The OFFICIAL MAGAZINE *of* Ucla ATHLETICS

BRUIN blue

SUMMER 2019

WESTWOOD CALLING

MEET UCLA'S NEW HEAD MEN'S BASKETBALL COACH

Mick Cronin

IN MY OWN WORDS

Joshua Kelley reflects on his football journey to UCLA

INSIDE:

Q&A
with Junior Pitcher
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&

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THE INSIDER'S VIEW

WELCOME FROM THE ATHLETIC DIRECTOR

DAN GUERRERO

This issue's cover story is an introduction to our new Michael Price Family Men's Head Basketball Coach, Mick Cronin. I hope that after reading the article, you come away with a glimpse into the side of Mick that we saw during our search and selection process, and you understand what makes him so special and such a great fit to lead our program moving forward.

Mick was on our radar from the very beginning of the search, and we kept a close watch on him throughout this season. For the past two years, Bruin fans saw firsthand the kind of teams Mick led at Cincinnati. No one was more prepared, more disciplined or played with more toughness than those Bearcats teams, which certainly left an impression on us. His basketball credentials are there: he was the 2018 Sporting News National Coach of the Year, he built a program over the last 13 years at Cincinnati that led to nine-straight 20-plus win seasons (including a few 30-win seasons), and he is one of six coaches who have led their teams to the NCAA tournament in each of the last nine years.

Beyond his record and the boxes he checked, Mick blew us away with his clarity of vision and shared ideas for what UCLA is and can be. He has a keen understanding and appreciation for the history of UCLA Basketball and the teachings of Coach Wooden. From the moment we met him, he conveyed his strong desire to be a Bruin and to lead this program, with the ultimate goal of winning national championships. He will embrace all that comes with being the steward of "John Wooden's program."

That's what we wanted: someone who truly wants to be part of the Bruin Family. UCLA and Los Angeles are special, but they are not for everyone. It was paramount to us to bring a coach here who is excited for the challenge and the opportunity to bring this program back to consistent, national prominence.

Mick is a player's coach. He loves his student-athletes deeply, gives it to them straight, even when it's hard to hear, and can pull the best out of them. The fact that he had several former Cincinnati players show up to support him at his introductory press conference in Westwood says a lot. The relationships he builds are not for one, two, three or even four years; they are lifelong. He does the right thing the right way. As he said in his opening remarks, he believes that the job of a college coach is to nurture, develop and prepare young men for the real world. He believes that love and discipline go hand-in-hand, and he is committed to the success of his student-athletes, just as we all are at UCLA Athletics. Certainly a great deal of this mindset comes from his upbringing. His father, Harold ("Hep"), is a former coach, who taught his son the importance of building relationships and that tough love can work, when applied properly.

On top of everything else, Mick understands the importance of winning together. That means together as a team, together as a fan base, together as an alumni group and together as the Bruin Family. During one of our discussions, it was wonderful to hear him rattle off the names of many of our former head and assistant coaches and players — individuals he has met over the years or admired from afar. He hit the ground running in his first week in Westwood, meeting and corresponding with men's basketball alumni like Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and Russell Westbrook, meeting with supporters of the program, and of course, getting to know his team. His pledge to get to know as many alums, donors and campus notables as possible is just one of the many things on his list of "to dos" as he settles into the job. That being said, he has expressed a desire for everyone — all of you included — to feel as much a part of the program as you ever have.

We know Mick is the right coach to lead our program back to the point of competing for championships, and we hope you will rally around him and our Bruins by supporting them next season in Pauley Pavilion presented by Wescom. I'm preaching to the choir here because all of you readers of this column and Bruin Blue have demonstrated support for our program in so many ways ... and of course, we are forever grateful for your loyalty. We all know that a packed Pauley is one of the greatest environments in all of college athletics and presents a strong home court advantage for our team. Let's plan on being there to see the team and show Coach Cronin how Bruins take care of their own.

Go Bruins!

Dan Guerrero

Dan

INSIDE *this* ISSUE

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Kid Captain Summer Medford

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Making a big difference in young lives

The UCLA Kid Captain program recognizes pediatric patients who are facing serious illnesses with exceptional courage, strength and determination. UCLA Athletics and UCLA Mattel Children's Hospital are proud to join together with Bruins everywhere to create special memories for these amazing kids.

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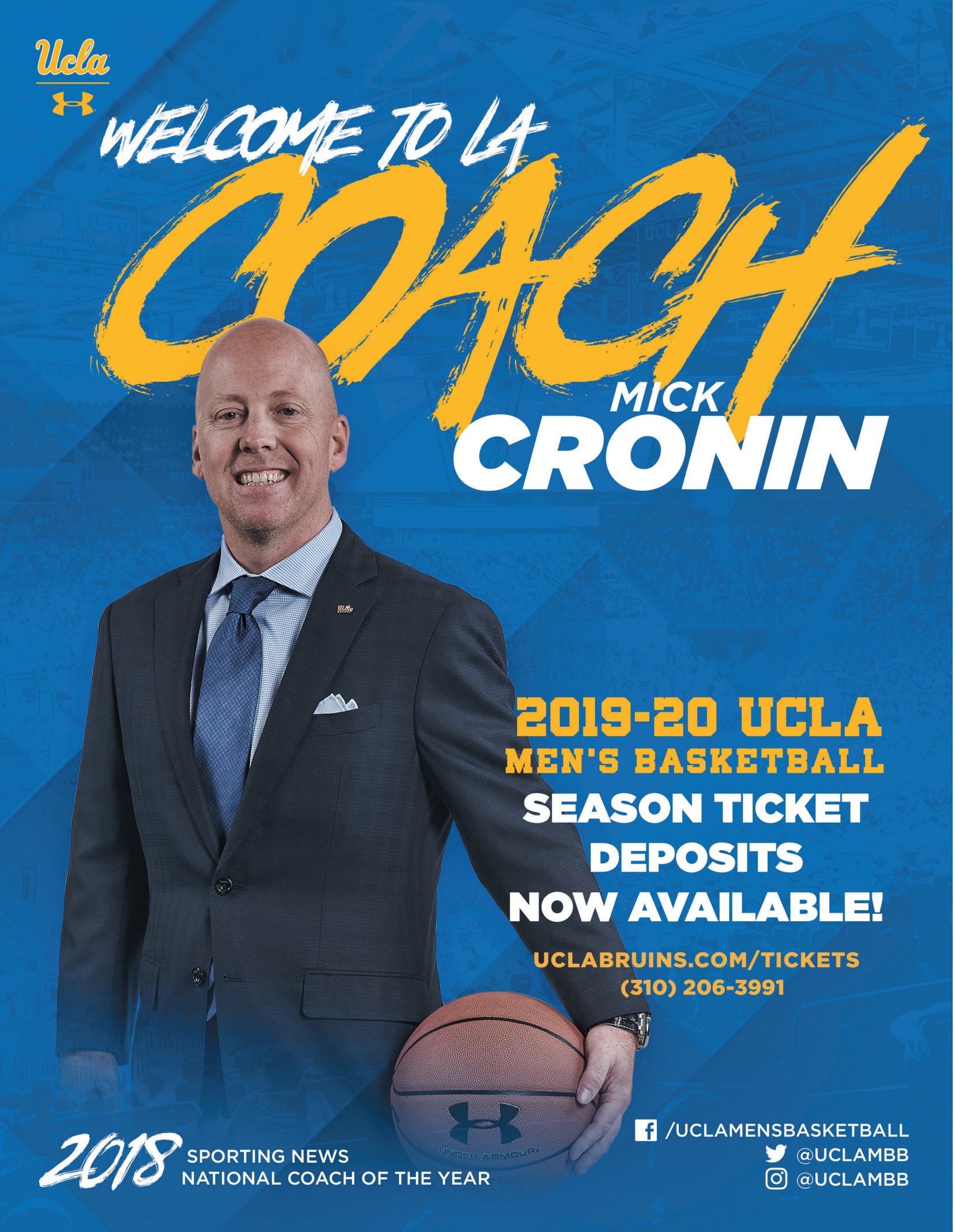
A MASTERFUL DISPLAY

