

Special Section

Local media follows Rebels games

As the Rebels traveled, local sportscasters followed them every step of the way

by steven kapellas

features editor

Last week as the Runnin' Rebels traveled to New Orleans to the Final Four, so did Las Vegas' television stations, with one station going as far to broadcast a newscast from New Orleans.

"The Rebels were the only thing people were talking about," said Brent Baader, Managing Editor for KVBC-TV whose station, channel 3 sent three reporters to New Orleans.

News anchors Dave Courviosier and Rikki Cheese along with sports anchor Scott Reynolds

traveled with the Rebels. Two days before the Rebels played Indiana, channel 3 used its First News 3 newscast to broadcast live from New Orleans. "News is based on what people are talking about," said Baader.

Not only did channel 3 broadcast a newscast from New Orleans, they also broke through their regularly scheduled programming when the Rebels came back from Seattle after they had won the Western Regional Finals.

Reporters Darwin Morgan and Dave Dietrich were on hand as the jet

the Rebels were on came into the gate. "The viewers were interested in the Rebels, there was high anticipation of them coming back," Baader said.

Asked if he received any complaints about the interruption of programming, Baader said the station received a "few complaints."

"The Rebels are part of the community, you can't over cover the Rebels," he said.

Not to be out done by channel 3, Las Vegas' two other major television stations also sent crews to New Orleans.

Channel 13, the ABC af-

filiate here in Las Vegas, sent two reporters to the Final Four: Sports anchor Ron Futrell and general assignment reporter Sandy Beall.

According to News 13 assignment editor Rick Lake, channel 13 sent reporters to New Orleans because the Rebels were news in Las Vegas. "The Rebels being in New Orleans was the biggest story in the city," Lake said.

While in New Orleans, Futrell covered the sports aspect of the Rebels while Sandy Beall covered the features and human interest stories at the Final

Four. One feature story that was done showed a witch doctor placing a voodoo hex on the Indiana players. Lake said that feature was "well received" in Las Vegas.

Asked why so much effort was put into covering the Rebels, Lake said that Las Vegas wanted to see more than just the Rebels. "Our viewers should have the right to get the feeling of this event," said Lake.

The CBS affiliate in Las Vegas, channel 8 also sent two reporters to New Orleans: sports anchor Dave Fox and sports reporter Jerry Olenyn.

Fox said the reason channel 8 sent reporters

down to the Final Four was to get the best possible coverage out of the event.

"The Rebels going to New Orleans was a big deal," said Fox. "Doing one story would not have been enough, we tried to get the flavor of New Orleans."

To help get the flavor of New Orleans across to Las Vegas, channel 8 followed the Rebels down New Orleans' famous Bourbon Street.

"We wanted the viewers to see the Rebels and what they were going through," Fox said.

Basketball outshines others

by karen hall

sports editor

At every college and university across the nation one sports program receives more media publicity than the others.

For example, the recently crowned National Collegiate Athletic Association men's basketball champions, the Indiana Hoosiers, dominate the other sports programs on their campus.

In Tennessee, the Lady Volunteers, NCAA's women's basketball champions, rule over other programs on their campus.

At UCLA, the football team receives more national publicity than any other program at the university.

Here at UNLV, the men's basketball team receives more publicity locally and nationwide than any other program.

Not to say that all the other programs are not as good, but because of the basketball team's "running and gunning" reputation the media tends to cater more to them than any other programs on campus.

What attracts the media attention to such programs?

Big name players, tradi-

tion of the sports program and opponents during the season are what attracts media coverage.

If that is the case UNLV women's basketball, football and women's track teams should receive an equal amount of coverage.

Something to think about, is that virtually everyone in Las Vegas knows the full name of each Rebel player. But, how many of those people with the name Trena Hull. Probably not half. Why?

Well, the media has given the women's track team little media exposure. When they have received publicity, the article most likely was found on page five of the sports section.

What about members of the UNLV football team?

Their publicity from the media has not been that good. However, they have received television coverage to inform the community on their start of spring practice and will receive more television coverage when it gets closer to the start of their season.

Unfortunately though, the football program does not receive half of the media attention that the

Runnin' Rebels do. Turning to women's basketball, the Lady Rebels have their own rendition of "fast breaking" basketball. They may not slam-dunk, but they play exciting, aggressive and tough basketball.

What media attention the Lady Rebels have received, like the football team, has been limited.

Some of the "buried" sports on campus are baseball, softball, tennis, and soccer.

Buried refers to those sports that receive a minimal amount of coverage, if any. It seems that those programs are lucky if they receive any publicity at all.

In reality, men's basketball is superior to all the other sports here at UNLV.

Publicity is essential to every sports program on campus. The amount of coverage a program receives, plays a vital role when coaches recruit, when All-American honors are awarded and when national rankings are mentioned.

It's extremely embarrassing when a UNLV sports program or student athlete is given heavy media coverage when a negative instead of positive act has been com-

mitted. Aren't the positive experiences suppose to be those that most people want to know or remember about a sports program or student athlete?

Media coverage if distributed fairly among all sports programs would increase student body support and community support.

It's frustrating to athletes that condition and play just as long as another program but receives little support from the student population.

True, no one appreciates a losing team, but UNLV only produces winners. And if the media could realize this fact, UNLV athletes and coaches would receive more satisfaction from the publicity they have earned.

Jim Bolla, Women's Basketball co-head coach said, "I think the more media coverage the better the benefit to the school."

"Two negatives that result from one sport receiving more media attention are, one, the more space used for one sport means there is less space for the other sports; and two, other sports take a back seat."

Number one team breeds many spinoff industries

by gary beaudry

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Having the No.1 ranked college basketball team in the nation has brought a lot of attention to UNLV.

And because of their popularity, the Runnin' Rebels are in high demand for merchandising.

Two stores are currently servicing this need for Rebel artifacts.

Rebelabilia, located near Tower Records on Maryland Parkway, features a wide array of T-shirts, posters, jackets and caps and other items.

Manager Ross Moraz described the type of customer looking for Rebel products.

"We get a lot of tourists, alumni and boosters. We get phone-in orders from all over the U.S., including Canada."

Moraz is pleased with business and says business only falls off a bit when the season

ends.

"We haven't had much of a loss this year as before," he added.

Rebelabilia opened in October 1983.

The UNLV Bookstore, located in the Moyer Student Union, also carries stock items like shirts and caps, and features oddities like plexiglas hoops and the shark hand puppet.

Manager Richard Field said that besides students, the bookstore is now getting customers from the community.

"People who didn't come to the bookstore before are now making the effort." As a result of the Final Four, business almost tripled. "The shark hand puppets were selling like crazy," Field said.

After the Rebels lost to Indiana, Field said business remained steady. "This community has not deserted the Rebels. There still is a demand for merchandise."