

# UCLA stuns unbeaten and top-ranked Stanford, 79-73

by Sam Farmer  
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PALO ALTO, Calif. - Welcome back to UCLA's magical mystery tour.

In Saturday's installment, the unranked Bruins confounded their critics once again by knocking off No. 1 and unbeaten Stanford, 79-73, before a stunned crowd of 7,391 at Maples Pavilion and a national TV audience.

Yes, these are the same Bruins who lost by 29 to California less than 48 hours earlier; the same team that fell to Cal State Northridge this season; the same team whose coach's job status is forever in limbo. Leave it to a Stanford player to add a dash of mythological perspective to the craziness.

"They're a tragic team," guard Ryan Mendez said. How can they play like they did against Cal, then come in here and play like they did today?"

Obviously, Mendez isn't a history major. If he were, he would know that these Bruins play at their rock-solid best when everyone thinks they're on the verge of collapse. Saturday's victory was merely an encore of last season's shocker, when unranked UCLA rolled into Maples and rubbed out the No. 1 Cardinal.

With Saturday's victory, the Bruins

improved to 13-6 overall, 7-2 in Pacific 10 Conference play. Stanford, which was the nation's only undefeated team, dropped to 20-1 and 8-1.

That UCLA won ensures there will be plenty of confused top-25 voters this week. The Bruins haven't been ranked all season, and their loss to Cal was an embarrassment. Yet how can anyone ignore a team that did what UCLA did Saturday?

"We don't expect anything from the top-25 voters," point guard Earl Watson said. We beat SC, and we couldn't figure out why we weren't in the Top 25. But we don't even care anymore. Because it only matters if we win the Pac-10 and get into the (NCAA) tournament, and do good things from that point. Don't give us any extra credit; just keep giving us motivation by not voting for us."

The Bruins love the role of scrappy underdog, and few players embody that more than guard Billy Knight, who learned five minutes before the game he would be making his fifth start of the season.

Knight drained a three-point shot seven seconds into the game, then never looked back, finishing with career highs in points (22) and backslaps in the locker room.

Coach Steve Lavin gave Knight the nod over Jason Flowers because

Knight played so well during the Bay Area trip last season. Not only that, but when the Bruins scrimmaged Friday, Knight knocked down every shot in sight.

"For him to get 22 today, it's like, Who is he? Where did he come from?" said Watson, who shares an off-campus apartment with Knight. But people don't understand that (Friday) Billy hit 10 threes in a row. Dick Vitale had to tap one of his friends, like, 'Do you see this kid?' Billy was just going off."

Just as important, Knight did a good job of putting the defensive clamps on Stanford's Casey Jacobsen, who made 4 of 18 shots from the field and saw his team's dream of an undefeated season vanish.

"I thought we could do it," Jacobsen said. Maybe it wasn't realistic. But if any team could have gone undefeated, it would have been us."

Stanford had its chances, clawing back from a 40-37 halftime deficit to forge a 55-55 tie on a dunk by Justin Davis with 10:08 to play. The Bruins answered with an 11-0 run during the next three minutes that quieted the crowd.

The Cardinal had one flurry left, cutting the lead to 74-71 on a three-

pointer by Mike McDonald with 48 seconds remaining. But UCLA clinched the victory at the foul line, getting two free throws from Matt Barnes, and one each from Knight, Watson and Jason Kapono.

In addition to Knight, three other UCLA starters scored in double figures: Watson (20), Kapono (14) and Dan Gadzuric (10).

"We showed incredible poise when Stanford made their runs," Lavin said. "We kept our composure and continued to execute. Had some great defensive efforts. From the end of the Cal game, I was really impressed with our kids' maturity in terms of focusing on Stanford, putting that game (the 92-63 loss to Cal) behind us. Learning from it. But putting it behind us and moving forward."

Lavin chalked up the turnaround to lessons learned. He said his team is merely progressing as it becomes more seasoned. But Saturday's Bruins looked nothing like the team that was so overmatched two nights earlier.

"Yeah, it's weird," Barnes conceded. "We lost to the team we should have beat, and then we come in here and beat the No. 1 team. Of course, people are going to look at it as a little strange. But it happens. It's an up-and-down season."

And the next twist, at USC on Thursday, is anyone's guess.

