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# 2011 Fight Hunger Bowl Preview

The Kraft Fight Hunger Bowl in San Francisco will feature a couple of teams that are hungering for wins to end their seasons on a positive note.

Both schools will have new head coaches next season. That hunger to get the victory in this game should make this entertaining when Illinois of the Big Ten Conference takes on UCLA of the Pac-12.

These two teams have played 11 times, with UCLA holding a 6-5 edge and a four-game win streak in the series. These two last played in Champaign in 2004, with the Bruins notching a 35-17 victory. The last Illinois victory came at home in 1964, 26-7.

Our current [Hunger Bowl odds](#) show a line of Illinois -2.5 and a over/under of 47 points.

## **Illinois**

The Fighting Illini have been struggling for wins lately. After starting the season 6-0, Illinois promptly went the opposite way, dropping each of the last six games, culminating in a 27-7 loss at Minnesota, which cost Ron Zook his job and led to the hiring of Tim Beckman from Toledo. Illinois is 1-3 away from home, dropping their last three road games.

The Illini rate a respectable 21st in the nation in scoring defense (20 points per game), giving up 292 yards per contest (159 through the air, 133 on the ground) while recording 36 sacks and generating 20 turnovers – two of which were taken back for scores (Tavon Wilson, fumble; Trulon Henry, pick).

Jonathan Brown leads the defense with 102 tackles (24 more than anyone else), adding six sacks, an interception, forced fumble and two recoveries, while Whitney Mercilus has 14.5 sacks and nine forced fumbles to go with 52 tackles and a fumble recovery. Henry and Terry Hawthorne each have two interceptions and Wilson and Ian Thomas have two fumble recoveries.

On offense, Illinois ranks just 91st nationally in points scored (23 ppg) while compiling 358 yards per game (187 passing, 171 rushing). Jason Ford and Nathan Scheelhaase lead the offense with a combined 1,114 rushing yards and 13 TDs on 3.4 yards per carry.

Scheelhaase completes 64 percent of his passes for 1,971 yards and 12 TDs with seven interceptions. The offensive line has allowed 35 sacks. A.J. Jenkins is the top receiving threat with 84 receptions (59 more than anyone else) for 1,196 yards and seven TDs.

## **UCLA**

UCLA won the Pac-12 South and played in the inaugural conference championship game, but Rick Neuheisel was canned and the program just announced the hiring of former NFL head coach Jim Mora. The Bruins have lost three of its last four contests and were outscored in their last two games, 99-31, by USC (50-0) and Oregon (49-31). The Bruins were 1-6 as a visitor, but 5-3 in their home state.

UCLA ranks 85th nationally in scoring offense (24 ppg) while compiling 389 yards per game (198 passing, 191 rushing). Johnathan Franklin and Derrick Coleman anchor the offense from the backfield, combining for 1,673 rushing yards and 16 TDs on 5.6 yards per carry.

Kevin Prince connects on 57 % of his throws for 1,627 yards and 10 touchdowns with seven picks. The offensive line has allowed 24 sacks. Nelson Rosario paces the receivers with 61 grabs (27 more than any other player) for 1,106 yards and four touchdowns.

The Bruins defense rates just 96th in the nation in scoring defense (32 ppg) and allowing 424 yards per game (233 through the air, 191 on the ground) while recording 13 sacks and generating 20 turnovers – one of which was taken back for a touchdown (Pat Larimore, pick).

Larimore anchors the unit with 81 stops, adding a sack, an pick, a forced fumble and fumble recovery, while Datone Jones has three sacks. Andrew Abbott has four interceptions and Sheldon Price has two forced fumbles.

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