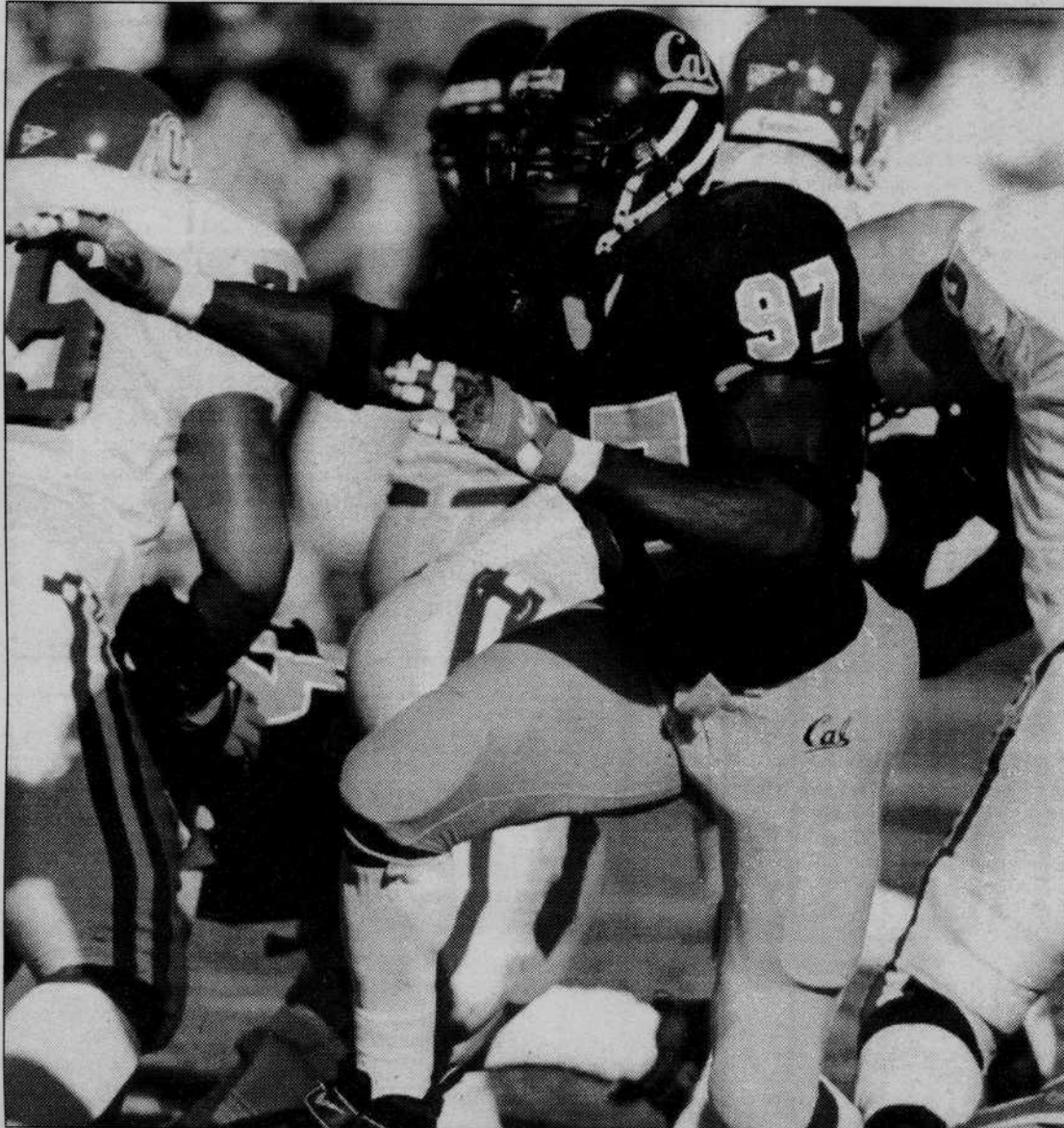


Cal is 'excited' about heading into Autzen



Cal defensive lineman Andre Carter is the "best player in the country," according to Oregon State head coach Dennis Erickson. Courtesy of California Media Services

■ Led by a sophomore quarterback, the improving Bears look to end the Ducks' home winning streak

By Adam Jude
Oregon Daily Emerald

With their hopes of a bowl berth gone, the California Golden Bears have their paws ready to ruin the Ducks' unbeaten conference record and upset the country's sixth-ranked team in its own backyard.

Although the Bears (3-6 overall, 2-4 Pacific-10 Conference) haven't won in Eugene since 1987, they do hold an all-time series advantage against the Ducks, 35-26-2. Oregon, however, has won the last four meetings, including last year's 24-19 win in Berkeley.

Coming off a close 38-32 loss to Oregon State and a near upset two weeks ago in Seattle, Cal is eager to finally put some wins on the board.

"They're just excited about this opportunity," Cal coach Tom Holmoe said of his players. "They respect Oregon and what they have accomplished. They realize it's a very difficult challenge, but they're up for it."

The Bears have owned the state of California this season, picking up their only two conference victories against UCLA and USC.

On the defensive side of the ball, Cal presents one of the toughest matchups in the country in senior lineman Andre Carter, who holds the school record for most sacks with 28.5.

"Andre Carter is the best player in the country — that's just my opinion," Oregon State head coach Dennis Erickson said after last week's contest. "I'm surprised he's not in the Lombardi Award race [for best defensive lineman]. When you play Cal,

you've got to get ready for Carter."

Cal also boasts the best punter in college history in Nick Harris, who set the NCAA record for total punting yards last week. The senior kicked for an average of 45.5 yards on eight punts versus the Beavers, pushing his career total to 13,161 yards. It is likely that the senior from Avondale, Ariz., will be drafted into the National Football League next year.

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Tom Holmoe
Cal coach

"After the Illinois game [a nationally televised game in which he put nine punts inside the 20], all the agents started calling me," Harris told the Contra Costa Times. "I know there is a spot at the table for me. I know I can sit there."

Offensively, the Bears are near the bottom in most of the major Pac-10 statistics. Starting quarterback Kyle Boller is averaging just 192 yards per game through the air, which is ninth in the league, while the team scores an average of 22 points per game.

But things are starting to look up for a program that has had little success in recent years.

Over the last four games, the Bears

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