

Defensive End  
Josh Beckham

# 2003 OUTLOOK



# 2003 SEASON OUTLOOK



*Cal's 30-7 victory over Stanford in "The Big Game" iced a dramatic 2002 season for first-year head coach Jeff Tedford.*

## The Tedford Touch

### Pac-10's Coach of the Year Faces New Challenges in Year Two at Cal

When University of California Athletic Director Steve Gladstone hired Jeff Tedford to revive a sagging Golden Bears football program last year, one local sportswriter gazed in his crystal ball and made a bold prediction about the new head coach.

Wrote veteran *Oakland Tribune* columnist Carl Steward: "Tedford will be a name everyone will know in short order when he leads Cal out of the college football swamp. (He) has the look, the sound and the feel of a guy who can be what one observer termed, 'Cal's first "legacy" coach since Pappy Waldorf.' Here's betting that assessment, and Gladstone's instincts, are right on."

Right on, indeed.

While it may be a bit premature to make lofty comparisons to the legendary Waldorf – who chiseled out a 67-32-4 record in 10 years as Cal coach, including a 39-3-1 mark and three consecutive Rose Bowl appearances from 1948-50 – when it came to first impressions, Tedford almost scored off the charts in 2002.

What he did in resurrecting the California football program almost overnight was nothing short of incredible. Consider the distance Tedford and the Golden Bears had to travel:

- \* *He inherited a Cal program that had not tasted a winning season since 1993, and had endured a .291 winning percentage (16-39) over the past five years.*

- \* *The previous year's club posted the school's worst record (1-10) in 104 years, and surrendered the most points (431) and touchdowns (56) in Cal football history. That same Bear club finished last in the Pac-10 in 11 statistical categories.*

- \* *The 2001 Bears also forced the fewest turnovers (18) in school history and ranked 114th out of 115 NCAA Division I-A colleges with a -17 turnover margin.*

So, when Tedford transformed the Pac-10's last-place team into a high-powered unit that produced a better overall record (7-5) than such conference juggernauts as Washington and Oregon in his first season, an entire country stood up and took notice.

As 2002 Pac-10 Coach of the Year, Tedford guided his Bears to the biggest turnaround in the nation among Division I-A schools. With senior Kyle Boller emerging as perhaps the most improved quarterback in the nation – his yardage (2,815) and touchdowns (28) ranked second in Cal single season history – the Boys from Berkeley went from the outhouse to the penthouse in the blink of an eye.

Utilizing virtually the same roster that had gone 1-10 the season before, Tedford led his charter club to upset victories over nationally ranked opponents at Michigan State, Washington and Arizona State. It was the first time Cal had accomplished that feat of three wins over Top 25 schools in 52 years, and it marked the first time ever that the Bears had knocked off three nationally-ranked schools on the road.

The team numbers were staggering. Cal set a modern day school record by scoring 427 points on the season, while its 35.6-point scoring average ranked 10th in the nation (some 17 points higher than the 18.3 average of the previous season). And the 2002 team's +18 turnover margin led the Pac-10, ranked third nationally, and was the widest differential by a Cal club since 1951. And who was the Bears' head coach in '51? A guy named Pappy Waldorf.

Yet, while last year was a remarkable beginning for the Jeff Tedford Era of California football, the Bears' head coach realizes that it was only that -- a beginning. As ominous as last season's task was, Tedford and his staff face another severe challenge in 2003.

Gone are 23 seniors from that '02 club that tied for fourth place in the Pac-10 standings and was a pair of two-point losses to USC and Air Force from going 9-3. And on an even more sobering note, 15 of those 24 seniors were starters.

In fact, only junior tackle Lorenzo Alexander and sophomore rover Donnie McCleskey return as starters on the Bears' defense. By design, 18 of the 28 recruits signed this year are defensive players, and their arrival is right on time. Seven are defensive linemen, with prep All-Americans Leon Drummer (Berkeley High), Matt Malele (Carson High) and Brandon Mebane (L.A. Crenshaw High), and JC transfers Ray Tago (Long Beach City College) and Ryan Riddle (El Camino College) headlining the list.

"No question, we lost a lot of key players from last year's team," conceded Tedford. The Cal coach considered this past spring's camp to be much like his first.

"They're very similar. Last year, we didn't know the team going into spring ball. Now, with 24 seniors leaving, we had some challenges to see who would surface as leaders on this year's team."

The big advantage this year's team has over his first club is a winning foundation and attitude.

"The players have a trust level in us to know that, with hard work and dedication, they will have the ability to compete in any and all games we play this season," Tedford said. "That's a big plus."

