

# Trying to Fill Bart's Shoes

It would hardly come as a surprise if figures revealed that college coaches have an abnormally high incidence of ulcers.

It is in the very nature of college athletics that just when you are able to establish a player as a leader and star of a team, his college career has ended, and he is moving on the proverbial "greener pastures" of professional sports.

So when Cal's All-American quarterback Steve Bartkowski's eligibility expired at the end of last season, you might have expected head coach Mike White to grab his playbook and whistle, and start looking for a more stable and comfortable profession.

Not so. White has been directing his club through Spring drills at Memorial Stadium each day, culminating in Saturday's Alumni Game at 1:30. He calls the drills the "most rewarding and enjoyable" since he came to Cal three years ago.

A surprising attitude, indeed, for a man who has the unenviable task of finding someone to replace Bartkowski, the departing leader of an offense that led the nation in passing last year.

If White does not seem overly apprehensive about the prospects of finding a suitable replacement for Bart, it is understandable. You see, White was the offensive coordinator at Stanford in 1972, when they responded to the loss of Heisman Trophy quarterback Jim Plunkett by winning the Pac-8 championship with Don Bunce at the helm.

White realizes that if his team is going to make a serious challenge for the Rose Bowl next year, he must find a capable quarterback before the opener against Colorado in the second week of September.

He made it clear before practice began that the top priority of the spring sessions is to establish a definite "number one" at the quarterback position.

"We want to avoid what Stanford went through last fall," White said, referring to the struggle among three Stanford quarterbacks for the starting position that extended well into the 1974 season, and caused divisive elements within the team.

Under consideration for the September 13 starting spot are Mark Cahill (6-0, 190) a returning letterman from last year's squad, Fred Besana (6-4, 190) who redshirted last year, and All-American



junior college transfer Joe Roth (6-4, 205). Freshman Mike Williams (6-1, 185) is also bidding for top billing.

Cahill is judged to be the best runner of the bunch and has demonstrated "excellent leadership qualities" according to White. Cahill, backup to Bartkowski last year, feels he has had a good spring and believes he has "come out ahead of the others."

"I think I've done better than the other two," he said. "But there's no heat between us. We've been working together."

Besana doesn't have an especially strong arm, but has impressed the coaching staff with his game-sense and command of the offense. He characterized the quarterback race as "a highly competitive situation," but said "it's not a blood and guts thing between us. The main thing is to get to the Rose Bowl — that's what it's all about."

Roth, the heavily-recruited

performer from Grossmont JC, has the strongest arm and the quickest release among the candidates, and has been described by White as having the "most overall physical talent."

White and his staff have been careful not to make any public evaluations to the media about the status of the battle for the starting job. But yesterday, three days before the alumni contest, White confirmed that "Besana is the guy right now, and he will start the alumni game."

White said that because Besana knows the system, he had a head-start on Roth at the beginning of the practices. "Besana is definitely number one right now," White said, "but we're still evaluating."

With the NCAA probation now history, White knows the importance of the quarterback choice in Cal's first legitimate shot at the Rose Bowl in four years: "We're giving everyone a fair shot."