# A spectacle for generation XFL

by Angus Phillips  
The Washington Post  
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ORLANDO, Fla. - They played some pretty good pro football Saturday on opening day of the hyped and heralded XFL, with lots of scoring, powerful hits, bouncy cheerleaders, fireworks after each home score and a full house - sort of. The Rage beat the visiting Chicago Enforcers, 33-29, in a chilly drizzle and from the beer-bleary look of fans when it was over, most went home happy, including Jeff Carnine, who will be back.

And why not? Carnine bought prime, five-game Rage season tickets 10 rows back from the 40-yard line for \$180 apiece, including parking. "Cheap investment," said Carnine, 24, who's at the top end of the XFL target audience of 12- to 24-year-old males. "If this turns out to be as hot as I think, I'm first in line next year."

Why the XFL? "It's old-style football like in the '50s and '60s," said Carnine, a software company employee and ex-Cowboys fan. "The NFL is too passive. Too much kicking, too much protecting the quarterback, too many rules. This opens it up. Sexy cheerleaders, fights - it's all encouraged. It's the politically incorrect vs. the politically correct."

That much he divined before kickoff. Afterward, Carnine was swept away in a mob of 36,000 who greeted the XFL by filling "every available seat" at the Citrus Bowl (league officials left the upper deck empty to keep the experience "intimate.")

And what a nice, intimate crowd it turned out to be. "Worst I've ever seen," said a weary cop as he made his way out after midnight. "Fights, people throwing bottles and stuff. We must have kicked out 100 people."

A cameraman from a Gainesville TV station concurred. "It seemed like every time I panned the crowd from the field," he said, "it was either women pulling up their shirts or guys fighting."

Oh, well, the XFL is the brainchild of World Wrestling Federation chief Vince McMahon, who didn't get rich overestimating the intelligence of his audience, and NBC. McMahon's "family has been putting on a heck of a show for years," said red-bearded Jed Clampette of Tampa, who clutched a beer as he waited in the rain for the last tickets to go on sale. "He'll put one on here, too. It's going to be a lot more like football than what we saw in the Super Bowl."

The Rage recorded its first serious injury before the kickoff - in the coin toss!

Under XFL rules, that musty old NFL tradition at the 50-yard line is replaced by a mad dash. Two players line up at the 30-yard line, the ball sits on the 50, someone shouts "go" and whoever grabs it and hangs on wins

the right to receive the kickoff.

Some fun, eh? Tell that to Hassan Shamsid-Deen, the speedy defensive back who ran for the Rage. First he lost the race to the Enforcers' Troy Saunders, then when the ball squirted free and he pounced, he lost use of his left shoulder for a couple of weeks, dislocating it in the scramble.

"That's the concern we all had," Rage Coach Galen Hall said. "Hopefully, the league will look at this and find something else."

"Next time we're just going to let the other team have it," said Rage wide receiver Mario Bailey, the all-time leading pass catcher in NFL Europe. "It's not worth it to lose a guy like that."

The game lured several NFL scouts, including one from the East Coast who declined to give his name. He offered this halftime assessment:

"A lot of guys here could play in the NFL right now. ... There's plenty of talent."

The Rage showed that on the first play from scrimmage. Quarterback Jeff Brohm, who spent six years as a backup in the NFL, lofted a long, soft, arcing pass to Kevin Swayne, a refugee from Arena Football, who flubbed past the defense for a 51-yard touchdown.

The play highlighted another XFL-only rule. It allows one backfield player to launch full speed before the snap. Swayne, 6 feet 2 and 195 pounds, passed Chicago's defensive backs before their mouthguards were in.

Fireworks erupted at the score, cheerleaders danced lasciviously and the XFL was up, up and away.

Cheerleader Nina Oh, an aspiring singer, said she has worked with the New England Patriots, Orlando Magic and Denver Nuggets. "This is the first time it's been for more than just gas money. I graduated to the XFL. ... We're getting decent pay and we're respected not just for our bodies but for our minds."

Back on the field, play was being dominated by the Rage except for one unstoppable Enforcer, 5-9, 190-pound running back John Avery, who ran up an impressive 157 yards on the ground and 93 on pass receptions and scored two touchdowns.