Current UCLA sophomore **DEVON BLING** *was one of four amateurs to make the cut at the 2019 Masters which recently took place from April 11-14 at the Augusta National Golf Club in Augusta, Georgia. Bling, who was being caddied by UCLA assistant coach Andrew Larkin (left), finished the four-day event at 3-over 291 to place 55th overall. Bling didn't get much rest after his amazing week at Augusta, as he immediately headed back west to help the Bruins compete at the Pac-12 Championships in Eugene, Oregon. (Photo: Andrew Redington/Getty Images)*

INSET: Former UCLA standout **PATRICK CANTLAY,** *a member of the Bruin golf team in 2011 and 2012, plays a shot off the second tee during the final round of the Masters on April 14. Cantlay actually led the final round at one point, eventually finishing with a 4-under-par 68. His four-day total of 10-under 278 was good enough for a ninth-place tie, assuring him of a spot in next year's Masters. (Photo: Kevin C. Cox/Getty Images)*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BACK TO BACK

The second-seeded **UCLA BEACH VOLLEYBALL TEAM** *successfully defended its 2018 NCAA title on May 5, 2019, downing crosstown rival and top-seeded USC, 3-0 in the championship match in Gulf Shores, Alabama. The Bruins did not lose a match during the tournament, posting a perfect 4-0 record while also defeating Hawai'i (3-2), Florida State (3-0) and LSU (3-0). UCLA finished the season with a 35-3 overall record. The win marked UCLA's 117th NCAA Championship across all sports. (Photos: Jamie Schwaberow/NCAA Photos via Getty Images)*

2019 FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

- AUG 29 AT CINCINNATI
- SEPT 7 SAN DIEGO ST.
- SEPT 14 OKLAHOMA
- SEPT 21 AT WASHINGTON ST.
- SEPT 28 AT ARIZONA
- OCT 5 OREGON ST.
- OCT 17 AT STANFORD
- OCT 26 ARIZONA ST.
  HOMECOMING & BRUIN FAMILY WEEKEND
- NOV 2 COLORADO
- NOV 16 AT UTAH
- NOV 23 AT USC
- NOV 30 CALIFORNIA

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GIVING BACK

UCLA FOOTBALL PLAYERS *took part in a pair of charity initiatives surrounding the team's annual Spring Game on April 20. A day before the game, on April 19, players assembled in Bruin Plaza to raise awareness for Be The Match and the Andy Talley Bone Marrow Foundation. The student-athletes spent several hours helping educate potential donors about the cause and assisting in a simple online registration process. Prior to the game the next day, players and coaches all brought non-perishable items to benefit the UCLA Community Programs Office Food Closet. All fans received free admission to the game with their donations. Clockwise from top: Jordan Wilson, Dorian Thompson-Robinson and Kyle Philips at the Be the Match registry drive. Elisha Guidry speaks to a student regarding the registry process. Osa Odighizuwa helped register potential donors. Tyree Thompson signs autographs for fans at the Spring Game. Devin Asiasi drops in his donation while walking into the game. (Photos by: Jesus Ramirez, Steph Burnham and Don Liebig)*

SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT

TCL: AMERICA'S FASTEST-GROWING TELEVISION BRAND

A TCL FOOTBALL PUNT PROMO CONTEST WINNER *shows his brand new TCL TV at the UCLA vs Fresno St Football Game in 2018.*

WHEN DID TCL FIRST BECOME A SPONSOR OF UCLA ATHLETICS AND THE ROSE BOWL STADIUM?

TCL, America's fastest-growing television brand, became the official TV of the Rose Bowl Stadium, one of the most iconic stadiums in sports and home to the annual Rose Bowl game, in the fall of 2016. At that time, TCL also announced a new long-term partnership with UCLA Athletics, one of the world's most recognizable collegiate athletic programs, to become an official sponsor of the Bruins football and basketball teams beginning with the 2016-17 season.

WHY DID TCL INITIALLY DECIDE TO STRATEGICALLY PARTNER WITH UCLA ATHLETICS AND THE ROSE BOWL STADIUM?

While our award-winning TVs offer the ultimate in-home entertainment, we want consumers to know that TCL offers a premium experience out of the home as well. So, we set out to find a partner who could help us communicate to fans that we offer ways to watch football from anywhere, from world-class venues to tailgates across the country, and we are thrilled to work with UCLA Athletics. Their legacy as a world-class institution with high-performing teams aligns perfectly with our position as a global leader producing high quality electronics. And as the official TV partner of the Rose Bowl Stadium, it's an honor to have our premium televisions featured in this historic stadium known for hosting the highest attended college bowl game.

HAS THE PARTNERSHIP ACCOMPLISHED WHAT YOU HAD ORIGINALLY HOPED?

As part of the collaboration, TCL TVs and signage were to be featured throughout the Rose Bowl Stadium for UCLA football games as well as featured in Pauley Pavilion. But since we joined efforts, our presence at both venues has grown tremendously. We worked together to come up with a way to provide a place for fans to gather around our TVs to enjoy the game day experience in a relaxing atmosphere and hence, the TCL Lounge was born. What first started off as a temporary lounge setting will now be a permanent structure with state-of-the-art technology. Along the way, the TCL brand has grown in prominence as our UCLA and Rose Bowl Stadium partnership has helped us reach sports fans and we have become one of the leaders in ultra-large screen TVs (65"plus).

HAS THE PARTNERSHIP ACCOMPLISHED ANYTHING YOU DID NOT ORIGINALLY THINK IT WOULD OR HAVE YOU HAD ANY UNEXPECTED RESULTS?

When we initially teamed up with UCLA and the Rose Bowl Stadium, we did not foresee partnerships with other brands branching off of our relationship but that definitely hasn't been the case and TCL is very appreciative of these added-value opportunities. For example, through our partnership we unveiled a mobile eSports Gaming Lounge at a series of marquee matchups throughout the 2017 football season as part of the Wendy's® College Tailgate Tour, starting with the UCLA opener at the Rose Bowl Stadium. A customized 18-wheeler — with a patio, roof-top party

SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT

TCL: AMERICA'S FASTEST-GROWING TELEVISION BRAND

TCL NORTH AMERICAN PRESIDENT, MICHELLE MAO, *accepting the official game ball at the UCLA Men's Basketball Game presented by General Manager of Learfield IMG College UCLA, Paul Engl.*

The **TCL LOUNGE** *during the 2018 Beyoncé concert at the Rose Bowl Stadium.*

deck, indoor lounge and 14-foot video board — hit 12 major games from September to November and the TCL eSports Gaming Lounge featured its newest TVs along the way.

Critically acclaimed among gaming press, our TVs meet the highest standard for content with stunning picture quality and powerful performance. As such, TCL is always looking to create unique activations with our premium TVs for passionate sports fans in key markets — whether they want to play the latest Xbox title or just hang out and watch their favorite college teams battle — so this gaming lounge was a perfect fit. Participating in a nationwide tailgate program furthered our commitment to sports and entertainment so we were very excited to have TCL's latest TV models be the centerpiece of the touring experience.

PLEASE SHARE ONE MEMORABLE MOMENT FROM THE PARTNERSHIP.

