its offensive squad virtually intact, but that offensive squad ranked ninth in yards per game last year. Much also has been made about the fact that Oregon doesn't play USC this year, and that is something to appreciate.

But again, it seems likely that any bowl hopes will rest on the defense, an Oregon strength the last two years but a big question this season. David Cusano and Chris Oldham are the foundations of a squad that must replace half of its starters.

A bold prediction: Brilliant but accident-prone junior QB Bill Musgrave will stay healthy

Turn to Predictions, Page 9D

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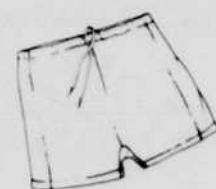
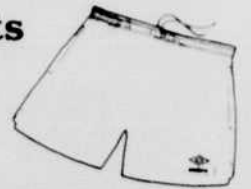
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