

ERIC BALL

**ONE
POWERFUL
BRUIN**

6-1½	209
4.5	Speed
VJ: 38	SLJ: 10-8
Squat: 490	
Bench: 365	
Clean: 358	

ONE POWERFUL BRUIN ERIC BALL

Last New Year's Day, I was watching underdog U.C.L.A. play in the Rose Bowl. I was unfamiliar with the Bruin's running back. He was supposed to be kind of a substitute. This running back had carried the ball a modest 122 times during the regular season for a 5.8 yard per carry average. What was this 2nd year freshman going to do against the vaunted Iowa Hawkeye defense?

All this running back did was to blast his way through would-be tacklers for 227 yards and four touchdowns! All this in only 22 carries! This up-start was named the MVP in the 1986 Rose Bowl as the U.C.L.A. Bruins romped to a lop-sided win. His name: ERIC BALL!

Was the superlative effort a fluke? I wanted to find out. I'll let you judge for yourself. As for myself, I strongly feel, barring serious injury, that Eric Ball's name could one day be spelled H-E-I-S-M-A-N! Here is his story.

Eric grew up in Ypsilanti, Michigan. He went both ways as he filled a running back and linebacker position. Eric states, "I didn't lift too much in high school. My father told me that I'd lose flexibility and become tight. So I did a lot of pushups. Of course, now I know that weight training is essential to a running back. It's not true that lifting will make you tight as long as you combine your lifting with flexibility, agility, speed work, ball handling, and jump training."

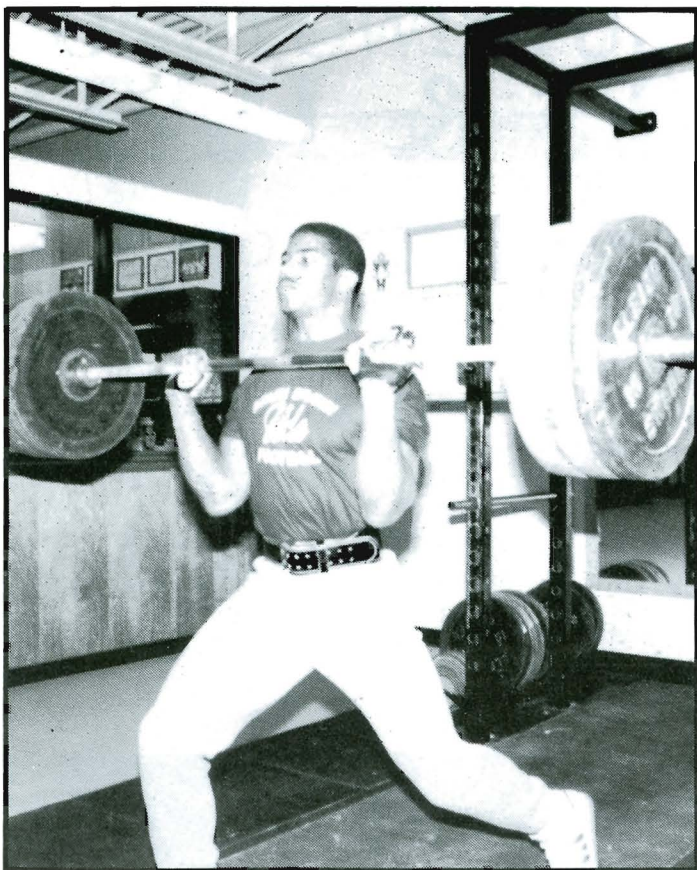
Eric's High School Coach was Jerry Hayes. As a junior, Eric ran for 1287 yards in nine games for a sparkling 8-1 record. Graduation hit his team hard and as a senior, Eric's line averaged only 160 pounds. The team went 1-8 and Eric rushed for 1103 yards.

