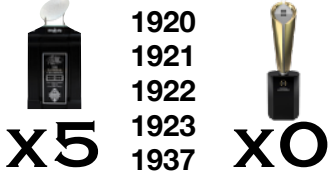




CALIFORNIA BIO

National Championships - 5



PAC-12 Championships: **14**
(Last: **2006**)

Location: **Berkeley, CA**

All-Time Record: **586-535-31**

2022 Results: **4-8**

Head Coach: **Justin Wilcox**
7th Year (30-36)

Will Golden Bears Come Out of Hibernation?

Football hasn't been a priority in Berkeley for some time. California is seen academically seen as perhaps the best public institution in the conference and has the potential to be equally as strong on the football field, but they unfortunately haven't. With access to some of the most fertile recruiting grounds in the country, there's few excuses for the ineptitude shown within this once proud football program. College football is big money these days, but to make money it must be spent and Cal has largely refused to spend it. Failing to garner proper support from the administration to the alumni base has left them with an inability to keep up with others in the region. This lack of support caused Cal to get left behind (for the time being, at least) in conference realignment and they are now stuck hoping for a lifeline to be thrown their way. Their last conference title was in 2006, but in 2019 head coach **Justin Wilcox** led the team to an 8-win season. While that season has been the highlight of his tenure, overall, it's been a mixed bag and he has just a 30-36 overall record in six years in Berkley. Still, he is seen as a top defensive mind in the game proven by an offer to take the head coaching job at Oregon after the 2021 season.

Despite being competitive in many games thought to be beyond their abilities, last season was a failure as Cal failed to make a bowl game for the third season in a row. Finishing tied for second-to-last in the conference during your sixth season typically doesn't bode well for a head coach, but expectations aren't as high here as they are in some other corners of the state. While nearly pulling off upset wins against Notre Dame, Washington, and USC, the Golden Bears hit rock bottom when they provided lowly Colorado with their only victory of the season. The worst part is that, while Wilcox's speciality should be on the defensive side of the ball, the team finished 111th in the country in total defense. While posting a respectable 64th ranking in rushing defense, the Golden Bears finished 123rd in the country against the pass allowing 280 yards per game through the air alone. Clearly, the issues in the secondary will need correcting if this year will be any different. Look for transfers **David Reese** (Florida) and **Nohl Williams** (UNLV) to help disrupt the passing attack (only 19 sacks last season). Cal also was able to retain linebacker **Jackson Sirmon** for a sixth season who led the team with 104 tackles last season. The safety pairing of **Patrick McMorris** (San Diego State transfer) and **Craig Woodson** could provide a huge lift.

The offense was expected to carry the load last year with the defense slipping and was unable to do so. As a result, wholesale changes have been made on that side of the ball including new offensive coordinator **Jake Spavital** and quarterback **Sam Jackson V** who transferred from TCU. Jackson was a four-star recruit but found himself as the third option in the quarterback room last season in Fort Worth. His speed, explosiveness in the run game, and ability to play off script will be critical in what could be a far-from-ideal situation for a first time starting quarterback. A bright spot last season was freshman running back **Jaydn Ott** who will need to alleviate some pressure off Jackson and an offensive line that struggled last season. He ran for 897 yards on a 5.3 yards per carry pace. With much of the depth from last year's running back room gone, he could see more than the 170 carries he took last season.

The Bottom Line: It sounds bleak, but don't expect a huge resurgence out of the Golden Bears this season. They don't get a scheduling break and miss out on playing Arizona and Colorado. In addition, they travel to a tough North Texas team the week before they host Auburn. There doesn't seem to be a path forward to beating the top six teams in the conference, and they have to play every single one. To avoid another disappointing season, Jackson will have to be everything promised and more at quarterback. His playmaking ability will need to cover the warts of the offensive line and keep his team in games. Transfers will need to have immediate impacts on defense and health will need to be in their favor. In the end, there are far too many questions unanswered and massive pressure put on too few players. Wilcox has to hope that the changes he made this offseason can get the team to a bowl game and turn around a 10-19 record of the last three seasons.

Projection: 2-10 (11th in PAC-12)

2022 Statistics

Points Scored	Rush Yards	Pass Yards	Turnover Margin
23.9	96.6	268.0	+6
96th in FBS	122nd in FBS	31st in FBS	T-22nd in FBS
Points Allowed	Rush YDS Allowed	Pass YDS Allowed	
27.8	149.1	279.5	
79th in FBS	64th in FBS	123th in FBS	



Memorial Stadium (63,000)

2023 California Schedule

Week	Date	Team
1	Sat, Sept 2	 @ North Texas
2	Sat, Sept 9	 vs. Auburn
3	Sat, Sept 16	 vs. Idaho
4	Sat, Sept 23	 @ Washington
5	Sat, Sept 30	 vs. Arizona State
6	Sat, Oct 7	 vs. Oregon State
7	Sat, Oct 14	 @ Utah
8	Bye Week	
9	Sat, Oct 28	 vs. USC
10	Sat, Nov 4	 @ Oregon
11	Sat, Nov 11	 vs. Wash St.
12	Sat, Nov 18	 @ Stanford
13	Sat, Nov 25	 @ UCLA

Conference Games in Bold

KEY GAMES

Sat, Sept 2: @ North Texas - The Mean Green have been a solid program recently and get a power conference team at home. Cal has to find a way to win this game or the season ends before it even begins.

Sat, Oct 7: vs. Oregon State - There aren't a lot of obvious wins guaranteed on the schedule for the Golden Bears. If they are to pull off a massive upset in conference, perhaps the contrast of styles between the Beavers and Bears could help them.

Sat, Nov 18: @ Stanford - Rivalry games mean something even when the programs are at their lowest. Unfortunately, this describes the matchup all too well this season unless one or both of the teams surprise.

KEY PLAYERS

Jaydn Ott - RB



As a freshman last season, Ott led the team with 897 yards on the ground. This year, with a young first-time starting quarterback behind the same offensive line that allowed 31 sacks last year, his production will be needed all the more.

Jackson's dual threat nature combined with Ott's running ability could give the Bear's offense the punch it needs to be effective.

Nohl Williams - CB

Transferring in from UNLV, Williams is expected to make an immediate impact. What had previously been a solid defense under Wilcox fell apart last season and in the secondary, specifically. Bringing in additional talent and experience through the portal (like Williams) will hopefully pay off for California this season. If Williams can replicate his 39 tackle, 3 interception production from last season, the Golden Bears could be in good shape.



2022 RESULTS (4-8)

UC Davis (W 34-13)

UNLV (W 20-14)

@ Notre Dame (L 17-24)

Arizona (W 49-31)

@ Washington (L 9-28)

@ Colorado (L 13-20)

Washington (L 21-28)

Oregon (L 24-42)

@ USC (L 35-41)

@ Oregon State (L 10-38)

Stanford (W 27-20)

UCLA (L 28-35)

California™

RECRUITING

2023 Class Ranking

79th

(Via 24/7 Sports)