With the Bears losing such All-Pac-10 selections as Boller, kick-off return specialist and wide receiver LaShaun Ward, offensive guard Scott Tercero and cornerback/punt returner Jemeel Powell, the 2003 club appears void of individual megastars.

But Tedford believes those stars will emerge when the season begins.

"Some positions where people haven't played, there was a higher learning curve in spring camp, where players gained experience through repetitions," he said. "Many of our returning players, as well as many of our JC recruits, must -- and will -- be asked to step in and perform. We're confident that they will meet the challenge."

Primarily bolstering the team's speed and defense, the Bears signed 28 players to national letters-of-intent in February, including 11 who received All-American accolades last season. Recruiting exclusively in the state of California, they inked 19 high school prospects and nine junior college players. In Rivals.com's ranking of the state's Top 100 prep players, the Golden Bears landed 14 from the list -- second only to USC's 20 recruits. No other school in the nation had more than six players in California's Top 100.

Cal also boasted six of the country's Top 125 junior college players, according to *PrepStar* magazine.

And virtually every recruiting publication and web site placed Cal's recruiting class among the country's Top 20 and second to the Trojans among Pac-10 schools.

Tedford, who served as offensive coordinator on Oregon's nationally No. 2 ranked Ducks in 2001, assessed what he believes to be the strengths and concerns of this year's Bear squad.

"I feel good about our offensive line," he said. "We have three starters back, anchored by our seniors Mark Wilson and Chris Murphy. I also like our defensive tackles, where Lorenzo Alexander, Josh Beckham and Tom Sverchek return."

"I'm a little concerned about the lack of game experience at quarterback and the defensive secondary, as well as people who are returning from injuries like our tailbacks (Adimchinobe) Echemandu and (Terrell) Williams."

Filling the king-sized shoes of Boller at quarterback will be difficult, to be sure. Junior Reggie Robertson (2-for-2, 64 yards, 1 TD), who served as the understudy last season, will certainly vie for the job, as will sophomore Richard Schwartz. Those two returnees may find stiff competition from Butte College transfer Aaron Rodgers, a third team JC All-American, however.

Echemandu and Williams, who both sustained knee injuries last year that required surgery, may hold the key to Cal's offensive fortunes this fall.

After apparently wrestling the starting tailback job away from incumbent Joe Igber with a brilliant showing two springs ago, Echemandu (formerly Joe Echema) had his dreams shattered when he tore his ACL and lateral meniscus in his right knee in the final days 2002 spring drills. Igber, the senior, went on to rush for 1,130 yards for the Bears.

Yet, Tedford believes that Echemandu -- the former *PrepStar* All-American at Hawthorne High who has rushed for only 239 career yards at Cal due to academic and medical detours -- can ably replace last year's No. 3 Pac-10 rusher if he's healthy. This past spring, Echemandu gave every indication that his physical problems are a thing of the past.

"If Joe (Adimchinobe) comes back at the level he left off last spring, he will be one of the top tailbacks in the Pac-10," flatly states the Cal coach. "He has the ability to run and block, and is a great receiver coming out of the backfield. He's a very talented person who has the speed to make big plays. We were encouraged by his performance in the spring."

Williams, who burst onto the Cal scene by rushing for 688 yards and averaging 105 yards in his final five games as a freshman in 2001, could also step in if Echemandu falters. The north-south runner was held out of contact drills in the spring for precautionary purposes, but he should be ready for full action in August.