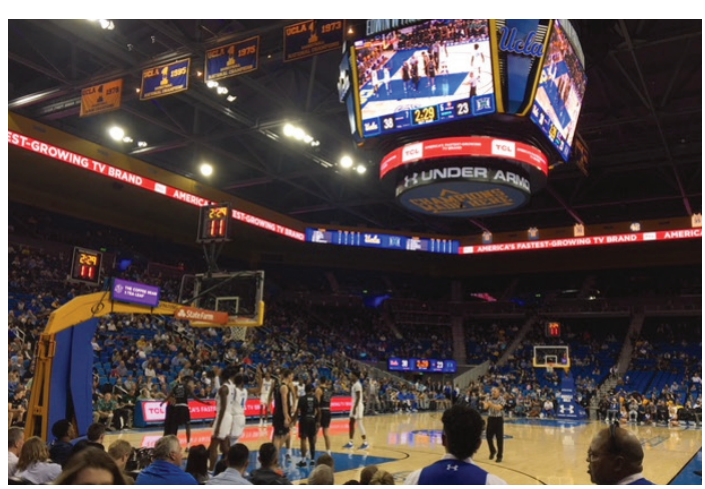
The year following our partnership announcement, the iconic stadium was host to an epic home opener for UCLA on September 3, 2017. Josh Rosen completed 35 of 59 passes for 491 yards and four touchdowns to rally UCLA to a 45–44 win over Texas A&M. The Bruins overcame a 34-point deficit, the largest comeback in school history, and the TCL signage was prominently showcased in the background of almost every photo and video that captured these monumental plays. It was this game that made the partnership feel real and showed the power of strategic branding.

ARE THERE ANY NEW PROJECTS OR PROGRAMS THROUGH THE PARTNERSHIP THAT BRUINS SHOULD LOOKS OUT FOR?

This year the TCL Lounge at Rose Bowl Stadium will be moving to the Terry Donahue Pavilion. Level C of the Pavilion will become the TCL Club at the Rose Bowl Stadium. The level will be filled with brand new, top-of-the-line TCL televisions playing live sporting events throughout the day, interactive games, comfortable seating, food and beverage concessions, photo booths and special guest appearances.

IS THERE ANY SORT OF "SPECIAL OFFER" OR SERVICE THAT YOU'D LIKE TO COMMUNICATE TO READERS OF BRUIN BLUE, WHICH INCLUDES ALL UCLA ATHLETICS DONORS, SEASON TICKET HOLDER AND SPONSORS?

We would just like to remind UCLA Fans that for watching the game at home, they should consider our new lineup of TCL TVs. We now have multiple 75" models that are amazing for watching sports and cost less than a 55" TV did just a few years ago. If that is too big for the room you are putting it in, our 65" models offer great performance at an amazing price. As we have grown with our UCLA partnership, you can now find our TVs at any major national retailer in-store or online.



TCL SIGNAGE *presence at Pauley Pavilion presented by Wescom.*

CRONIN

(Photo: Don Liebig)

WESTWOOD CALLING

The opportunity to lead one of college basketball's blue bloods was an opportunity Mick Cronin couldn't pass up.

by **JON GOLD**

Early on in UCLA's search for a new head men's basketball coach, one conversation set the tone. Legendary Bruin Bill Walton, one of several former players and Bruin stakeholders who UCLA reached out to, had expressed to the search committee that his only desire was that UCLA would land someone who the community and the campus would be able to rally behind. And most importantly, somebody who understood and respected "who we are and what we are."

Through an exhaustive search that left no stone unturned, it was something that Mick Cronin said early that most meshed with Walton's message and struck a chord with the committee.

"What was really compelling for us is he just blew us away with his clarity of vision of what UCLA is and what it can be," said Athletics Director Guerrero during Cronin's introductory press conference on April 10. "He's the right guy to lead our program where we want to go, and that of course is national championships."

What UCLA is, and what it can be: in short, the two reasons Mick Cronin ended up in Los Angeles.

◊◊◊

Cronin has always admired UCLA from afar.

He grew up watching college basketball, and specifically the Bruins, with his father, Harold "Hep" Cronin, a high school basketball coaching legend in Ohio.

"I still remember Rod Foster against Ohio State in 1980," said Cronin. "I was nine years old."

In 2017, after the Bruins defeated Cincinnati, 79-67, in the second round of the NCAA tournament, behind Lonzo Ball's 18 points, Cronin jumped at the chance to schedule a home-and-home series with UCLA. Once his operations manager gave him the confirmation, Cronin got excited. "I don't even know why, I immediately called my Dad," Cronin remembers. "'You won't believe this. I just booked a home and home with UCLA. We get to play in Pauley next year.' I hung up and called my brother, and he said, 'What's the date?' My brother never leaves Cincy. He won't leave the west side. He doesn't even go to the east side. He won't leave his neighborhood. Well, he immediately booked flights."

They played on a Saturday, but the Bearcats arrived in Los Angeles on Thursday, giving Cronin a chance to see a place he'd only fantasized about. He woke up early the day before the game, strolled through campus at 7 a.m., "not ever thinking I'm gonna be the coach." School officials offered the Bearcats a choice of facilities for practice; Cronin picked Pauley Pavilion. He'd been to Los Angeles "a million times," but he'd never been to Pauley.

Ever since his hire, it seems like he can't leave. He and new associate head coach Darren Savino, who joined his staff at Cincinnati in 2011, have barely left campus.

"It feels like a million years and it's been 12 days," Cronin said.

Like Cronin, his new top lieutenant Savino recalls his early memories of Pauley Pavilion, even from across the country in New Jersey.

"Anybody who has played or loves basketball, you can't get that image of UCLA out of your mind," Savino said. "You see the videos of Wooden and Walton and Lew Alcindor. You heard about it all the time. I'm on the other side of the country, on the Atlantic Ocean, and you know these things about UCLA. It seemed like you knew everything about it. You've never been there, but because you saw and read all these things about Westwood, you always wanted to see it. You're intrigued by it."

ATHLETIC DIRECTOR DAN GUERRERO *(left) presents* **MICK CRONIN** *with a personalized jersey at his introductory press conference on April 10. (Photo: Don Liebig/ASUCLA)*

WESTWOOD CALLING

AN OPPORTUNITY MICK CRONIN COULDN'T PASS UP

Cronin was more than intrigued, even if he knows what could have been.

In another universe, Cronin stays at Cincinnati, remains at home, and has dinners with the family — the whole family and iced tea by the pool, feet up. He golfs — some nice golf. After all, nine-straight NCAA tournament appearances can buy you some relaxation.

Instead, he had to just go ahead and upend his life.

"We'd just had a great season. I could stay (at Cincinnati), with everything on autopilot," he said. "When you go to take a job, you're turning a switch on. Your first year, you get no offseason. You have to talk to everyone from former players, to boosters, to staff. It's 24/7. But you've got to know that when you take the job."

For Cronin, it was perfect timing.

For nine-straight summers, athletic directors across the country kicked the tires on the Cincinnati kid. Every year, Cronin felt "I couldn't even take a job now, I'm so tired from the season. For years, I'd laugh, I'm not doing that again. I don't have it in me. This will take years off your life."

Over the last couple years, though, he'd been answering nagging questions in his own head. If he was going to take a next step, if he was going to swing for the fences just once, this was the time. And he knew that if he did take the leap, he was going to try to fly.

MICK CRONIN, *pictured here with returning senior guard* **PRINCE ALI**, *began off-season workouts with his new team in mid-April. (Photo: Alex Timiraos)*

"You know what it entails if you're going to do it right," he said. "Some look it at as a golden parachute job. That's not me. I'm still young enough. I knew when the day came, it was 100 miles an hour and you're starting over. You've lost all your equity."

