

Around the Pac-12: Injuries lead to shuffling QBs

By ANNE M. PETERSON
Associated Press

The nickname Conference of Quarterbacks has taken on a new meaning as injuries have led to a revolving door between starters and backups for many Pac-12 teams.

From USC reaching down into its depth chart, to the absences of established veterans K.J. Costello at Stanford and Khalil Tate at Arizona, this has been a rough season for quarterbacks.

Eighteen different quarterbacks have started games so far this season in the league, compared to 20 for all last season.

One of the newcomers is Devon Modster, who is taking the reins at California (4-1, 1-2) while Chase Garbers recovers from an apparent shoulder injury. Garbers is out indefinitely.

Modster, a UCLA transfer who had to sit out Cal's first three games after committing to the Golden Bears in December, was pressed into service when Garbers was injured during a 24-17 loss at home to Arizona State. Modster struggled, throwing for 23 yards and an interception in the end zone.

He fared better last weekend, when Cal put up a fight against No. 13 Oregon at Aut-



AP Photo/Chris Pietsch

California quarterback Devon Modster, right, looks down field for an open receiver against Oregon during the first quarter of an NCAA college football game on Saturday in Eugene.

zen Stadium before falling 17-7. Modster threw for 190 yards and the Golden Bears' lone touchdown of the game. But he also threw two picks.

"I thought he handled himself really well. There were a couple of throws in there that he can make, that we didn't quite connect on, but I thought he was calm, I thought his demeanor was good," Cal coach Justin Wilcox said. "I think he's going to keep improving the more that

he plays."

The Golden Bears have a bye this weekend.

A look at some of the other teams that have faced injuries at QB:

USC: The Trojans are the most extreme example when it comes to the position. Sophomore JT Daniels started in the opener against Fresno State but he was injured in the first half and needed season-ending surgery to repair a torn ACL. Freshman Kedon

Slovic made his debut in a surprise victory the next week over Stanford, throwing for 377 yards and three TDs. But then Slovic was knocked out of USC's game at home against Utah with a concussion, forcing the Trojans to turn to third-string QB Matt Fink.

Fink led the team to victory against the Utes but struggled in a 28-14 loss to Washington with three interceptions.

The junior had been on the brink of transferring at the start of the summer but decided to stick it out.

"I did some research, I went to some schools. Had some unofficial visits and an official visit with Illinois and met some great coaches and great players and built some good relationships. But this team is stacked. You have the best players in the nation here. I'm saying that SC is on the rise," Fink said. "We have guys that are going to push us to the top here."

It is likely Slovic will return this weekend when USC (3-2, 2-1) visits No. 9 Notre Dame on Saturday.

Stanford: Davis Mills has started a pair of games for Costello, including last Saturday's 23-13 upset of Washington. Mills threw for 293 yards and a touchdown in the game but came out in the fourth quarter with what appeared to be a calf injury, making way for sophomore Jack West.

On Tuesday, Stanford coach David Shaw provided a preliminary update for the Oct. 17 game against UCLA: Mills is in pain but there's no major damage so he'll be questionable for the game, as will Costello. West will take most of the reps in practice in the coming days.

Arizona: The Wildcats

weathered the one-game absence of Tate when freshman Grant Gunnell took over and threw for 352 yards and a touchdown in a 20-17 victory over UCLA. Tate returned last weekend from an ankle and hamstring injury and threw for a career-high 404 yards and three touchdowns in a 35-30 win on the road over Colorado.

Arizona (4-1, 2-0) hosts Washington (4-2, 1-2) on Saturday.

UCLA: Sophomore Austin Burton made his first start in the Bruins' 48-31 loss at home to Oregon State last weekend. He threw for 236 yards and a touchdown, while also running for a score, in place of Dorian Thompson-Robinson, who was knocked out of the loss to the Wildcats the week before with an apparent ankle injury.

"Did OK. I think I left some plays on the field, moved the ball, and I know we had some long drives. But at the end of the day, it comes down to winning and losing as a quarterback," Burton said. "Especially as the quarterback, you have to be the leader of the team, and I personally don't think I got the job done."

The Bruins (1-5, 1-2) have a bye this weekend before visiting Stanford on Oct. 17.

USA softball coach: '20 team resembles '04 Olympic champs

By CLIFF BRUNT
Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY — Ken Eriksen has flashbacks when he looks at the U.S. Olympic softball roster.

Eriksen was an assistant coach in 2004 when the United States won gold in Athens. Now the head coach, he sees a similar talent level, demeanor and focus in the squad that will head to the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo.

"Very athletic team," Eriksen said Tuesday. "Well diversified with any position

that we can play. Well diversified in any kind of game we want to play. Speed, power, short game."

Softball will return to the Olympics next year for the first time since 2008, and the United States finished its Olympic trials last week. Cat Osterman, a pitcher who won a gold medal in Athens in 2004, and Monica Abbott, a pitcher who earned silver in Beijing in 2008, are the veteran headliners.

"They've been there, and they've done that, and they go out there and it's 100%

effort every single day on the field," Eriksen said. "Off the field, tremendous maturity and leadership."

A 15-player roster and three alternates were chosen.

Rachel Garcia, the pitcher who led UCLA to a Women's College World Series title this year, made the squad. She has been the USA Softball Collegiate Player of the Year the past two years.

Infielders are Ali Aguilar, Valerie Arioto, Delaney Spaulding and Kelsey Stewart. Outfielders are Haylie McCleney, Michelle Moul-

trie and Janie Reed. Catchers are Dejah Mulipola and Aubree Munro. Utility players are Ally Carda, Amanda Chidester and Bubba Nickles.

Replacement players are catcher Taylor Edwards, infielder Hannah Flippen and pitcher Keilani Ricketts.

Garcia and Nickles both have eligibility remaining at UCLA and Mulipola has eligibility left at Arizona. Eriksen said USA Softball has been in touch with both schools and is trying to get a redshirt year for them.

Eriksen said their maturity level allows them to fit right in with the veteran players.

"It's amazing that if you didn't have a sheet that said born this date, I don't even think you'd know there was a difference," he said.

Four players with UCLA ties are on the squad — Garcia, Nickles, Carda and Spaulding. Eriksen credited UCLA coach Kelly Inouye-Perez and assistants Lisa Fernandez and Kirk Walker for helping them reach an elite level.

"They're doing a great job of recruiting the best players in the country," Eriksen said. "But also, their player development — I think they're doing great with that kind of stuff."

Eriksen will not coach college ball at South Florida this season. He has the title of the coach in residence and cannot coach the players or recruit. Jessica Moore will take over this season, allowing Eriksen to focus on coaching the U.S. team when it tours in preparation for the Olympics.

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