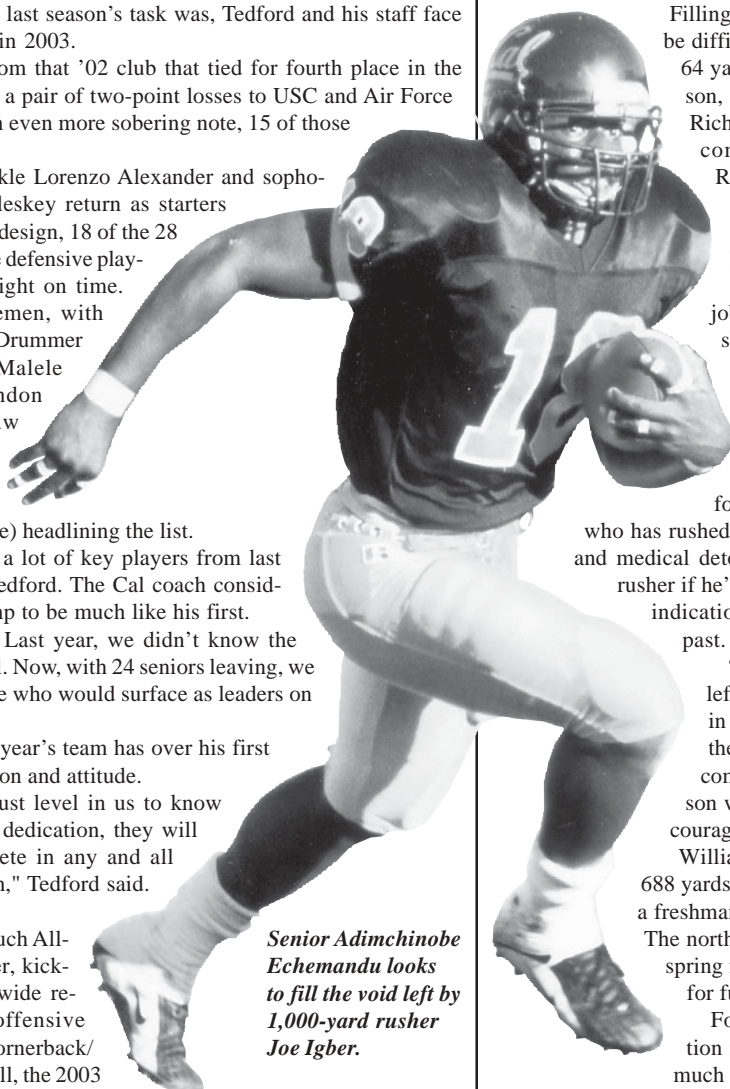
For the Bears to continue to lay a winning foundation in Year Two of the Tedford tenure, the Cal coach, much like last season, will not rely on any magic formulas but simply hard work.

"We need to do what we've been doing from Day 1 when we got here," he stressed. "We don't talk about how many games we're going to win. Just take care of the little things and the big things will take care of themselves. Our goal is always to compete for the Pac-10 championship. And that's a day-to-day proposition."

The 2003 schedule will be another challenge for Tedford and his Golden Bears. No less than nine of their 13 opponents were bowl teams last year. The pre-conference slate includes Southern Mississippi and Colorado State at Memorial Stadium, as well as stern road tests against Kansas State, Utah and Illinois. The Bears christen the Pac-10 season by hosting conference co-champion USC on Sept. 27.

"There are no soft spots," admits Tedford. "We have a very strong pre-season schedule. And the Pac-10 is tough every Saturday."

Tedford hopes the same can be said about his 2003 Bears.



*Senior Adimchinobe Echemandu looks to fill the void left by 1,000-yard rusher Joe Igber.*



## Offense

### Quarterbacks

The departure of Boller, who completed his career as the school's all-time TD pass king (64) and No. 2 passing yardage (7,980) leader, leaves a large void in the Golden Bears' offense in 2003. Yet, Tedford – the man who has developed the likes of Trent Dilfer, David Carr, Akili Smith, Joey Harrington and Boller into NFL first-round draft choices – has a way of reloading at the quarterback position.