In Cincinnati, he built up a ton of equity, forming real relationships with boosters, the community, and even the media. And then, of course, there were his players — both former and current — some of whom he'd first met nearly a decade prior.

Next season, the Bearcats are due to return 11 scholarship players from a 28-win team. During one of Cronin's last meetings with his players, right around the Final Four, he told them he believed they could be there next year.

But there was that voice on the inside. It beckoned.

"You're sitting there thinking it would it be nice to have a chance to be on that level," he said. "You're always wondering."

◊◊◊

What UCLA is: The House That Wooden Built. Eleven national championships, an NCAA record. Ten titles in 12 years. Four undefeated seasons. Eighteen Final Fours and 22 Elite Eights. Nearly 40 All-Americans. Eight NBA MVPs and 36 first-round picks. Nine Naismith Hall of Famers.

"We wanted an individual who had a keen understanding of what UCLA was all about, who had an appreciation for UCLA, and certainly for the teachings of Coach Wooden," said Guerrero. "We wanted to hire a basketball coach who really wanted to be here, and that was really important. Really wanted to be here, to be a Bruin, to exhibit the pride of a Bruin, who'd embrace Los Angeles and embrace this university. From the moment we met Mick, he conveyed a strong desire to be here."

What UCLA can be:

"You get excited because you know that if you can get the right people and push hard in developing that culture, with the kind of talent you can attract here, it can be special," Savino said. "In Mick's mind, he's thinking 'I'm coming to UCLA and our goal is to win a national championship. That's why we're here. That's in our mind. That's our goal. That's our vision.' The advantages are right here at your fingers. We have to be diligent

15 OF THE 20 LARGEST FIRES IN CALIFORNIA HISTORY HAVE OCCURRED SINCE 2000.

Wildfires are a part of life in California. But today, they are getting worse. The 2018 Camp Fire was the deadliest in state history, killing 86 people. According to climate scientists, these massive fires are fueled in part by climate change. UCLA researchers are creating high-resolution computer models of climate, vegetation and fire behavior to predict the future of wildfire, and find new ways to protect our communities. **UCLA.EDU/100YEARS**

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WESTWOOD CALLING

AN OPPORTUNITY MICK CRONIN COULDN'T PASS UP

MICK CRONIN *spent the previous 13 years at his alma mater Cincinnati, leading the Bearcats to the NCAA tournament in each of the last nine seasons. (Photo: Getty Images)*

and make sure we add talented people around us on our staff who have that kind of vision. It's going to take time to develop it. But the kids on the team all came here because it's a special place."

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For Cronin, there was one big conversation that kicked things off.

"You always have an eye on your future, and for me, my daughter is the most important thing that I'll ever do in life," he said. "That was a huge factor."

Before he could commit to UCLA, Cronin had to get the go-ahead from 12-year-old daughter Sammi, and his ex-wife, Sammi's mother, Darlene. The two share custody of Sammi, and if Darlene and Sammi were not on board, neither was he.

"Chapel Hill could've called, and I'm not saying I wouldn't have done it, but it's not Los Angeles," he said. "It might have been great for me, but not for my daughter."

Cronin has plenty of friends in Southern California having visited countless times. During his introductory press conference, he told of a vacation out west with Sammi four years ago, during which he told her, "This is the best school in the world."

"That's a true story and, then, finally, after about five days, she goes, 'We don't have to ever go home do we?'" he continued. "We're driving back down to Santa Monica and she says, 'You know, Dad, they've got a high school.'"

Still, this was a challenge and a big one. One the search committee understood of and respected.

"Mick had an unbelievable situation where he was," said Sr. Associate Athletic Director Josh Rebholz, who served on the search committee. "Born and raised in Cincinnati. Entire family lives there. It was a very drastic change, and we never disrespected that on our end. One of the first things he said is this has to make sense for my family. I'm not coming if my daughter and ex-wife don't want to come. He had to leave something that was very comfortable, very familiar. He had it rolling there and was going to continue to be successful at a high level. It was comfortable for him."

For Savino, someone who knows him quite well, it took a big opportunity to pry Cronin from that life.

"Loving his alma mater, loving the city of Cincinnati, he was every bit a part of the fabric there in that community," Savino said. "It was hard for me to see him anywhere else. He's had plenty of opportunities in my nine years. Every year. After a while, it got to a point where they wouldn't gauge interest. Mick wouldn't leave Cincinnati. But this was an opportunity he had to really consider closely. It was something he couldn't turn down. The history, the tradition and all that it entails. An unbelievable place to live. Bringing his daughter and having her experience this for her life. If he was ever going to leave, this was the kind of place he'd leave for."

The search committee had an inkling of that from the very beginning.

"The first day we met with him, he was all-in," Rebholz said. "We went through this process with several people, engaged them and explained what we had to offer. You could learn very early on what was a priority for some of these people. People's true colors start to show."

Turns out, Cronin's true colors might just be blue and gold.

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(Photo: Don Liebig/ASUCLA)

by **JOSHUA KELLEY**

IN MY OWN WORDS

Running back Joshua Kelley took an unconventional path to UCLA stardom.

I remember everything.

I first put on pads when I was 12 years old. It was in Lancaster at Tierra Bonita Park with the Lancaster Jets Youth Football Program. At first I was scared. Am I going to get hurt? Am I going to die? There were all sorts of thoughts running through my mind.

It was fun, that feeling of playing football. The first game I ever had, I remember a feeling I hadn't felt before. I had played basketball, soccer, ran track. But football was different.

My first three years at Eastside High School, we didn't really do that well. We were kind of figuring things out. I was barely playing running back. But then, something clicked. I was making some plays out there, like plays where I wasn't even thinking. I remember it seeming just very natural.

Once my senior year came, it turned around. We really stuck with it and won eight games and went to the playoffs.

My entire junior year — that whole summer and then into my senior year summer, too — there was no interest. Nobody. I remember thinking, "Whoa, maybe I'm not as good as I thought." There was nobody.

And then, all of a sudden, UC Davis pulled up. Coach (Ron) Gould said, "We're interested. We want you to come visit." So I visited. UC Davis is a really great school with great academics. The football program was Division I-A at the time, FCS. I thought, "If this place offers me a scholarship, I can see myself going here." And they did. I had to take it. It was a full ride.

The experience overall at UC Davis was great. The football experience, however, was tough. We were losing a lot. Not to mention the transition from high school football to college football is so different. And then you go through that and you're losing games. So yeah, it was pretty tough. There were some great coaches there my first two years. And we fought hard. That's one thing about Davis — we really worked hard. We grinded.

I was always curious about playing at a higher level. I wondered how other guys do it at the Division I, Power Five conferences. Are those guys really that much better than me? I always had that in the back of my head.

We came back from winter break, my sophomore year, and there was a team meeting. The whole coaching staff got fired. That hit me hard because I made really great relationships with all the coaches. It was kind of wild because I've never been a part of something where I've seen the whole staff leave. Maybe one or two people, but not the whole staff.

Once the new staff came in, I got a chance to meet with a lot of them and they were all great. But, they changed up their scheme. I had some time to reflect about it and I thought, "You know what, maybe this is time for me to explore my options and see what I can get?" So I told the coach I wanted to transfer, which is always difficult to do.

IN MY OWN WORDS

JOSHUA KELLEY TOOK AN UNCONVENTIONAL PATH TO UCLA STARDOM

Playing in his first rivalry game, redshirt junior **JOSHUA KELLEY** *set a new UCLA rushing record against USC, going for 289 yards and two touchdowns in the Bruins' 34-27 victory at the Rose Bowl. (Photo: Don Liebig)*

(Photo: Steph Burnham)

I ended up calling Coach (DeShaun) Foster from there on out. Like every single day. It was just calling and calling and calling. A month went by and I didn't really get anywhere. I thought, "You know what, I might as well just stop."

