

# LAMORINDA SPORTS

## Miramonte and UCLA alum Drew Bennett reflects on time in NFL



Drew Bennett scores a touchdown against the Raiders.

By Jon Kingdon

There is no greater annual sporting event that captures the attention of the country than Super Bowl Sunday. In the buildup to the game, there is as much analysis done as there is for a presidential election.

For Drew Bennett, following his graduation from Miramonte and UCLA, the term long shot would not have been misapplied prior to his eight-year career as a wide receiver for six years with the Tennessee Titans and two years with the St. Louis

Rams that could clearly be called successful, having caught 307 passes and 28 touchdowns.

Bennett was a multi-sport athlete at Miramonte prior to the beginning of year-round club sport teams. "Back then you would play one sport after the other," Bennett said. "There would be about a week break between the football, basketball and baseball seasons and over the summer, you played all the sports."

It was more than sports for Bennett growing up in Orinda. "There is something very unique about Lamorinda that

promotes lifetime connections," Bennett said. "People are always surprised at how many friends I keep in contact with that go back as far as elementary school."

As a quarterback his senior year, Bennett was a first-team All-League and second-team All-Bay Area honors, averaged 17 points/game in basketball and batted .430, earning first-team All-League honors in baseball.

"I remained close to my basketball coach Tom Blackwood until he passed away and I still talk with my football coach Floyd Burnsed (now at Acalanes) on a regular basis," Bennett said. "Both were pillars of the Miramonte sports world for decades."

Burnsed still remembers Bennett's play in the 1995 NCS playoffs: "We played Vintage High School in Napa stadium and late in the game, Drew made a great pass down the field and on the 10-yard line, he ran a bootleg play for a touchdown to win the game. I believe he may have been the best athlete that ever came out of Miramonte."

Yet Bennett was more than just an athlete to Burnsed. "As a person, Drew was a great kid," Burnsed said. "He was very well liked and a hard worker that did whatever it took to be successful. He had all the good things that you wanted in a player and a young man."

Bennett was heavily recruited by Princeton (his mother Barbara's first choice), but on his recruiting trip it was 9 degrees and Bennett didn't get along with his host. His next visit was to UCLA where it was 77 degrees and sunny. He then told his mother, "I'm sorry, Mom. I'm not going to

Princeton."

As a walk-on at UCLA in 1996, Bennett soon learned that he was no longer playing for Miramonte but things soon broke his way. "When I got to UCLA, I was the seventh quarterback on the depth chart," Bennett said. "We then had QB's quit, fail physicals and transfer and I became the 3rd string, dressing for all of the games,

Bennett said.

After graduating with a degree in political science, Bennett was anticipating going to law school. "My dad, Richard, is an attorney and when I was asked my career choice at UCLA, I suggested that I would be an attorney so they directed me to political science," Bennett said.

With such limited playing time, Bennett finished his col-



Photos provided

Drew Bennett after beating Charles Woodson for a touchdown.

and was the backup QB to Cade McNown after another player's injury."

After being awarded his scholarship in 1997, UCLA utilized Bennett's athleticism as a quarterback and a receiver and he was the starting quarterback for three of the first four games in 1999. "I was not playing as well as I had been and was then demoted and then moved to wide receiver my senior year,"

lege career having completed 56 out of 102 passes for 773 yards with 7 touchdowns, 4 interceptions and 8 receptions for 167 yards, numbers that did not bring NFL teams running in his direction. "At my pro day, when I was asked for my medical records by the NFL teams, I told them I didn't have any because I didn't play very much so there was no damage yet," Bennett said. ... continued on Page C2



Men's Rugby continues to prove successful for the 22-23 season and displays skill and athleticism on the field. The team just returned from a tour to England and Ireland which showcased their strength against Cambridge University, Oxford University, and Trinity College.

Upcoming games will solidify the team ranking and we invite you to attend a match at Saint Mary's College. Saint Mary's Stadium is located in Moraga on 1928 Saint Mary's Road. Ticket prices are \$10.00 for adults, \$5.00 for 17 - 11-year-olds, and 10 and under are free.

Visit our website for game times, stadium policies and recruiting information. [www.gaelrugby.com](http://www.gaelrugby.com)

Photo Credit: Sandi Allan

### REMAINING 2022-2023 HOME GAMES FEBRUARY

- 11 CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY | 12:00 PM
- 11 SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY | 2:00 PM
- 25 GRAND CANYON UNIVERSITY | 1:00 PM

### MARCH

- 04 BYU | 1:00 PM
- 25 UC BERKELEY | 1:00 PM