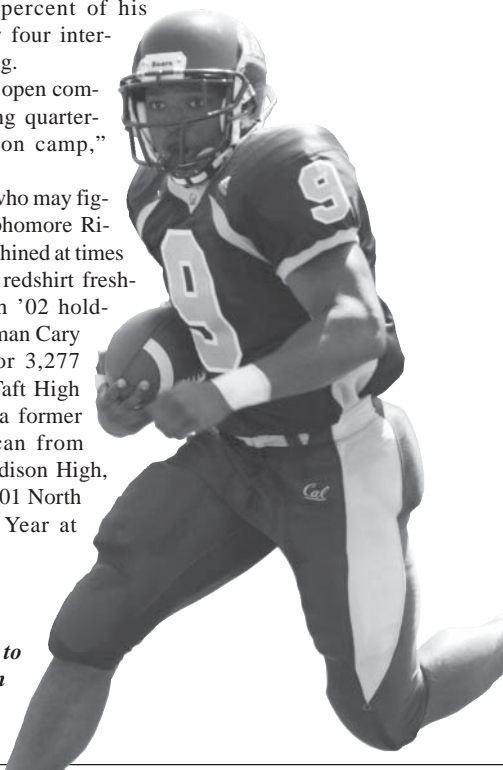
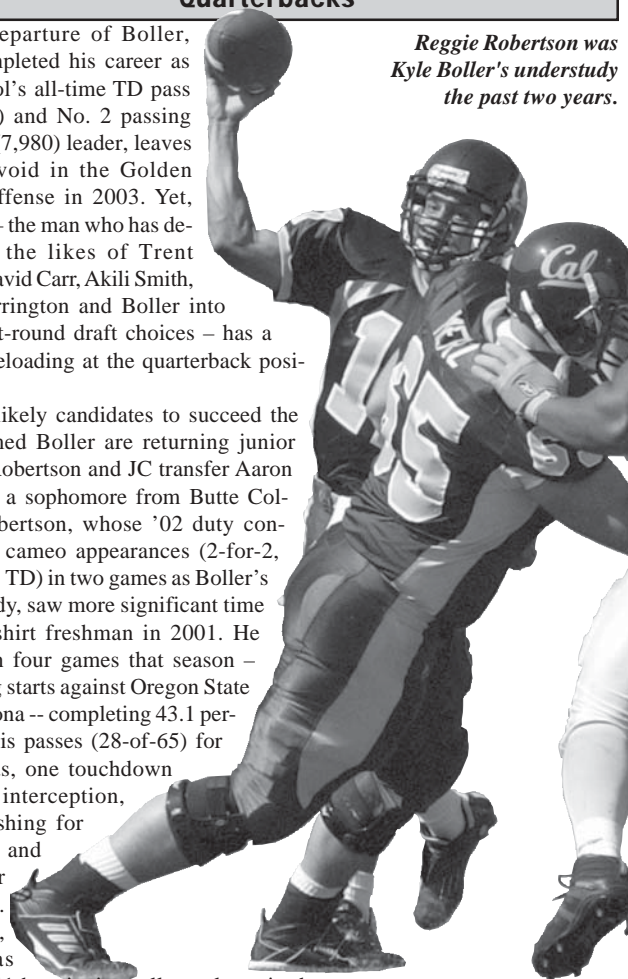
Most likely candidates to succeed the laser-armed Boller are returning junior Reggie Robertson and JC transfer Aaron Rodgers, a sophomore from Butte College. Robertson, whose '02 duty consisted of cameo appearances (2-for-2, 64 yds., 1 TD) in two games as Boller's understudy, saw more significant time as a redshirt freshman in 2001. He played in four games that season – including starts against Oregon State and Arizona -- completing 43.1 percent of his passes (28-of-65) for 298 yards, one touchdown and one interception, while rushing for 49 yards and another score. Rodgers, listed as the No. 41 best junior college player in the country by SuperPrep magazine, set school records in passing for 2,408 yards and 28 TDs for a 10-1 Butte team that earned a No. 2 national JuCo ranking. In completing 61.9 percent of his passes, he only threw four interceptions all season long.

"We will have wide open competition for the starting quarterback job in pre-season camp," clearly states Tedford.

Other quarterbacks who may figure in the mix are sophomore Richard Schwartz – who shined at times this past spring – and redshirt freshman Steve Levy, both '02 holdovers, as well as freshman Cary Dove, who passed for 3,277 yards and 31 TDs at Taft High last fall. Schwartz is a former *PrepStar* All-American from Huntington Beach's Edison High, while Levy was the 2001 North Jersey Player of the Year at Don Bosco Prep.

*Terrell Williams looks to recapture his freshman form when he rushed for 688 yards.*