Then, the next month, it happened. He said, "How's it going? Where you from? I want to see your tape." I got on that immediately and showed it to him. I think a week later, he got back to me and said, "You know, we're kind of interested. We want to see what you can do. Come visit us real quick."

It didn't really happen until three months later. He called me in the summer and said, "Are you interested in walking on? We need you three days before camp starts." It was crazy. He took a chance on me. That's something I'll always remember.

It was risky telling my mom I was trying to transfer while on full scholarship, but she was definitely supportive. There were a lot of times when we prayed, for sure. She said, "Make sure when you do this, you can't dip one toe in. You've got to go all in." That attitude really helped me.

UCLA was familiar. My Mom had volunteered at UCLA throughout her whole career in college. My uncle (Derek Vaughn) actually played baseball here. My auntie was in the band here. This place has always been so huge to my family. They've all been UCLA fans too. Growing up in that house, it was just UCLA. They've pretty much bred the entire culture in me. And

now I had the chance to actually do it? It's kind of crazy when you think about that.

I think the team meeting I'll always remember will be the one before last fall camp. We were doing compliance stuff, setting season goals, everything. At the end of it, Coach (Chip) Kelly said, "Josh Kelley, come down here and just end the break."

I'm thinking, "Alright, cool!"

I go down there and I say the break. Then afterwards, he says, "Oh, I've got a special announcement to make."

What is it? Did I mess up?

He said, "Josh Kelley, you're going to be on scholarship now."

Everybody went nuts. They came down and gave me hugs. I'll admit, I kind of teared up a little bit. It was a moment where I just reflected — where I was before and where I was here — wow. It was a sense of I kind of did it. I knew my journey wasn't done. I know I've still got to produce and be efficient but, wow. This was the first step.

I remember the night before my first game, I thought, "I'm about to actually play. Start even." There was a lot going on. It was kind of crazy. The game didn't go as well as planned. We lost and I didn't really play well. It was almost like a game to forget.

I improved though. I played well against Colorado and Washington and that definitely gave me reassurance and confidence. I thought, "OK, not only can I play at this level, but I've shown some success. There are some good things going on here."

Early on, Coach (Kelly) was always telling me, "It doesn't matter in between these lines if you were a five-star, a four-star or a walk-on. Everyone's on the field. You belong here."

That's what I had to remind myself. I've got to just keep my focus on playing football, working hard, doing extra, always being a gym rat — a football rat, too. All that stuff really helps, so I got back to that.

Looking back at what I did last season, I didn't really like it. There were some good things, don't get me wrong, but I felt like, as always, I could get so much better. I'm never going to become complacent because that's when you lose. That's when the bad things happen. I always remind myself that if I want to make a career out of playing football, I have to be obsessed with improvement like Coach Kelly always talks about. That's just the hunger and the drive that I'm really grateful that I've had. It came from a lot of people, that drive to get better.

This year, the sky's the limit. I have high expectations. We had a pretty great spring, so I'm looking forward to it. Honestly, if we can win a championship, I'm OK with however the stats end up. I'll be great.

(Photo: Steph Burnham)

"I WAS DOING MY BEST TO CONVEY THIS IMAGE ... YOU WANT TO BE STRONG, BRAVE, UNSTOPPABLE. YOU WANT TO DO YOUR BEST, ALWAYS. ADMITTING WEAKNESS SEEMS COUNTERACTIVE TO THAT."

-Kaiya McCullough

ENDING THE STIGMA

The UCLA Athletic Department, with help from its student-athletes, tackles the mental health conversation head on.

by **JON GOLD**

Kaiya McCullough descends from some impressive UCLA lineage.

Her mother, Amy Thorne, was awarded the first Perfect 10 for a floor routine in Bruins' gymnastics history; her father, Abdul McCullough, was a three-year starting safety for the football team in the early-90s, the last line of defense.

That's what McCullough considers herself, too: The last line of defense.

A dominating center-back, the defensive leader of the UCLA women's soccer team, with 66 career starts under her belt in her first three seasons, McCullough treasures that role. She embodies it. Tough, sturdy. A strong foundation.

The last line of defense. Just you, then the goalie. You can imagine the pressure.

For two-plus years at UCLA, McCullough handled it with grace, with aplomb. Nothing broke her. She doesn't just handle her own stress, she was a vocal mental health advocate on a team that takes such matters very seriously.

Then one day in October, she broke down. She went into her coach's office and, for the first time, cracked. She sobbed to a room full of stunned coaches. This is Kaiya. She doesn't break.

"I was doing my best to convey this image," remembers McCullough. "I'm a center-back, nothing can get through me, the last line of defense. It's like seeing someone who never cries cry. You want to be strong, brave, unstoppable. You want to do your best, always. Admitting weakness seems counteractive to that."

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Ending the stigma. It's one of the UCLA Athletic Department's top priorities.

Around five years ago, Associate Athletic Director Ashley Armstrong sensed a growing pattern emerging. More and more serious mental health cases among student-athletes, and increasingly minor issues that nonetheless resulted in unhappy — and in some cases, sidelined — Bruins.

Since then, every year, Armstrong said the department has sought to increase and improve access to mental-health professionals. She says that over the last three years, UCLA has really tried to zero in on two things: Where are the needs and where is UCLA most vulnerable?

Armstrong and her staff saw a need for more localized treatment options, so they created counseling space in the Acosta Athletic Center. That, in addition to increasing the number of counselors, and improving the training given to coaches, staff and athletic trainers to catch budding problems early, has caused an increasing number of student-athletes to seek treatment.

Left: At first reluctant to speak with someone regarding her mental health, junior women's soccer player **KAIYA McCULLOUGH** *has since opened up about the stress she sometimes feels while juggling the demands of academics and athletics at a school like UCLA. (Photo: Steph Burnham)*

Right: After battling mental health issues as a freshman, junior gymnast **ANNA GLENN** *now serves as a member of both the Bruin Mental Health Advisory Committee and the UCLA Student-Athlete Mentors Program. (Photo: Don Liebig/ASUCLA)*

ENDING THE STIGMA

UCLA ATHLETICS TACKLES THE MENTAL HEALTH CONVERSATION HEAD ON

As head women's soccer coach at UCLA the past seven years, **AMANDA CROMWELL** *and her staff are always looking at better ways to help their student-athletes deal with mental health issues. (Photo: Rand Bleimeister)*

"To me, mental illness is really a silent epidemic," Armstrong said. "I believe it is, within our country, something that needs attention. It still has so much of that stigma. Athletics is just a microcosm: High-achieving individuals, lots of Type-A personalities, over-achievers, the most talented – they've been told their whole lives."

UCLA — where nearly all of the teams compete for national championships on a regular basis — is a breeding ground for competitive athletes, for world-beaters. That only enhances the pressure.

"They get to college, pressures are more intense, home sickness, not being the best student-athlete on the team, playing time issues, coaching challenges, and the fact that it's not Disneyland every day," Armstrong said. "My coach isn't my best friend in college. Oh and by the way, you have to go to class, balance being a student-athlete with your social life and taking care of yourself. It's a microcosm of what happens in the real world."

Mark Pocinich, UCLA's Associate Athletic Director of Sports Medicine, also said things had reached a tipping point about five years ago.

"That's when I saw a spike," said Pocinich, who oversees all sports medicine for the department, including organizing team physicians, athletic trainers and ancillary providers — including mental-health professionals. "Listen, we knew it was there — for years, we've tried to increase awareness. We know that these student-athletes are already under a certain amount of pressure that most 18- to 22-year olds are dealing with. So we just hit a point where some of this was really sinking in. Maybe an increase in cases, or generational changes or just an awareness that it's okay to talk about it."