The books and education have always been important to Eric and his parents. Eric had a 3.8 GPA in high school. Graduation is a very clear cut goal. Eric relates, "I'm going to graduate. My father wouldn't let me come all the way to U.C.L.A. if I wasn't going to graduate."

Eric carries a 2.5 GPA at U.C.L.A. and stays at school during the summer to take classes. This also allows him to train and work on campus. Eric is an Engineering major. "I really like engineering especially mechanical or electrical engineering," Eric confided. "Both my uncles are engineers so I've worked with them as a journeyman in basic house wiring. As a result, I've gained experience and an interest in this field."

I asked John Arce and Bob Allejo, the Strength Coaches at U.C.L.A., if Eric Ball's phenomenal Rose Bowl game was a fluke. "Absolutely not," came their replies. Eric won our "Bruin Brawn Award." This is an annual award which goes to the player with the best combined marks of our testing. Here were last year's results and Eric's team ranking: Bench: 10th, Squat: 2nd, Clean: 2nd, Total: 2nd, 40: 4th, VJ: 6th (32½ back then), SLJ: 3rd, % Body Fat: 4th, and Power Index: 2nd (total pounds lifted ÷ bodyweight).

Some were strong but not fast. Some could jump high and far but didn't have the big lifts. Eric Ball finished high on every test. Thus, he won the Bruin Brawn award which was achieved before the Rose Bowl game. He was a giant

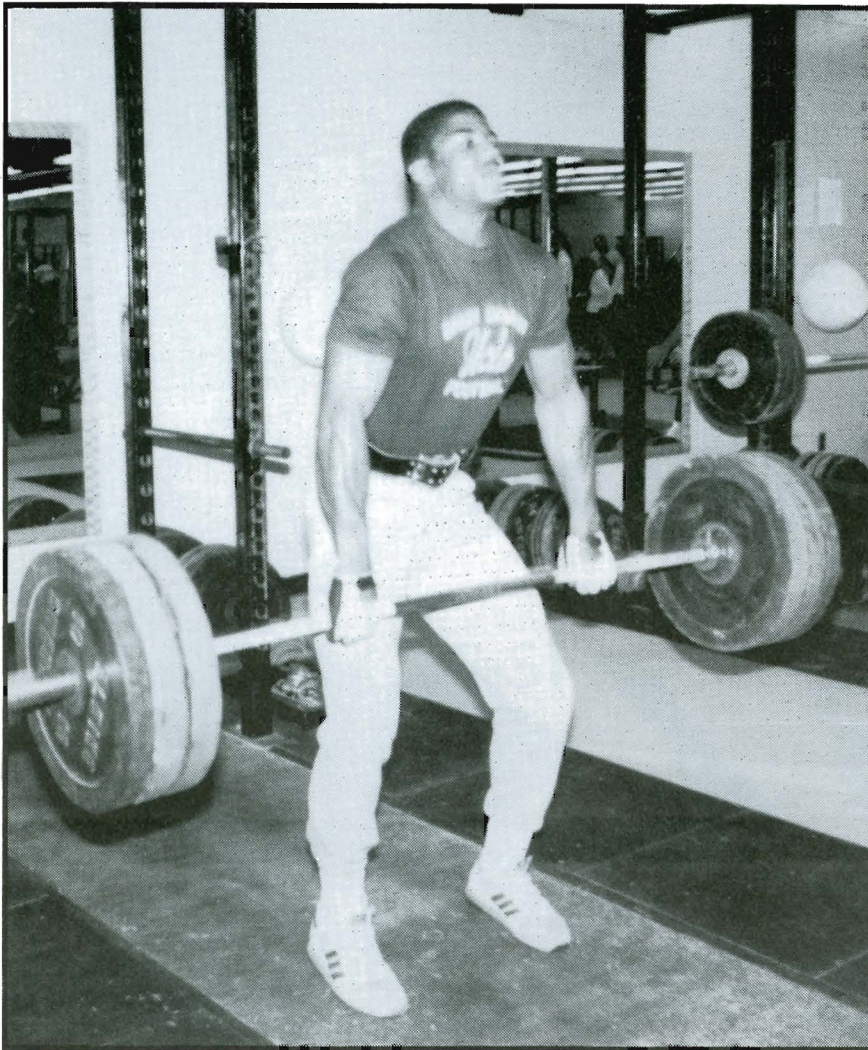


Eric holds the Bruin Team Football Record with his 358 Power Clean.



