About the author

Curtis Painter, Purdue QB
Painter is second in school history in career completion percentage (.599), fourth in completions (760), fourth in passing yards (8,763), fourth in touchdowns (54) and fourth in total offense (9,101).

Now that's the way to hit an offseason

BY CURTIS PAINTER
FOR SPORTING NEWS TODAY

When your last game of the season is a last-second, 51-48 win over Central Michigan in the Motor City Bowl, it makes such a difference in the offseason. It was a landmark game for us because, for the past few years, we haven't been very successful closing out games in the fourth quarter. In that respect, it was great for us to finally win a close game, and to win in the closing seconds.

So it gives you a positive attitude in the offseason. When you come out of other seasons and lose a bowl game like we did before, you come back out in the offseason and you're working out with the idea of not letting it be like it was last season. When you come out in the offseason after a game like the Motor City win, you work out and have a good time. I'm not saying it's laid back, but it's just a different attitude that you're taking.

In that game, I was so caught up in it that I had no idea we had thrown that many times and for that many yards. (Purdue assistant athletic director) Tom Schott came up after the game and told me I broke the record (school-record 546 yards). I said, "What record?" I had no idea.

MATTHEW OLTZ/SN

Purdue QB Curtis Painter is so good, he sets records without even knowing it.

I haven't watched the replay of that game entirely. The only copy I have is the TV version, and I've seen some of it. It was a very nerve-racking game. My mom would have a heart attack if we ever had to go through one of those again.

— As told to Derek Samson

Cal's Mack a dancing Bear

BY ALEX MACK
FOR SPORTING NEWS TODAY

I'm my team's member of the Student Athlete Advisory Council, which we call Bear SAAC. Bear SAAC is an opportunity to participate in community service and get involved with issues that affect student-athletes. I had heard about all the interesting things the athletes were doing around the community, and I wanted the chance to participate.

We meet twice a month and organize events that benefit the community and our fellow student-athletes. Job fairs, motivational speakers, community service events and career-training workshops are just a few of the different things we do.

Last February, I was approached about participating with other Cal athletes in "Toe-to-Toe," a benefit for the Oberlin Dance Company Dance Commons. They wanted me to be the poster boy, and they also wanted me to dance, which was really scary to me—I don't think I'm the most graceful of people. But it ended up being a lot of fun.

There were several events with the dancers vs. the athletes, like a goofy obstacle course with little tricycles and a relay race. I ran a three-legged race with a little gymnast, and I picked her up and just ran with her attached to my leg. I also did a joust event similar to the one on *American Gladiators*, that was one event that favored the athletes.

Everyone was really nice, and the dancers are all really good athletes.

They're all limber and quick and had great balance, so they were great at everything they did. They were more adaptable to everything else. Like for the obstacle course, some points were given for style—if you looked pretty doing it. And we failed on that. We didn't have any style. They were able to do all these jumps and flips and cartwheels.

One guy jumped and bounced off of a post like a wall run. They were very inventive, acrobatic people. I would have loved to have had some competitions that were weighted in our favor, like a tug of war. A tug of war would have been fun.

There were dances at the end. Out of the athletes, the soccer and track girls were probably the best with their skit. This was nothing like *Dancing with the Stars*. So you're not going to be able to compare me to Emmitt Smith or Jason Taylor. We were primarily in the background, either lifting people or throwing them around. It wasn't quite like the mambo, which is probably why I agreed to do it.

— As told to Benson Taylor

About the author

Alex Mack, California C
Mack was selected as a finalist for the Rimington Trophy as the top center in the nation, and he was voted by the Pac-10's defensive linemen as the league's top offensive lineman. He anchored a line that allowed only 11 sacks last year—best in the Pac-10 and third best in the country.

COURTESY B.L. MUNA

When it comes to dancing, Cal center Alex Mack can handle the heavy lifting. Just don't ask him to mambo.