

## **BIOGRAPHIES ON USC FOOTBALL'S DECEMBER SIGNING PERIOD SIGNEES**

### **WR Zachariah Branch – Bishop Gorman HS (Nev.)**

He was selected to compete in the 2023 Under Armour All-American game where he will be the Team Phantom captain. He was also chosen to play in the 2023 Polynesian Bowl. Branch tallied 753 yards on 45 receptions with 11 TDs and recorded 5 punt returns for 90 yards (18.0 avg.) as a senior wide receiver at Bishop Gorman (Nev.). He was ranked as a member of the PrepStar Top 150 Dream Team and the No. 1 wide receiver prospect in the nation. He was named to the 2022 Nevada Preps All-Southern Nevada First Team after helping the Gaels win the Class 5A state title. As a junior, he helped Bishop Gorman get to the Nevada 5A state championship and collected 1,094 yards on 48 receptions with 14 TDs. He also rushed for 5 yards on 1 carry and returned 2 punts for TDs. Branch was named the 2021 MaxPreps Nevada Player of the Year and earned placement on the 2021 MaxPreps Junior All-American First Team, the 2021 MaxPreps California All-State First Team and the 2021 Nevada Preps All-Southern Nevada First Team. In an abbreviated two-game sophomore season in the spring of 2021, he caught 7 passes for 134 yards with 4 TDs.

### **OL Micah Banuelos - Kennedy Catholic HS (Wash.)**

He made the 2023 PrepStar All-Western Region as he saw significant snaps on both sides of the ball as a senior at Kennedy Catholic HS (Wash.). Banuelos was the 2022 Washington 4A NPSL Offensive Lineman of the Year and was named to the 4A NPSL First Team as a senior defensive lineman. Selected to play in 2023 Under Armour All-America Game as an offensive lineman for Team Phantom. Helped Kennedy reach the 2022 Washington 4A State Championship Game. Primarily played left tackle and defensive tackle as a 2021 junior. He had two-way experience on varsity as a freshman.

### **TE Kade Eldridge - Lynden Christian HS (Wash.)**

He made 2023 PrepStar All-Western Region, was named the 2022 1A NWC All-Conference defensive MVP and was an All-State representative as a senior tight end at Lynden Christian HS (Wash.). On offense, he tallied 545 yards on 72 carries for 7 TDs. Defensively, he recorded 18 tackles, 6.5 for loss, 2 blocked kicks, 1 fumble recovery and 1 TD. He also notched 524 yards on 13 punts for Lynden in 2022. He was selected as the Whatcom Preps Special Teams Player of the Week on Oct. 11 with 2 kickoff returns for 105 yards, 1 TD and 4 punts. He was named to Cascadia Preps Top Performing list on Sept. 26, carrying the ball 27 times for 146 yards to help Lynden Christian to victory. As a 2021 junior, Eldridge was named the Cascadia Preps 1A Underclassman of the Year and earned placement on the Whatcom Preps 1A All-NWC Football Team. He had 794 total offensive yards on 85 carries and 8 receptions, recording 10 total touchdowns. On defense, he racked up 62.5 tackles, including 15 for loss, along with 4.5 sacks, two forced fumbles and two pass deflections as a junior.

### **RB Quinten Joyner – Manor HS (Texas)**

He was selected to compete at the 2023 All-American Bowl and the 2023 Polynesian Bowl. Joyner was named to the 2022 All District 25-6A First Team after he rushed for 1,794 yards on 196 carries (9.2 avg.) for 25 TDs and caught 5 passes for 73 yards while playing running back for Manor HS (Texas). On defense, he had 1 tackle. He tallied 3 kickoffs for 106 yards (35.3 avg.) with a long of 46 yards and recorded 14 punts for 408 yards (29.1 avg) with a long of 46 yards. Joyner had 2 kickoff returns for 44 yards (22.0 avg) with a long of 24. After his junior season, he was selected as the 2021 Texas District 11-5A-I Overall MVP as a junior. **He was named to the PrepStar Top 300 All-American Team.** He also was a 2021 Class 5A First Team All-State selection by the Texas Sportswriters Association (TSWA). In his junior season, he rushed for 2,494 yards on 223 carries (11.2 avg) for 31 TDs. He was the leading rusher in all of Class 6A. Joyner also caught 9 passes for 100 yards and 2 TDs. On defense, he had 1 tackle. As a sophomore in 2020, he rushed for 613 yards on 67 carries (9.1 yards) for 5 TDs and caught 5 passes for 33 yards. Joyner also plays baseball and competes in track and field. He ran an 11.06 100 and threw a shot put PR of 49 feet in spring 2022. At the AAU Junior Olympics Games in May 2021, he ran a 10.99 100 and posted a 45-8 shot put.