Pocinich said it has taken a multi-pronged approach to addressing what is a growing area of concern.

"The services are one piece, but the flip side is the education piece," he said. "We've focused on making sure coaches are aware of this. But the real

Women's soccer player **KAIYA McCULLOUGH** *in action. (Photo: Rand Bleimeister)*

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ENDING THE STIGMA

UCLA ATHLETICS TACKLES THE MENTAL HEALTH CONVERSATION HEAD ON

front lines are my athletic trainers. They spend so much time directly with the athletes. What are the signs? How to speak to athletes, how to educate them."

On the UCLA campus, the message is hitting home.

Some teams, like McCullough's women's soccer team, have taken a proactive approach to mental wellness. The goal? Destigmatize mental health treatment to the point that it becomes like any other athletic treatment.

"We want to prevent injuries, so we do X, Y and Z, whether in the weight room, on the field, we do these things," said women's soccer head coach Amanda Cromwell. "Well, we want to do these things when it concerns mental health, too. We look at it like treatment of an injury."

The team heavily utilizes the Headspace app, which was donated to all teams in the department by former UCLA men's basketball star Kevin Love back in October. They have regular team conversations about life, health and wellness. Sometimes heavier issues.

When a student-athlete for the Utah track team, Lauren McCluskey, was slain, the UCLA women's soccer team — in town for a game against the Utes — attended her memorial as a team.

"Mentally, it was hard for us," Cromwell remembers. "But we wanted to address it, talk about it. We've talked about steps to take to ensure your teammates are safe. So many issues to address, we try to just put things out there, and let people talk."

◊◊◊

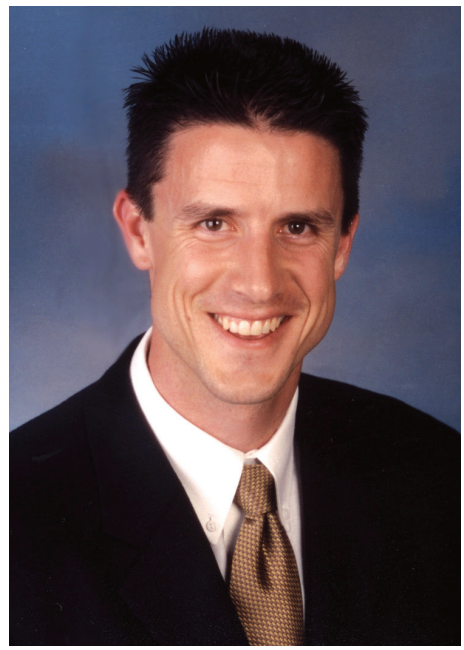
Sometimes it takes opening up about one's own weakness that inspires them to help. It did for McCullough.

An offseason injury had robbed her of precious workouts, but even more, it sapped her confidence. She felt a step slower, and a step slower in soccer might as well be a mile. She found herself frustrated, unable to dig out of a mental hole she'd dug. She was starting, but she wasn't ... herself.

If anyone understood the resources on campus, it was her. She could've seen someone sooner, could've revealed herself to coaches.

"I think it's the fear of seeming weak," she said, as to why she held in her stress.

For her coaches, it was a reminder that sometimes the most outspoken of team leaders can be handling inner turmoil.



Associate Athletic Director **ASHLEY ARMSTRONG** *(left) and Assistant Athletic Director for Sports Medicine* **MARK POCINICH** *(right) are two Athletic Department employees serving at the forefront of UCLA's mental health initiative. (Photos: Don Liebig/ASUCLA)*

"I definitely knew she was struggling; we talked about it as a staff," said Cromwell. "I may have blinders on — if someone looks like they're fine, they're fine. I don't think about the duck swimming underwater. Above the surface, everything is fine, but the feet are paddling. I used to think that if I don't see any problems, there aren't any. Now I know that's definitely not true. Some of my highest-functioning, my perfectionist athletes, need me to check in the most."

That word — perfection — is something so many UCLA student-athletes chase. The unattainable, of course.

Anna Glenn, a member of the 2018 national champion women's gymnastics team, knows what it's like to chase that Perfect 10, not only on the balance beam, but in life. Her internal struggles as a freshman where she admits "I was not taking care of my mental health," caused her to seek help. Her experience served as a catalyst for her to become a vocal mental health advocate on campus. Now a junior, she is a member of both the UCLA Student-Athlete Mentors program and the Bruin Mental Health Advisory Committee.

After reaching out to Towson University gymnast Olivia Lubarsky, who helped create the school's #OwnYourRoar mental health initiative, Glenn was motivated to start a similar campaign at UCLA. One of the first acts was creating a PSA video on YouTube — which features Glenn, McCullough and a host of other Bruin student-athletes — reassuring fellow students that it's OK to discuss their struggles.

"There is work to be done in terms of creating a more open dialogue about mental health," Glenn said. "Most of our conversations are about daily struggles we all deal with, so they know they're not alone. In terms of getting the help, I think that's something we're lacking in the conversation. I have been hearing more recently more coaches have been open in terms of trying to take down that barrier, trying to make conversations a little more open, more comfortable. I feel like it's a slow rise. It's not to the point we want it to be. Some athletes are still afraid to talk to coaches."

McCullough was, until one day, she wasn't.

Now, she knows she can talk to them, and to others, throughout the UCLA Athletic Department.

"I learned it's OK to not be OK," McCullough said. "It's one of the hardest things I've hard to learn. The only way you can see people care is giving them the opportunity to care."

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CATCHING UP

with

RYAN GARCIA

32

Three years after attending a UCLA baseball camp (as an infielder), junior pitcher Ryan Garcia is now the ace on the No. 1 ranked team in America. Through the team's first 46 games, Garcia was a perfect 6-0 on the mound with a 1.29 ERA, helping the Bruins to a 38-8 overall record. Bruin Blue caught up with Garcia to discuss how he ended up at UCLA, his thoughts on this year's team, and how he would like to finish the season.

HOW DID YOUR UCLA JOURNEY BEGIN?

During my junior year I came to a UCLA baseball camp. I was primarily an infielder in high school, so during camp I was taking ground balls at third base and shortstop. I ended up asking one of the assistants if I could throw an inning. So I threw the last inning of a game and did well. I talked to Coach Savage after that outing and he told me they would have me out here within the next two weeks for an unofficial visit. Two weeks later at the end of my tour, they offered me and I committed on the spot.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR PITCHING STYLE?

I'm a pitcher who doesn't use much effort in the delivery. People always tell me, "It doesn't even look like you're throwing." But I'm out there giving 100 percent even if it looks like 50 percent to them. I rely on my fastball the most, even though we are taught to have confidence in all of our pitches regardless of what we are throwing. The fastest I've topped out at is about 95 MPH.

HOW GOOD CAN THIS TEAM BE?

The sky's the limit. For us to be No. 1 right now, it motivates us to keep going. I know a lot of people say to not worry about the rankings, but I think there is no pressure. The pressure is on everyone else to try and beat us.

WHERE IS RYAN GARCIA IN 10 YEARS?

I envision myself being a starter in the Major Leagues. It's very doable. I think Coach Savage and the coaches here have put us on a great path to be successful at that next level.

WHAT DO YOU SEE YOURSELF DOING WHEN YOUR PLAYING DAYS ARE OVER?

I'd probably stay within the baseball realm. Maybe even be a scout for a Major League Baseball organization. Or an advisor guiding younger kids through the process of collegiate baseball and hopefully professional baseball.

DESCRIBE THE PERFECT ENDING TO THIS SEASON.