*Reggie Robertson was Kyle Boller's understudy the past two years.*



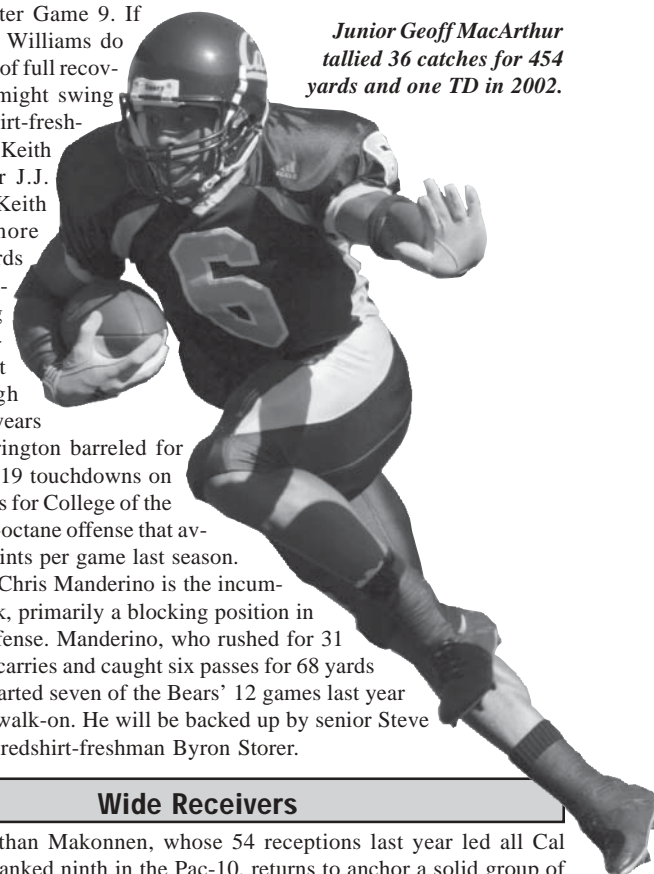
### Running Backs

Another Cal legend left the program last year, as the school's No. 2 career rusher Joe Igber (3,124 yards) graduated. Vying for his tailback position is a bevy of quality ball carriers, led by veteran returnees Adimchinobe Echemandu (formerly Joe Echema) and Terrell Williams. Echemandu, a fifth-year senior who has yet to see extensive playing time due to medical and academic issues, is an intriguing player. He was, perhaps, the story of spring practice a year ago, performing so well that Tedford had given him the starting nod over the more accomplished Igber. However, the former prep All-American from Hawthorne High School tore his ACL and lateral meniscus in the final week of spring practice, sidelining him for the entire 2002 campaign. A big and explosive back, he figures to have an inside track for the starting spot this fall if he can return to his previous form.

Meanwhile, Williams is another back who may be on the verge of greatness. Two years ago as a true freshman, he replaced an injured Igber at midseason and averaged 105 yards per game in the final five contests of the season, leading the Bears with 688 rushing yards overall. The Pac-10's No. 8 rusher that season, Williams bolted for a Cal freshmen-record 185 yards in the final game at Rutgers. With Igber almost used exclusively for much of last season, Williams' sophomore season was less eventful, carrying the ball only 37 times for 139 yards before he, too, was shelved with a season-ending knee injury after Game 9. If Echemandu or Williams do not show signs of full recovery, the door might swing open for redshirt-freshman Marcus O'Keith or JC transfer J.J. Arrington. O'Keith zoomed for more than 3,300 yards and 35 touchdowns rushing as a prep All-American at Narbonne High in Carson two years ago, while Arrington barreled for 769 yards and 19 touchdowns on only 135 carries for College of the Canyon's high-octane offense that averaged 54.5 points per game last season.

Sophomore Chris Manderino is the incumbent at fullback, primarily a blocking position in the Tedford offense. Manderino, who rushed for 31 yards on eight carries and caught six passes for 68 yards and one TD, started seven of the Bears' 12 games last year as a freshman walk-on. He will be backed up by senior Steve Torgersen and redshirt-freshman Byron Storer.

*Junior Geoff MacArthur tallied 36 catches for 454 yards and one TD in 2002.*



### Wide Receivers

Senior Jonathan Makonnen, whose 54 receptions last year led all Cal receivers and ranked ninth in the Pac-10, returns to anchor a solid group of wide receivers that also includes part-time starter Geoff McArthur, who snared 36 passes for 454 yards and one TD in 2002 as the team's No. 4 pass-catcher. Makonnen, who transferred from national champion City College of San Francisco last year, caught at least three passes in 11 of the Bears' 12 games in piling up 682 yards and seven touchdowns through the air. McArthur opened the 2002 campaign by averaging 6.0 receptions per contest in starting Cal's first five games, amassing 30 catches for 359 yards and a TD during that stretch. A hamstring injury sidelined him soon thereafter, and he started only one game the rest of the season. Other returning receivers with promise include senior Vincent Strang (5 rec., 100 yds., 1 TD), redshirt freshman David Gray, and juniors Chase Lyman and Burl Toler. Gray – a former prep All-American at Oakland's McClymonds High – helped christen the Tedford Era by collaborating with Terrell Williams on a spectacular first play of the season in the Baylor game, racing for a 71-yard touchdown off a halfback pass from Williams. Soon thereafter, however, Gray was sidelined with a

**Senior Brandon Hall has the inside track to take over the starting role at tight end.**

shoulder injury, which led to a redshirt season. Lyman, who corralled a combined 28 passes for 419 yards and three TDs in his first two seasons at Cal, missed the entire 2002 slate with a hamstring injury that required post-season surgery. Two incoming freshmen who may also demand attention are prep All-American Devin Stearns, a 4.4 sprinter from Serra High, and two-time national Fred Biletnikoff award winner Sam DeSa, who caught 166 passes for 3,154 yards and 40 touchdowns during his career at nearby Monte Vista High.

### Tight Ends

In the Bears' new offensive system, the tight end position became an offensive weapon for the first time in many years in 2002. Tom Swoboda, who had managed only eight career receptions entering his senior season, erupted for 42 catches for 451 yards and seven touchdowns in leading all Pac-10 tight ends in receptions and TDs. The 2003 season is a good-news, bad-news proposition at the tight end spot. The bad news: Swoboda has graduated. The good news: the cupboard is far from empty. Brandon Hall, who transferred from Orange Coast College as an accomplished pass-catcher last year, appears to have the inside track at the starting job. Hall, whose banged-up ankle limited his production to eight catches for 79 yards last year, is fully healthy and should return to his 2001 form when he snatched 26 passes for 295 yards and two TDs at Orange Coast. He may be severely challenged, however, by the arrival of another tight end transfer in first team JC All-American Garrett Cross, a teammate of Rodgers at Butte College last year. Cross hauled in 39 passes for 590 yards and led all of the state's tight ends in touchdown catches with 10. Two returnees add further depth to the position, with junior Jordon Hunter, a former Pac-10 All-Freshman first team selection, and sophomore Eric Beegun, who impressed in last year's practices after catching 25 passes for 621 yards and nine TDs at Palisades High School two seasons ago.