Strength Coach, John Arce, Eric Ball and Greg Shepard in U.C.L.A. weight room.

ONE POWERFUL BRUIN: ERIC BALL



"Eric has exceptional character. He has been greatly blessed naturally as an athlete but he strives daily to enhance those abilities. That is what separates Eric from other great athletes. Eric is a hard worker and a 1st Class Person."

John Arce, Head Strength Coach

"Eric is a physical specimen. He is raw power. Eric is also a fine young man. He could get a big head but you would not even know that he's a starter. Everybody likes him and yet he stays humble."

Bob Allejo, Assistant Strength Coach

sleeper ready to roll over an unsuspecting opponent. The Hawkeyes of Iowa just happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Eric has a spectacular vertical jump. It is now 38 inches and Coach Allejo emphasizes that the Bruin test is without a lead step. For those of you who have seen our "Beyond

Man's Upper Limit" video, Stefan Fernholm does a 36 inch vertical jump. The Denver Coaches said at that time, "Stefan has the highest vertical we've ever seen." So I guess that puts Eric's jump in spectacular perspective.

"I was fortunate to be red shirted my first year," related Eric. "I played in 2 of 3 games and received an injury to my hip flexor. I petitioned to make that first year non-counting eligibility-wise. Anyway, last year was 2nd year but I was called a freshman. As for the Rose Bowl, we really practiced hard to redeem ourselves after losing to U.S.C. Also, two of our running backs got hurt and a lot more responsibility for carrying the ball fell on my shoulders."

