

Cal Downs UCLA in PAC Play

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The Golden Bears improved to 2-0 in PAC Rugby Conference play Saturday with their 75-22 win over UCLA on the North Athletic Field, outscoring the Bruins 49-0 in a 46-minute span that stretched from late in the first half to almost the end of the contest.

Nine different players scored for California, with second-half replacements Josh Tucker and Russell Webb notching two tries apiece and fullback Jake Anderson amassing 25 points on a try and 10 conversions (10-for-11).

The Bears got the job done with a mixed lineup that contained seven full changes - with starts for sophomores Michael Bush at No. 8 and Nicklas Boyer, Eakalafi Okusi and Andrew Battaglia in the backline - from the team that began the match vs. British Columbia last weekend.

Bruins inside center Race Noeldner intercepted a pass by Andre Coquillard in the second

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minute and raced 55 meters for a try that was converted by Ben Francis (1-of-4). Boyer poached the ball coming out of a Bruins' scrum three minutes later, leading to Cal's first try by Anderson, whose only missed conversion came on the ensuing attempt from the left touchline into a cool breeze.

"We stuck to it," said Boyer, who suited up in the No. 9 jersey across from his former Jesuit High School teammate Grant Penney. "We had our hands full in the first half but we fought through it. It was a good game at a good venue."

Anderson agreed that UCLA "had some good play though a lot of it was also self-imposed," such as when Battaglia had his nice breakaway down the right sideline negated by an in-goal knock-on two minutes after that. But a try by captain Seamus Kelly soon turned the tide back in Cal's favor and the Bears never trailed again.

Two tries by UCLA winger Sebastian Sharpe and another off a kick-and-chase by wing Martial Chaput accounted for the balance of UCLA's scoring.

California moves to 12-0 overall while UCLA falls to 6-3 overall and 0-1 in the conference, but despite the loss, Bruins head coach Scott Stewart said UCLA was "delighted to be hosting our first-ever PAC Rugby match" and praised the nascent conference's potential for "future growth both as an athletic pursuit and a commercial entity as we work hard to build its structure and appeal."

The Cal reserves also won Saturday, defeating the Bruins, 81-0.

In the other match in the PAC Rugby Conference this weekend, the match in Salt Lake City between Utah and Oregon State was postponed due to inclement weather.

The Bears return to Berkeley for a three-match home set, starting with Arizona (3-2, 0-1) in another PAC matchup next Saturday, March 2, at 1 p.m, with a reserve-grade match following the Starting XV.

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The following week kicks off under the lights on Witter Rugby Field with a rare Monday night match against Penn State (3-0)-- an even rarer opponent in the regular season -- starting at 6 p.m. Cal then hosts James Madison, which will just be underway with its spring season when it plays Cal in the teams' first-ever meeting Wednesday night at 6 p.m. in Strawberry Canyon.