### Offensive Line

One of the most stable areas of the Golden Bears, the 2003 offensive line features three returning starters and 11 players who have varsity game experience. All-Pac-10 honorable mention left tackle Mark Wilson, the only Cal interior lineman to start all 34 games over the past three seasons, is the senior cornerstone of this unit. The 6-6, 295-pound veteran played a key role in protecting Boller last year, as the Bears tied for the Pac-10 lead in fewest sacks allowed (25). Senior tackle Chris Murphy (6-6, 310) and junior Jonathan Giesel (6-4, 300) also return as starters on the right side of the line. Marvin Phillip, who's back from a two-year Mormon mission in North Dakota,

*Offensive tackle Chris Murphy will provide experience at right tackle.*

will be trying to reclaim his starting center job. He played in six games in 2000 as a true freshman, starting the final two contests of the season against Oregon and Stanford. Others who will battle for playing time in '03 include tackles Ryan O'Callaghan (12 games in '02), Aaron Merz (9 games) Jonathan Murphy (4 games) and Derek Joyce (3 games), guard David Hays (8 games, 1 start), and guard-center Nolan Bluntzer (1 game). Redshirt-freshmen Michael Gray (6-6, 320), Paul Fraley (6-4, 300) and Erik Robertson (6-7, 315) may also emerge this season. While the leadership of departing senior guard Scott Tercero, an All-Pac-10 second team pick in 2002, will be missed, the Bears have reason to believe that this year's offensive line could be improved over last year's unit.

## Defense

### Defensive Line

A year ago, the Bears' defensive line was one of the most experienced and deepest in the Pac-10, and arguably the strongest area of the team. Unfortunately, defensive line coach Ken Delgado was forced to say good-bye to the likes of All-Pac-10 first team selection Tully Banta-Cain (13) and All-Pac-10 honorable mention pick Tom Canada (12), who combined for 25 sacks as Cal's starting ends, and veteran tackle Daniel Nwangwu, a four-year starter. With their departure, the Golden Bears must rely heavily on the emergence of three returning tackles in All-Pac-10 honorable mention junior Lorenzo Alexander (25 tackles, one sack, two blocked kicks in '02), senior Josh Beckham (18 tackles, three sacks) and junior Tom Sverchek (10 tackles). Alexander, a former Pac-10 All-Freshman first teamer and prep All-American at St. Mary's High of Berkeley, started six games last year. With the line so depleted with its senior losses, recruiting defensive line talent was a high priority this off-season. From all indications, Cal's coaching staff was successful in replenishing that lost talent. The only question is, are they ready to excel on the Pac-10 level? In nabbing seven defensive linemen in the

recruiting wars, the 2003 Bears feature five prep stars who were all ranked among California's Top 100 players by Rivals.com – tackles Leon Drummer (Berkeley's St. Mary's High), Matt Malele (Carson High), Brandon Mebane (L.A. Crenshaw High) and Josh Tauanu'u (Long Beach Poly High), and end Kyle McClure (Oaks Christian) and two JC ends, Ryan Riddle (El Camino College) and Ray Tago (Long Beach City College), who were both listed among *PrepStar* magazine's Top 125 junior college players in the nation. Other '02 holdovers that could contribute include senior end