A dogpile on the mound in Omaha, of course.

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THE WOODEN ATHLETIC FUND

Sam and Ana Andress Invest in Tomorrow's Champions Today

Sam and Ana Andress are passionately committed to supporting UCLA and Bruin student-athletes through the Wooden Athletic Fund. Ana is a proud Bruin graduate who earned her BS degree in Nursing in 2010, and has been a Registered Nurse at the UCLA Health/Ronald Reagan Hospital since 2005. Sam is a Real Estate Agent with the Huntington Group in Los Angeles, specializing in residential and commercial real estate sales. Together, they are avid Bruin fans. Sam first became a Bruin fan at the age of four after attending his first UCLA Football game in 1984 – vs. USC – when UCLA downed the Trojans 29-10. In fact, one of Sam's most memorable moments was sitting amidst a sea of Trojans at the Rose Bowl wearing his UCLA blue and gold and watching the USC fans fall silent when UCLA defeated them 13-9.

Sam and Ana have been Wooden Athletic Fund members since 2013, and enjoy their connection to the Athletics program, the student-athletes, and other Bruin fans. They believe in the level of excellence and character for which the Bruins strive in pursuit of the motto, "Champions Made Here."

"We give to the Wooden Athletic Fund because, as Bruins, we believe contributing to this fund most fully supports and furthers the ability of our student-athletes to pursue excellence and achieve all that they do. It's an incredible honor to be a part of this group of great legacies like Jackie Robinson and Coach Wooden as well as the many legacies being built today and into the future."

Sam and Ana Andress are passionately committed to supporting UCLA and Bruin student-athletes through the Wooden Athletic Fund.

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WOMEN'S BASKETBALL
1978 AIAW CHAMPS

Led by four-time All-American Ann Meyers, Anita Ortega, Denise Curry and first-year head coach Billie Moore, UCLA captured the 1978 AIAW (Association of Intercollegiate Athletics for Women) national championship in Pauley Pavilion. The title drive included Bruin wins in the final 21 games of the season and culminated in the 90-74 championship victory over Maryland before an AIAW record crowd of 9,351.

As part of the school's Centennial Celebration in 2019-20, UCLA Athletics plans to commemorate 100 Top Moments in UCLA Athletics history. Many of these moments will be highlighted in Bruin Blue beginning this Fall.

MO OSTIN ACADEMIC CENTER FOR STUDENT-ATHLETES

A NEW ACADEMIC CENTER WILL BE DEDICATED TO THE ACADEMIC SUCCESS OF UCLA'S STUDENT-ATHLETES

by **EMILY LERNER**

The J.D. Morgan Athletics Center has served as the "hub" for UCLA's 25 intercollegiate sports programs since its completion in 1984. In 2001, it underwent renovations which included, among the construction of individual offices for athletics staff and coaches, the George Kneller Student-Athlete Academic Center. Situated on the north side of the Morgan Center, the Kneller Center houses the Rose Gilbert Learning Center, which features work stations, computers, and printers. Combined, these academic spaces doubled the size of what had been in place before the renovation. But some 18 years later, UCLA Athletics' academic and student services have far outgrown the space to the point where the need for a larger area and more state-of-the-art facilities has become mandatory.

To this end, on February 13, 2019, UCLA Athletics officially announced its plans to construct a new on-campus student-athlete academic facility, to be known as the Mo Ostin Academic Center for Student-Athletes. This building is being designed to enhance the many academic and student development services provided to UCLA's nearly 700 student-athletes by centralizing its academic and student services to better prepare UCLA student-athletes to achieve academic success. The comprehensive, state-of-the-art academic facility will be located in the heart of UCLA's campus, just west of Ackerman Student Union and immediately adjacent to the east side of the Morgan Center.

This building will be named for legendary music industry executive and philanthropist Morris "Mo" Ostin, who generously committed the lead gift of $15 million to the proposed project. Mr. Ostin is a proud UCLA graduate, earning his BA in Economics, and is currently Chairman Emeritus of Warner Bros. Records. His legacy in the music world is vast, and includes the founding of Reprise Records with Frank Sinatra, induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2003, and receiving the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences' Grammy Icon Award in 2007. If the name Mo Ostin sounds familiar without being aware of his music industry accolades, it is most likely because Mr. Ostin's lead gift of $10 million made in 2014 enabled the construction of the Mo Ostin Basketball Center. The state-of-the-art basketball training facility, situated south of Pauley Pavilion, opened in 2017, and has been pivotal in the recruiting and hiring of top men's and women's basketball student-athletes and coaches, as well as being used daily for both UCLA Men's and Women's Basketball programs. In addition to his interest in UCLA Athletics' sports programs, Mr. Ostin strongly believes that UCLA's student-athletes must have the resources necessary to be able to compete both athletically and academically.

"It is my hope this academic center for student-athletes will serve as a resource for the most elite student-athletes in the country, at the country's No. 1 public institution, to excel not only athletically but also academically," said Mo. "For decades UCLA has developed talented student-athletes, including Academic All-Americans like Mike Warren, John Sciarra, Bill Walton, Denise Curry and Jamaal Wilkes, to not only perform at their best athletically, but thrive in a very competitive academic environment. Assisting future student-athletes to reach their academic best is extremely important to me, and I am thrilled to be a part of this new academic center."

Legendary music industry executive and philanthropist **MORRIS "MO" OSTIN** *generously committed the lead gift of $15 million to the proposed project. (Photo: Reed Hutchinson)*

Student-athletes in any university are unique in that they are not only students, but athletes who must often put in grueling hours in order to fit in training, nutrition, practice and home and away competition, while fulfilling the "student" part of attending classes, tutoring, mentor and peer review sessions, studying, and taking exams just like non-athlete students.

Due to the student-athlete's unique needs while in school, the Athletics Department must do all it can to see to their success both athletically and academically. This is where UCLA Athletics' Academic and Student Services department, which consists of 20 career staff, over 14 academic mentors, and over 55 peer learning (tutoring) facilitators, enters the picture. The official mission statement of UCLA Athletics' Academic and Student Services department takes a "student-centered approach which empowers student-athletes to maximize their educational experience as they pursue their academic and personal goals. It is [their] mission to graduate self-sufficient learners who are able to successfully embark on life after college."

This essential department supports the needs of each student-athlete by providing services and programming in the areas of academic support, academic counseling, student-athlete development and student services. It has become increasingly necessary to service the student-athlete as a whole individual and in a more holistic manner, and in order to fulfill their mission statement, the Academic and Student Services area offers year-round individualized advising and support.

This being said, the need for a centralized location for all academic and student services is as imperative as the need to have this single, unified space immediately adjacent to the Morgan Center, where athletics staff and most coaches have offices. As it stands now, student-athletes must go to the Morgan Center to see academic counselors, academic support and student-athlete development staff members; while they must walk a half mile to offices in Covel Commons in order to see tutors, learning specialists, and program coordinators. This makes for a much less efficient model for the student-athletes, who already must deal with time-consuming obligations that non-athlete students don't have.

The new **ACADEMIC CENTER** *will consist of a study lounge that will provide a social space for student-athletes to meet and gather, as well as a large technology lab and offices for academic personnel.*

The Mo Ostin Academic Center for Student-Athletes will consist of three levels of nearly 20,000 square feet of new space. The entrance to the ground level will be next to the Bruin Bear statue — the symbol of UCLA and UCLA Athletics — and the first thing encountered when stepping through the doors will be the impressive UCLA Athletics Hall of Champions. This room showcases UCLA's 117 NCAA Championship trophies and cannot be anything but inspiring to the student-athletes who walk past them. The rest of this level will consist of a lobby and study lounge that will provide a social space for student-athletes to meet and gather, as well as a large technology lab and offices for academic counselors, eligibility and student-athlete development personnel. Staff occupying these offices are visited regularly by student-athletes, and having them within proximity to the technology lab, where student-athletes will have work areas, computers, and printers available to them, creates a more efficient model for student-athletes.

