

Airport shuttles carry USC, UCLA colors

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The Parking Spot, an off-airport shuttle service, gained a brand identity with its readily identifiable black-and-yellow spotted buses. Now shuttles serving Los Angeles International Airport will sport the colors of Southern Cal and UCLA as part of a three-year sponsorship agreement with the schools.

The Chicago-based airport parking company, which has 19 locations nationally from Los Angeles to Atlanta, put the USC and UCLA shuttles into service this past week, and more could be on the way.

Mark Wildman, The Parking Spot's vice president of marketing, said the company is evaluating similar arrangements with professional and college teams across the company's primary markets as part of a program that could put team colors on many of its shuttles. Other locations include Dallas, St. Louis, Houston, Kansas City, Phoenix, Orlando, Nashville and Austin, Texas.

"We think there is a lot of potential, especially on the university side where the loyalty is so strong," said Wildman, a former Miller Brewing executive.

The Trojans' cardinal and gold shuttles will work out of The Parking Spot's Sepulveda Boulevard location, while the Bruins' light blue and gold buses will work the Century Boulevard location. About 50,000 shuttle rides per month service the Sepulveda and Century locations going to and from LAX.



COURTESY OF THE PARKING SPOT

The Parking Spot is evaluating similar deals with teams across its primary markets.

The agreement calls for The Parking Spot to receive multiple ad units on USC and UCLA radio broadcasts, signs at football and basketball venues, and tickets, which will be used for employees and customer giveaways. There is not a cash element to the deal, which is strictly an exchange of services.

The arrangement with USC was negotiated with the Trojans' athletic department, which handles its marketing in-house, while the UCLA deal was struck with the Bruins' multimedia rights partner, ISP Sports.

Previous agreements between the company and the schools, which date to 2004, focused on an exchange of shuttle service for promotional rights and signage at basketball venues.

"There's a really high overlap between the sports fan and those who travel a lot," Wildman said. "When you think about reaching the fans of USC and UCLA, that's really our target customers. And with our shuttles, we think we can be mobile ticket-selling machines for the schools."

Wildman said he came up with the idea last winter while watching the NHL's Kings, another Los Angeles team that his company sponsors.