### **DL Deijon Laffitte - Colony HS (Calif.)**

**He made 2023 PrepStar All-Western Region as a senior defensive lineman at Colony HS (Calif.).** He recorded 51 tackles and 8 sacks as a senior. Laffitte was named MaxPreps Defensive Player of the Game on Aug. 26 as he had 4 tackles for loss against Santiago. He helped Colony to a CIF Division 9 title in 2021 and was selected to the 2021 All-CIF Southern Section Division 9 team.

### **WR Makai Lemon – Los Alamitos HS (Calif.)**

He was named a 2023 Under Armour All-American and selected to compete in the 2023 Polynesian Bowl. Lemon is also a Polynesian High School Player of the Year finalist. He made the 2022 Los Angeles Times All-Star Team as a senior wide receiver at Los Alamitos HS (Calif.). He caught 69 passes for 1,044 yards (15.1 avg.) and 12 touchdowns to help Los Al place first in the Sunset League and reach the CIF Southern Section Division 1 semifinals. He also recorded 15 yards on 3 carries (5.0 avg.). On defense, he had 12 tackles, tallied 1 INT and 1 PBU. On special teams, he recorded 8 kickoff returns for 267 yards (33.4 avg.). **He was named to the PrepStar Top 150 Dream Team.** As a junior, he was selected to the 2021 MaxPreps Junior All-America First Team, the 2021 MaxPreps California All-State First Team, the 2021 All-CIF Southern Section Division I Team and the 2021 Cal-Hi All-State First Team. In 2021, he caught 65 passes for 1,062 yards (16.3 avg.) and 15 TDs and recorded 6 yard on 4 carries (1.5 avg). He also tossed 1 pass for 19 yards. On defense, he recorded 28 tackles with 2.0 for loss and tallied 4 INTs and 8 PBUs. On special teams, he had 12 kickoff returns for 355 yards (29.6 avg.). After an abbreviated sophomore season in the spring of 2021...

**QB Malachi Nelson - Los Alamitos HS (Calif.)**

The decorated quarterback from Los Alamitos HS (Calif.) is the No. 1 ranked recruit in the nation per ESPN. As a senior on varsity, he went 192-for-286 (.671) for 2,898 yards and 35 TDs with 4 INTs. He rushed for 153 yards on 23 carries (6.7 avg) with 2 TDs to help Los Al earn first place in the Sunset League going 5-0 and went 9-3 overall, reaching the CIF Southern Section Division 1 semifinals. He was named to the PrepStar Top 150 Dream Team and the No. 2 quarterback prospect in the nation. He was named a 2023 Under Armour All-American. Additionally, he is a 2023 Polynesian Bowl All-Star. He also competed at 2022 Elite 11 Finals. Before the season, Nelson was named to the 2022 MaxPreps Preseason All- State First Team and the 2022 MaxPreps Preseason All-America Second Team. As a junior on varsity, he went 170-for-275 (.618) for 2,690 yards and 39 TDs with 8 INTs. He rushed for 192 yards on 34 carries (5.6 avg.) with 2 TDs. He also caught 1 pass for 19 yards. He was named the 2021 Long Beach Press-Telegram Player of the Year and to the 2021 All-CIF Southern Section Division I Team.

**OL Alani Noa - Grant HS (Calif.)**

He made 2023 PrepStar All-Western Region as a senior offensive lineman at Grant HS (Calif.). He helped Grant capture the 2022 CIF State 3-AA title and D4 State Team of the Year honors. Noa was selected to 2022 MaxPreps All Sac-Joaquin Section First Team.

**RUSH David Peevy - Lincoln HS (Calif.)**

He earned 2023 PrepStar All-Western Region honors as he had 31 tackles, 5 sacks and 1 interception as a senior defensive end and outside linebacker at Lincoln HS (Calif.). Peevy helped Lincoln HS to their first-ever Open Division CIF-SDS Title, beating De La Salle in the 2022 Division 1--AA Championship. He played safety as a freshman, including at the National Preps Camp, but transitioned into the defensive end role for Lincoln the past two seasons. He recorded 37 tackles and 3 sacks as a 2021 junior. A multi-sport athlete, Peevy played basketball and ran track. He was part of Lincoln's 4x100 and 4x400m relay teams that finished first and second, respectively in the 2021 CIF Finals.

**OL Tobias Raymond - Ventura HS (Calif.)**

He made 2023 PrepStar All-Western Region as a senior offensive lineman at Ventura HS (Calif.). He was named the 2022 All-Channel League Offensive Lineman of the Year, the Ventura HS Tyler Ebell Offensive MVP and the Ventura High Offensive Lineman of the Year. As a 2021 junior, Raymond received the CIF Lineman of the Year award while playing offensive tackle and defensive lineman. In 2021, he was selected to the All-CIF Southern Section Division 9 team and the All-Ventura County Football Coaches Team. Raymond has also played basketball, soccer and baseball.