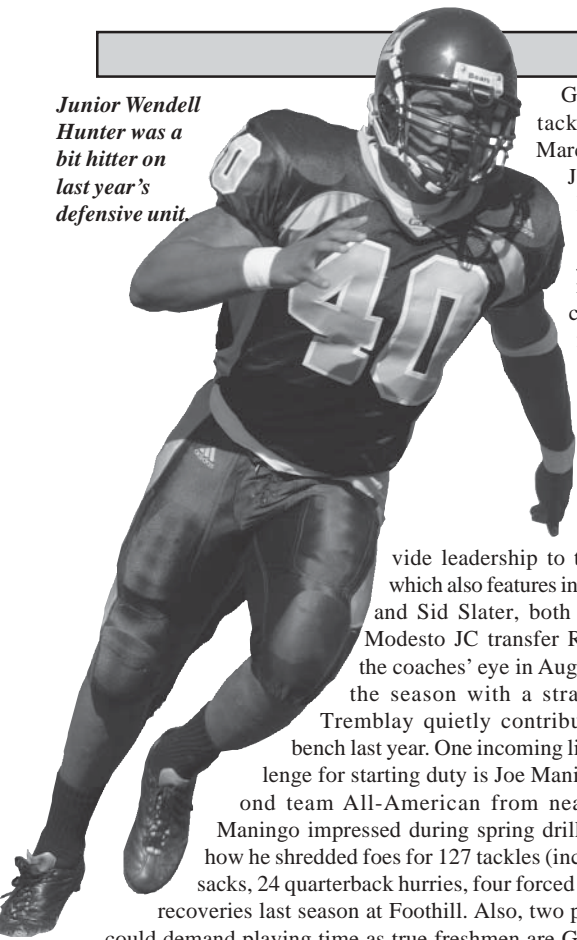
Monte Parson, junior tackle L.P. Ladouceur and sophomore tackle Brandon Povia, all of whom saw sparse playing time last fall.

*Junior defensive tackle Lorenzo Alexander is poised for an All-Pac-10 season.*



## Linebackers

*Junior Wendell Hunter was a bit hitter on last year's defensive unit.*



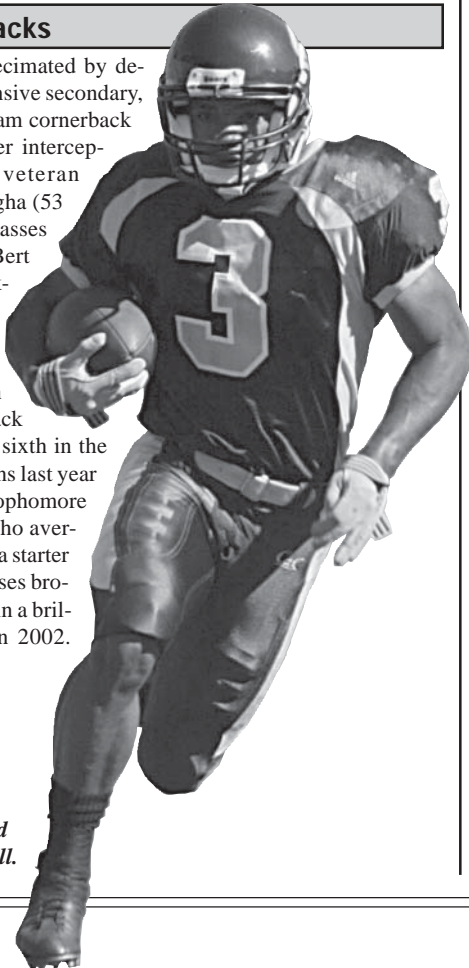
Gone are Matt Nixon (61 tackles, 3.5 sacks in '02), Marcus Daniels (68 tackles), John Klotsche (13 tackles in 2 games) and Paul Ugenti (37 tackles), as junior Wendell Hunter represents the only five career Cal starts on this fall's linebacking corps. Hunter, a vicious hitter who has impressed with his speed and instincts, was the Bears' sixth-leading tackler last year with 43 stops. He will be asked to provide leadership to this experienced group, which also features inside men Brian Tremblay and Sid Slater, both reserves last year, and Modesto JC transfer Ryan Estes, who caught the coaches' eye in August drills before missing the season with a strained Achilles tendon.

Tremblay quietly contributed 27 tackles off the bench last year. One incoming linebacker who may challenge for starting duty is Joe Maningo, a *JC Gridwire* second team All-American from nearby Foothill College. Maningo impressed during spring drills at Cal, demonstrating how he shredded foes for 127 tackles (including 33 for losses), 15 sacks, 24 quarterback hurries, four forced fumbles and two fumble recoveries last season at Foothill. Also, two prep All-Americans who could demand playing time as true freshmen are Garrett Tremblay, Brian's younger brother who stockpiled 233 tackles and 12 sacks at Palm Desert High during the past two seasons, and Chris Purtz, who reeled off 156 tackles and 15 sacks at Clovis West High in 2002.

## Defensive Backs

Another area that was decimated by departing seniors was the defensive secondary, where All-Pac-10 second team cornerback Jemeel Powell (No. 7 career interception leader with 10), veteran cornerback Nnamdi Asomugha (53 tackles, 3 interceptions, 10 passes broken up), and free safety Bert Watts (team-leading 80 tackles) were stalwarts last season. The only returning starters – both appearing in the opening lineup in seven games – are senior cornerback James Bethea, who tied for sixth in the Pac-10 with four interceptions last year and added 42 tackles, and sophomore rover Donnie McCleskey, who averaged 5.4 tackles per game as a starter and posted 45 stops, five passes broken up and one interception in a brilliant freshman campaign in 2002.