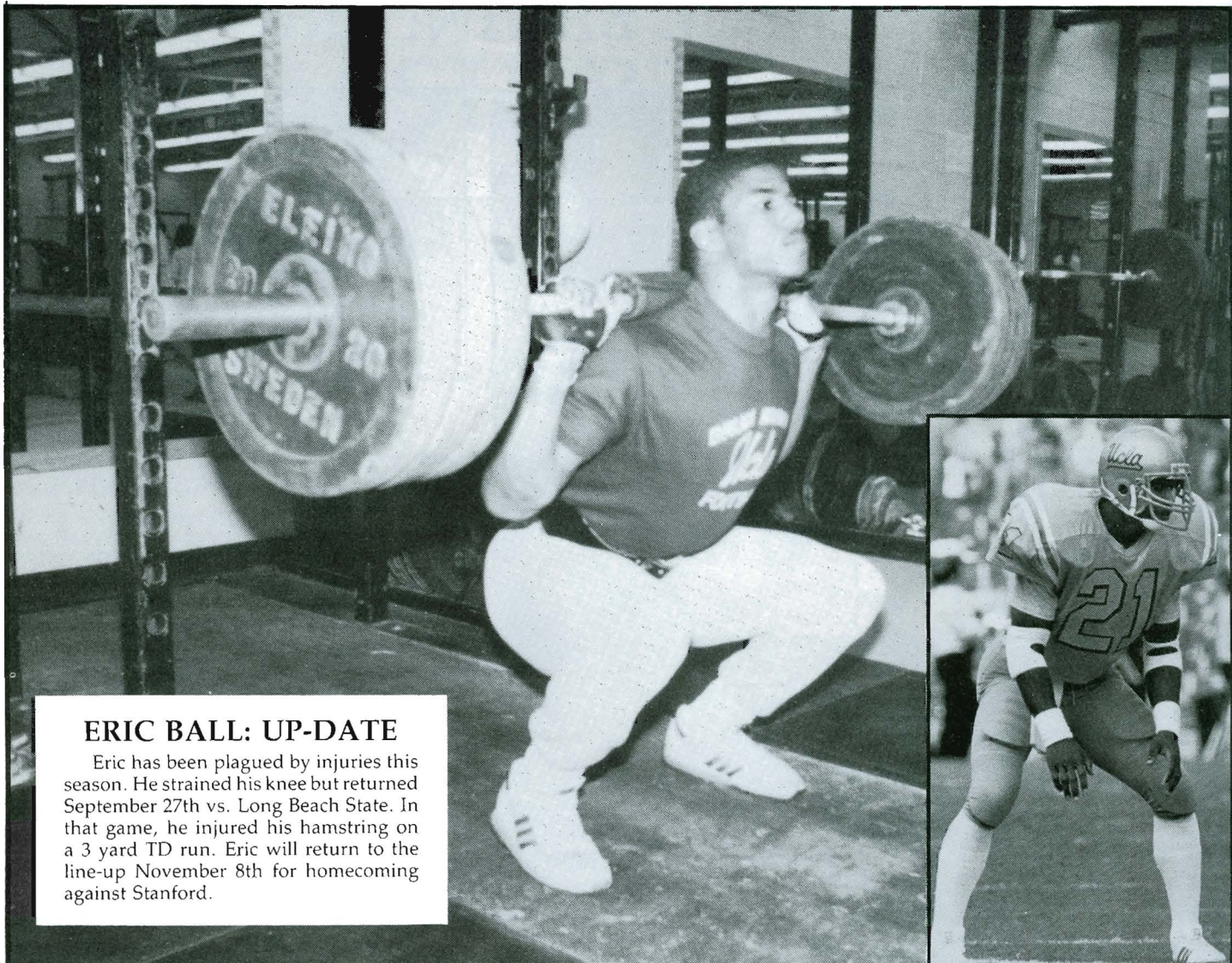
Eric had lifted, trained hard, practiced hard and took his education at U.C.L.A. seriously. I asked Eric if there was anything else that was important. He gave an "Upper Limit" answer.

"Take pride in whatever you do. Work hard to achieve your goals. Never be content where you're at. Always be ready with another goal. There's a lot more for me than being MVP in the Rose Bowl. I've never been able to understand why people abuse themselves through alcohol and drugs. When you can't remember the fun you had, its got to be destructive. Why not concentrate on constructive things."

"I'm a baptist. I read the bible and pray every night. It makes me feel more secure to know what the real purpose of life is."

I then asked Eric about these California girls. He laughed, "It was quite a shock to see the girls out here in California. I just like to watch. I decided not to have a girlfriend. I've got to get a little further in athletics and school before I get involved in personal relationships."

What a joy it was to interview Eric Ball. I only wish the general public and the news media could be aware of the many great people like Eric representing our nation's youth and athletic programs. We thank Eric and Coaches Arce and Allejo for making this story possible.



ERIC BALL: UP-DATE

Eric has been plagued by injuries this season. He strained his knee but returned September 27th vs. Long Beach State. In that game, he injured his hamstring on a 3 yard TD run. Eric will return to the line-up November 8th for homecoming against Stanford.

ERIC BALL'S PROGRESS CHART

	HT	WT	40	Bench	Squat	Clean	VJ	SLJ	Fat %
9th	5-10	170	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
10th	5-11	185	4.5	X	X	X	X	X	X
11th	6- 0	196	4.6	X	X	X	X	X	X
12th	6- 0	193	4.5	250	375	X	X	X	X
★FR	6- 1	210	4.5	330	457	303	30½	9-3	5.0
SOPH	6-1¼	215	4.5	365	475	342	37½	10-4	3.7
Summer	6-1½	209	X	X	490★★	358★★	38	10-8	3.1

★ Marks before the Rose Bowl

★★ Team Record

★★★ U.C.L.A. did not squat until John Arce came 3 years ago.