Avery, a 25-year-old first-round draft pick of the Miami Dolphins who played two years in the NFL before being cut by the Broncos, said he enjoyed everything about the game except for the fans peppering him with chicken bones.

Avery called the XFL "a blessing for a lot of guys with a lot of ability," adding, "I belong in football." He admitted he had doubts, in light of the XFL's connections to TV wrestling. "But I figured if Little Debbie owned the team, that doesn't mean we all have to eat Twinkies."

# A long, strange trip for Capriati

by Sally Jenkins  
The Washington Post

Ask yourself whether you would like to be held responsible for anything, one single solitary thing, that you did at age 18. The answer is no. You wouldn't like to be held responsible. Not for the things you said, or for the things you felt, not for the things you jumped off of, or for the things you ran into, not for the things you hazarded, or the things you held back. Not even for the things you were.

That's why the most stirring event in sports last week wasn't the Super Bowl, or the Duke-Carolina game. It was the Australian Open final won by Jennifer Capriati, who collected the first Grand Slam title of her half-wrecked career and instructed us all in why, sometimes, failure and loss can be so much more valuable than unbroken success.

You've known Capriati for more than a decade now, and it's been a strange kind of intimacy. You've traced the arc of her life, from wholesome prodigy to a quarrelsome, nerve-shattered burnout who dropped off the tour in 1993 and was arrested for misdemeanor marijuana possession, in the company of grungers carrying cocaine and heroin. In 1994, she entered a rehabilitation clinic to cure her of God knows what.

She returned to the tennis court in 1996, but played only sporadically until last season. And then last week she won the Australian, a full decade after she was supposed to. By now you've practically got a picture album of her.

A retrospective seems only fitting. Boca Raton, Fla., spring 1990:

She was just 13, making her pro debut with a lopsided smile and a Labrador quality. She greeted every shot that came over the net with a bounding kind of joy, as if to say, "A ball!" She wore a gold bracelet that said, "Love, Chrissie," from her mentor Chris Evert, only enhancing her fairy tale aura. Her parents Stefano and Denise, a real estate agent and a flight attendant, respectively, delivered her to the world with expressions of pride and bafflement and could only shade their eyes as she went off the high dive. "There's this greatness in her," Denise said. In her very first tournament, she made it all the way to the final. She was wildly promising. How

far could she go? Ted Tinling, the historian and tennis dress designer, said her future was unlimited "as long as she doesn't fall in love with a ball boy."

But the pressures were immediate and overwhelming: A battery of cameras accompanied her as she walked onto the court for the first time. She was worth \$5 million in endorsement contracts right out of the gate, although she scarcely seemed to know it initially. "Doesn't it go in a trust fund or something?" she said. Her agent was kiddingly dubbed the Colonel, after Colonel Tom Parker. "I think it's kind of out of control," the kid said, and everyone laughed nervously.

New York, November 1991:

By 14, she was the youngest player ever ranked in the top 10. By 15, she was a semifinalist at Wimbledon and

scaled back her tournament schedule, and declared her hatred for public life and the press. "Why does everyone care?" she asked at one point. "I mean everyone is so wrapped up in everyone else's lives. People think they know what I feel like. I'm like, 'Hey man, what do you know? I don't tell you what's going on in your life or how you feel.'"

Miami, December 1993:

Capriati was arrested in a motel in Coral Gables, Fla., while bingeing with a group of other teen-agers possessing crack and heroin. Her mug shot showed a young woman with a nose ring, eyes as dim as windows with the shades drawn, and a slack and uncaring jaw.

Saddlebrook Resort, winter 1996:

After two stints in rehab, with rumors of perhaps even more, Stefano persuaded his daughter to pick up the racket again. She lost weight and looked more fit and happy than she had since in she was seventh grade, and there was a real heat in her groundstrokes. There were rumors of a comeback, but she was still angry and wounded. Stefano and his wife had long since divorced, and the family was convinced the relentless glare of the spotlight had been the source of their problems.

"You're the reason we sent her to Coral Gables, to get away from people like you, otherwise she wouldn't have been in that hotel," he said to a reporter. As Capriati gathered her rackets after a practice session, she said, "Everybody wants me to take responsibility, and I have. But what about their responsibility?"