*Senior James Bethea picked off four interceptions last fall.*

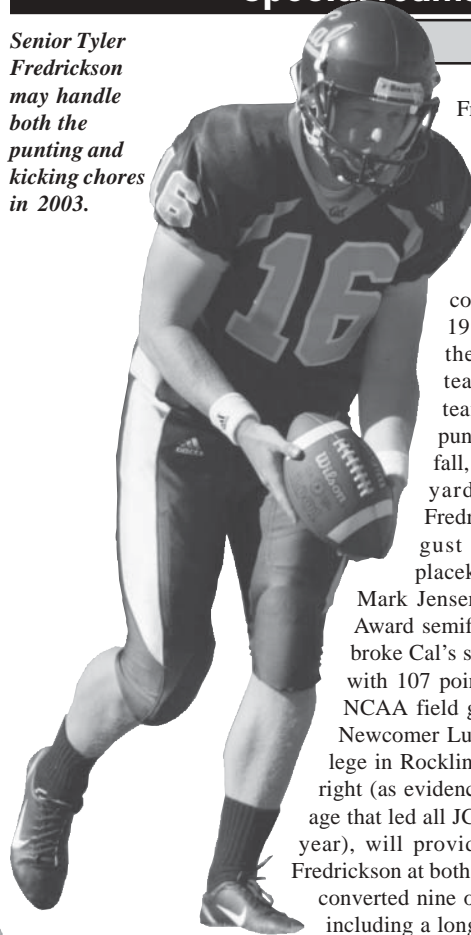


Other returnees who will need to step up this fall are juniors Ryan Gutierrez (14 tackles, one fumble recovery) and All-Pac-10 second team special teams whiz Mike McGrath (21 tackles), and sophomores Wale Forester, Will Scott and Obi Amajoyi. Fresno City College transfer Matt Giordano should provide a veteran force at safety in his initial Pac-10 season, while freshman cornerbacks Daymeion Hughes (L.A. Crenshaw High), Brandon Myles (Carson High), Brandon Sanders (Oakland's Skyline High) and Thomas DeCoud (Pinole Valley High) are all speed merchants who can close fast. Tedford and position coach J.D. Williams are prepared to play some incoming high school recruits immediately, knowing full well that there will be early mistakes of inexperience. "It's the job of our coaches to put them in situations where they can be successful," said Tedford. "The quicker they can catch on to the speed of the game, the faster they will be able to play and contribute."

## Special Teams

### Kickers

*Senior Tyler Fredrickson may handle both the punting and kicking chores in 2003.*



Senior punter Tyler Fredrickson returns for his third straight year as the starter, lugging a 39.2 yards per average on 141 career punts at Cal. His 39.5 average in 2002 was the best of his collegiate tenure, as was his 19 punts that landed inside the 20-yard line. The first team Pac-10 All-Academic team member blasted seven punts of 50 yards or better last fall, including a career-best 66-yarder at Michigan State. Fredrickson will also open August camp as the starting placekicker, having backed up Mark Jensen last year. A Lou Groza Award semifinalist last season, Jensen broke Cal's single season scoring mark with 107 points and ranked seventh in NCAA field goals with 1.58 per game. Newcomer Lucas Everett of Sierra College in Rocklin, a fine punter in his own right (as evidenced by his 45.2-yard average that led all JC punters in California last year), will provide strong competition to Fredrickson at both kicker and punter. Everett converted nine of 12 field goal attempts – including a long of 47 yards – and 49-of-52 extra points for Sierra's 10-1 club.

### Return Specialists

The Bears lose two of the finest return men in school history with the departure of Ward and Powell. Ward, named All-Pac-10 first team for his kickoff-returning prowess, set a school record for most kickoff return yardage (809) in a season last year in averaging 28.9 yards per return. That average ranked first in the Pac-10, fifth in the NCAA and fourth on Cal's all-time single season list. Powell, meanwhile, closed the curtain on his career with a 12.7 punt return average over his four years in Berkeley that ranked third all-time in school annals, while his 724 punt return yards ranked second only to the great Deltha O'Neal on Cal's career charts. Clearly, no one player will replace these all-time performers. Most likely to share in their duties this year will be Bethea, who averaged a respectable 22.9 yards on nine kickoff returns last season, and the less seasoned Gutierrez and McCleskey. With the influx of nine recruits who have been clocked at 4.5 seconds or faster in the 40-yard dash, it's a sure bet that some newcomers will also figure in the return picture. Heading that group of speed burners is Noah Smith of Taft High School, who has blazed to a 4.29 time.