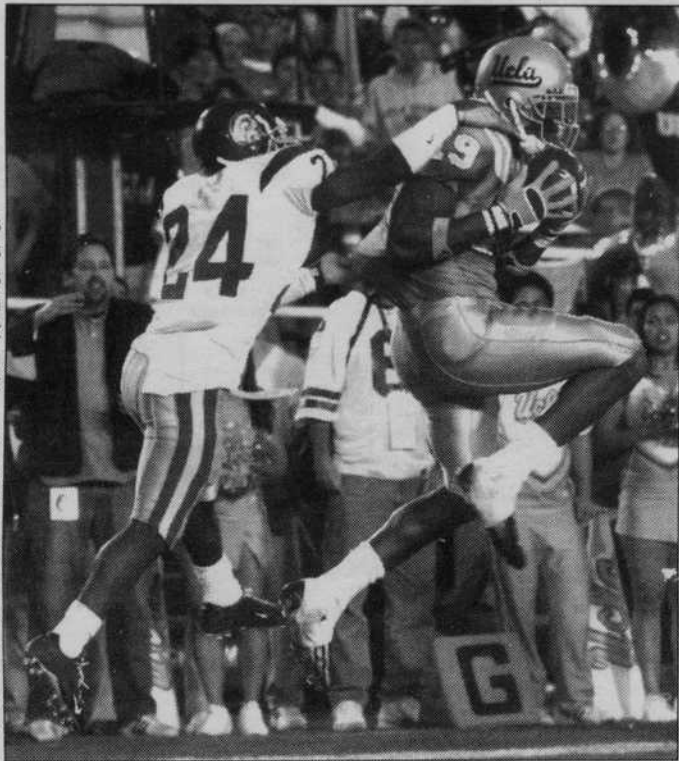


■ Pac-10 game of the week



UCLA's Marshawn Lewis hauls in a catch last season against USC. Lewis and the No. 20 Bruins will host Marshawn Lynch and No. 10 California Saturday at the Rose Bowl.

COURTESY

# Bruins aim to prove status as contenders, not as mirage

*Tenth-ranked Cal needs a win in Pullman to keep an unblemished record before facing ASU next week*

BY JEFFREY DRANSFELDT  
SPORTS REPORTER

Maybe UCLA football isn't quite a superpower yet, as prognosticators have been predicting after a three-game winning streak and a dominating performance against Oklahoma, or maybe that's just what UCLA wants its competitors to think.

The 21-17 win against Washington last Saturday, which earned UCLA its fourth win and maintained its undefeated status, hardly came easy. Washington (1-4 overall, 0-2 conference) entered last Saturday's game coming off blowout losses to Cal (56-17) and Notre Dame (36-17), sandwiching a 34-6 win over Idaho in between.

Now, though, comes UCLA's next test as No. 10 Cal visits the Rose Bowl Saturday, with game time set for 4:30 p.m. on TBS.

If UCLA can beat Cal, its next four games will come against Washington State, Oregon State, Stanford and Arizona, teams with combined records of eight and eight. The Washington State game should come with a disclaimer — it's played in Pullman, Wash., a notoriously difficult place to play.

It's a stretch run that, if UCLA plays well, could have them undefeated for games against No. 17 Arizona State and cross-town rival No. 1 USC.

Many didn't think No. 20 UCLA would be thinking big at this point of the season, but coach Karl Dorrell thought otherwise.

"We've been trying to keep the big picture from the very beginning," Dorrell said. "We envisioned

ourselves being in this position at this point of the season."

Cal has started 5-0 for the first time since 1996 and only the fifth time since 1950.

"They are a top-10 team and they are playing like a top-10 team right now," Dorrell said. "So our challenge this week is to shore up our fundamentals and get ourselves back to playing the caliber of football that we're capable of playing."

To do that, UCLA will need quarterback Drew Olson to regain his effectiveness to avenge last year's blowout loss (45-28) in Berkeley.

The same early season rhythm that allowed Olson to throw for 296 yards against Rice and 314 yards against Oklahoma.

In UCLA's slow start against Washington, Olson still managed to complete 29 of 44 passes for 287 yards and two touchdowns — though he tossed his first two interceptions of the season.

On the ground, tailback Maurice Drew, who averages 77.8 yards per game, ran for only 33 Saturday. He did, however, help UCLA recover from a 17-7 fourth-quarter deficit, scoring the go-ahead touchdown with 1:08 remaining.

Against Cal, UCLA's run defense will be tested again after allowing Washington to run for 213 yards, led

by Louis Rankin with 109.

Cal running back Marshawn Lynch played against Arizona for the first time since breaking his pinkie finger against Washington two weeks prior. The 5-foot-11-inch, 215-pound Lynch, who is comparable to UCLA speedster Drew, rushed for 107 yards.

It was the 17th consecutive game that Cal has had a 100-yard rusher.

Cal was able to plug in Justin Forsett in Lynch's absence. The sophomore Forsett is averaging 117 yards per game and had 74 yards against Arizona.

Arizona tried stopping Cal's running game last week and failed in a 28-0 loss.

"It wasn't for a lack of working that we allowed their success," Arizona defensive end Copeland Bryan said. "They are just really good."

*"There will be no problem getting up for this particular game with both teams being undefeated."*

KARL DORRELL | UCLA head coach

Combine that with improved play

from quarterback Joe Ayoub, who failed to complete a pass in 10 attempts against Sacramento State in the season opener. Last Saturday he was solid, completing 14 of 20 passes for 137 yards and two touchdowns. He ran in a third touchdown on a 1-yard run.

It's a two-pronged attack that will challenge UCLA and go a long way toward proving whether the Bruins are contenders or a mirage.

"There will be no problem getting up for this particular game with both teams being undefeated," Dorrell said.

[jdransfeldt@dailyemerald.com](mailto:jdransfeldt@dailyemerald.com)

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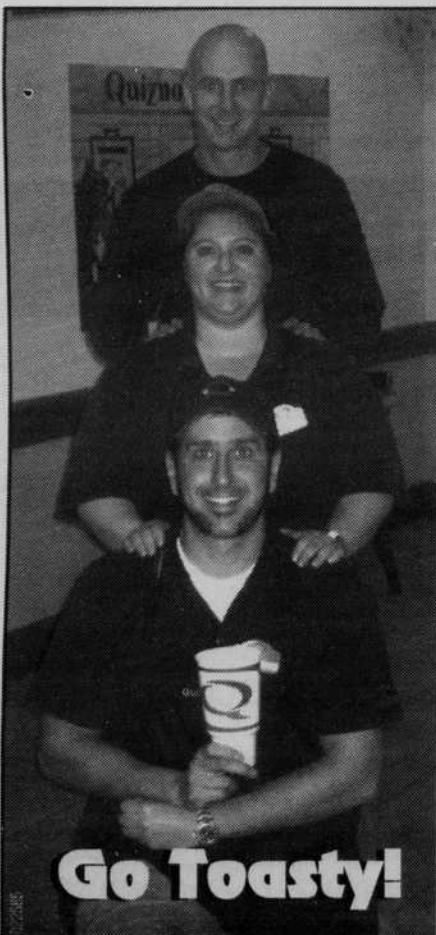
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