It would be two more years before she appears on tour on a regular basis. January 2001:

It is Super Bowl Sunday and the Tampa airport is deserted when Capriati disembarks from an 18-hour flight from Australia. Only her mother, Denise, is waiting for her. Capriati has skeins of muscle in her arms and a light in her face. She is just 24, but it is clear from her demeanor that she has decided that life

is not a matter of unfettered happiness, and that's fine. The truth is that such a thing is not only impossible, but probably not even good for you.

At the gate, her mother hugs her. And then Denise and Stefano, whose agonies, one would venture to say, have been unimaginable, hug too. For the first time in years.

A few days later, after she has caught up on her sleep, Capriati reflected: "Sometimes I think, why have all these things happened to me, why is my life like this, you know? But I wouldn't trade it because it is interesting. ... I am glad not just to have this boring, ordinary life."

She is glad, because she understands that there are certain inevitabilities. You will grow older. You will be forced to compromise in ways you never imagined and confront problems you thought you were immune from. You will find a job, and perhaps lose it. You will fight with your mate, shoulder unwanted responsibilities, and cope with rank unfairness. You can allow that to demoralize you. Or you can let it shape you. To paraphrase C.S. Lewis, maybe pain really is God's way of making us more perfect.

What happened to Jennifer Capriati was only life.

# As if the league didn't have enough publicity

by Mal Florence  
Los Angeles Times  
February 7, 2001

The debut of the XFL was certainly not ignored by a majority of our nation's sports columnists, many of whom seem personally offended by the gimmicky new league. A sampling:

Dave Kindred in the Sporting News: "With all due disrespect, the XFL is the trashiest creation in legitimate-sports history."

"It's brilliant marketing of the sort remarked upon by P.T. Barnum, who said, 'There's a sucker born every minute,' and by Henry L. Mencken, who said, 'No one ever went broke underestimating the intelligence of the American public.'"

More outraged was Phil Mushnick of the New York Post, who wrote: "For however much longer the XFL has, there's really only one scorecard worth keeping."

"It's the one that notes all the sellouts who lent their names, careers, reputations and consciences to this predictably unmitigated piece of garbage."

Tim Kawakami of the San Jose Mercury News had a ho-hum take on the new league:

"Not as scripted as feared, not as gritty

as promised, not as interesting as hyped, and not as outrageous or (gulp) revolutionary as most of us sports-TV critics assumed and awaited.... A bauble. A fun thing, easily discarded."

Caryn James, writing in the arts section of the New York Times, said: "Presenting 'The West Wing' and the XFL means that NBC now has the smartest and dumbest shows on network television."

Trivia time: What was significant about the UCLA men's basketball team's 42-37 overtime win over USC in 1943?

You complain too: Maryland basketball Coach Gary Williams, annoyed at the relentless criticism of Terrapin fans after their behavior following a devastating loss to Duke on Jan. 27:

"They're great fans. This is overkill, what's going on right now. Everybody should shut up. I think this is being made into something because this is Duke and Duke complains."

No hero: Michael Bauman of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel on the statement by Mark Chmura's attorney, Gerald Boyle, that Chmura showed courage usually displayed by those who win the Medal of Honor:

"Some of us thought that the medal was awarded to people such as Sgt. Alvin York, who charged a machine-gun nest.

The medal is not typically awarded to someone who charges into a hot tub with booze and adolescent girls."

No decision: Mike Tyson was reportedly wrestling with one of his pet tigers when it pinned him to the ground. "The tiger's foot was on his head," a source told the New York Post. "He had to pet it for three or four hours before it got off him."

Wardrobe dilemma: Minnesota Wild defenseman Brad Bombardier, explaining why he has worn his New Jersey Devils' Stanley Cup ring only twice: "It's pretty hard to go out in a shirt and jeans and a \$40,000 ring."

Trivia answer: It ended a 42-game Trojan winning streak over the Bruins that began in 1932.

And finally: Former Dallas Cowboy wide receiver Drew Pearson is the vice president and general manager of the XFL's New York/New Jersey Hitmen.

During a practice session, says Tom Rock of Newsday, "He stands on the edge of the field, wearing a suit and a cell phone, waiting."

"Every so often a player will run past him and Pearson will lower his shoulder and slam into the player. Then, he'll stand up, unrumpled his suit, and return to his telephone conversation."