The second level will boast the main study lab, offices for learning specialists, as well as individual and group tutorial rooms and peer learning (tutoring) offices. Having these offices in close proximity will allow for streamlined communication and support amongst staff with student-athletes. The third, or top, level will house the Main Tutor Workplace & Lounge, an all-purpose main conference room, more group tutorial space, and academic coordinator offices. Once inside the Mo Ostin Academic Center for Student-Athletes, students will know they have all the support, mentorship, tutoring, academic and student-athlete development staff in one focal area.

UCLA Director of Athletics Dan Guerrero sees this as a necessity and next step for the balance of UCLA student-athletes' athletic and academic success, and remains grateful to Mr. Ostin for his vision of the new academic center.

"UCLA is the premier public institution in the country, one that is rigorous both athletically and academically. As we look to provide our student-athletes with every resource and opportunity for success in this environment, a state-of-the-art academic center is the next step in our facilities master plan," said Guerrero. "This facility will be essential to maintaining the balance of athletic accomplishments and academic achievements that have become a hallmark of UCLA Athletics, and it would not be possible without supporters like Mo Ostin. Mo has stepped up time and again in support of our student-athletes, and quite simply, it would be impossible to overstate our gratitude for the impact his generosity has had on our program."

Following the announcement of Mr. Ostin's lead gift, a capital campaign was begun to help fund this ambitious project, with UCLA Senior Associate Athletic Director for External Relations, Josh Rebholz, leading the charge.

"We are so grateful to Mo for stepping up once again and providing the lead gift," said Rebholz. "We now look to invite the generosity of others to raise $20 million more to make the Mo Ostin Academic Center for Student-Athletes a reality."

Ted Ackerley, a UCLA alumnus and former track and cross country student-athlete now living in Seattle, made a gift of $1M toward the construction of the Mo Ostin Academic Center for Student-Athletes just three weeks after UCLA Athletics announced their plans for the capital campaign. Citing his family's strong feelings about the importance of education, the donation to an academic center — specifically to name the Main Tutor Workplace & Lounge — was a perfect fit for the Ackerley family.

"As a former student-athlete at UCLA, I am honored, with my wife Danielle, to support the development of the Mo Ostin Academic Center for Student-Athletes and the Main Tutor Workplace & Lounge," said Ackerley. "This is where real work happens that advances the UCLA student-athlete's pursuit of classroom excellence. My wife and I care deeply about education, as do our three children, Ben, Hunter and Ashley."

Gifts of any amount to the capital campaign are welcome, and as of this writing nearly $17 million has been raised. Gifts of $50,000 or more, which may be payable over five years, will be recognized in the new facility, while gifts of $250,000 or more (also payable over five years) will be recognized with a dedicated naming opportunity. Benefits available to donors to the Mo Ostin Academic Center for Student-Athletes vary from invitations to the annual UCLA Scholar-Athlete Banquet to donor wall recognition to honorary membership in the Wooden Athletic Fund's Director's Circle or Wooden Benefactor membership levels, whose benefits include priority access to home, away, and postseason football and men's basketball game ticket allocation.

For more information or to become involved in the Mo Ostin Academic Center for Student-Athletes, please call UCLA Athletics Development at 310-206-3302, or visit UCLAAcademicCenter.com.

THANK YOU

The Wooden Athletic Fund is proud to honor the 8,513 donors who generously provide invaluable support for all UCLA student-athletes and honor the lasting educational and athletic legacy of Nell and John Wooden. Every gift has a positive impact on UCLA student-athletes' ability to succeed in the classroom, in competition and in the community.

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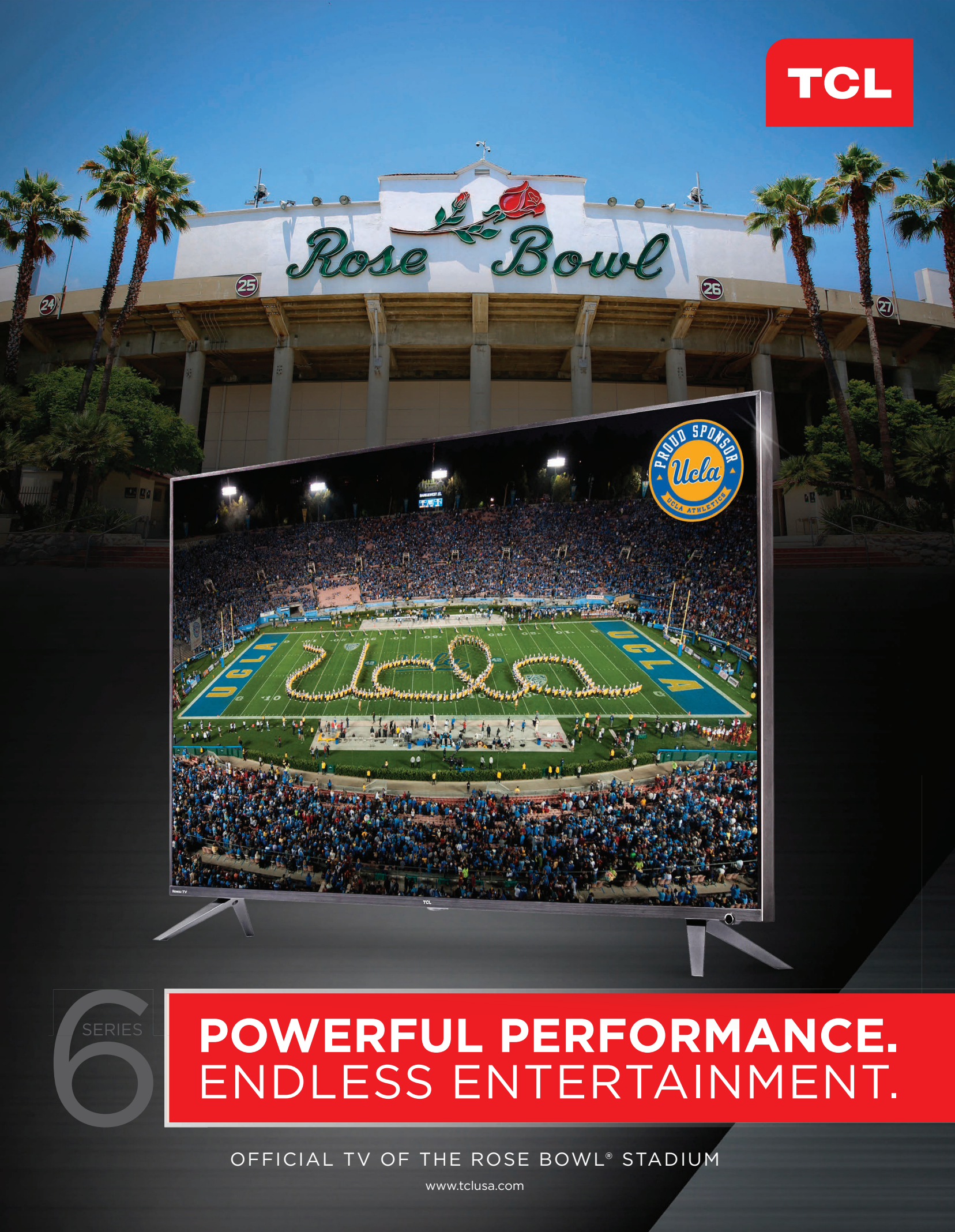
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