

# REBEL SPORTS

## PCAA Basketball gets better than ever

by darrell lutey

staff writer

It was only a few months ago at the Pacific Coast Athletic Association Media Day that we all heard the familiar sob story when UNLV Head Coach Jerry Tarkanian spoke about his team's chances to win the league this year, the number of players lost from last seasons 32-2 team, and how every team in the PCAA had improved.

If your a newcomer to PCAA basketball, you probably would have had tears in your eyes when pondering over Tarkanian's dilemma, but for those of us who have heard Tarkanian's same desperate plea in the past, we took his warnings lightly.

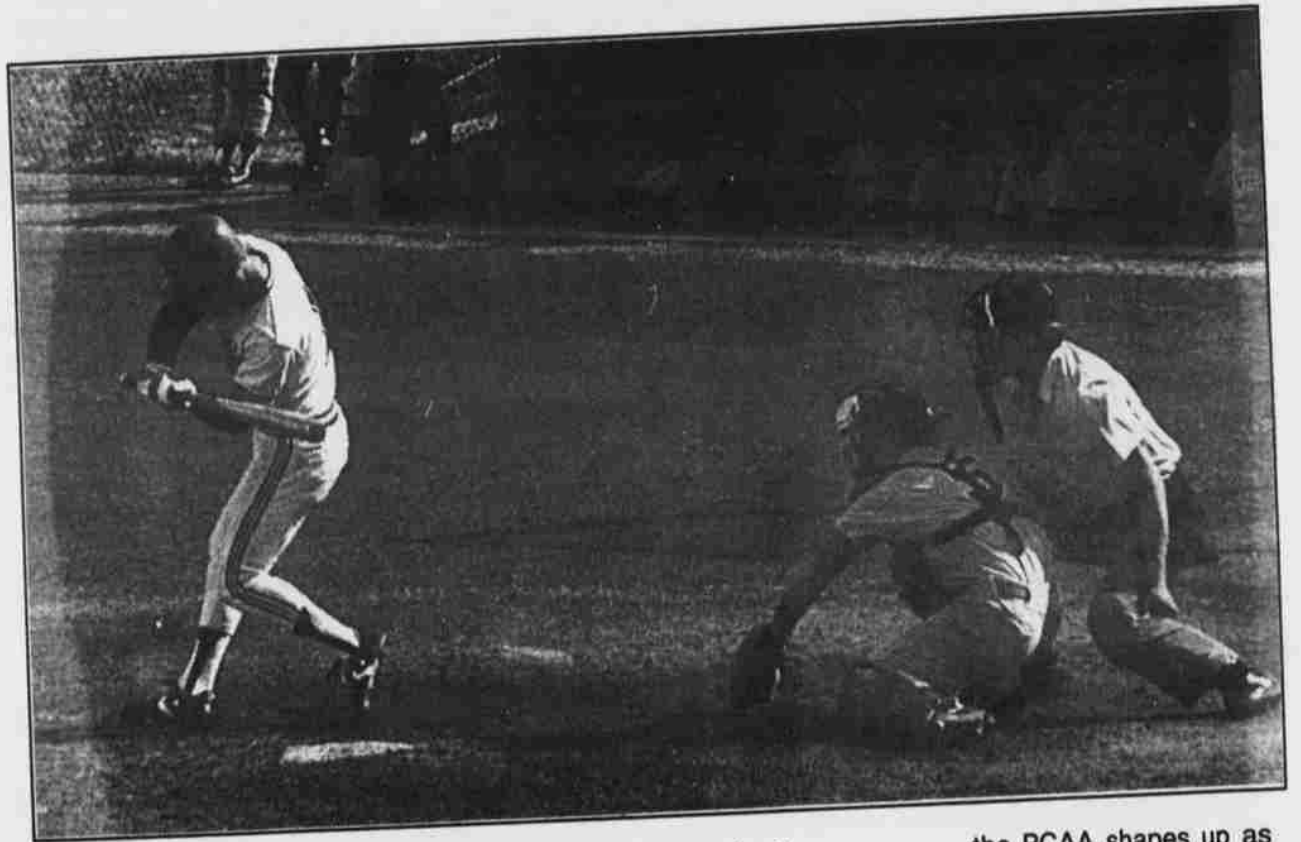
Now with three-fourths

of the PCAA Conference regular season over, we see a strange sight at the top of the conference standings. Having Utah State at the head of the conference has staged a battle with the Rebels for the PCAA crown.

The Aggies going into Thursday's showdown were a half game ahead of the Rebels.

Utah State had an overall record of 16-6, a league record of 11-2, and had won six straight games since losing to the Rebels on Jan. 19. Their wins have also included two wins over Cal-State Santa Barbara.

Usually this would be the point of the season in which the Rebels would have a three or four game lead in conference standing and have sole possession of the PCAA



crown. The PCAA hasn't seen this type of excitement since Fresno State and Boyd Grant gave the Rebels memorable games in the early 80's.

What we are seeing is the gradual improvement of all PCAA teams. The domination of one team is

disappearing in the league.

The parity in college basketball has finally reached the PCAA conference, and although the Rebels have received some bumps and bruises from this parity, the PCAA Conference as a whole is

better for it.

More than a couple of people have taken notice of the PCAA teams. In the Associated Press Basketball Poll, the Rebels were ranked 11th, UC Santa Barbara was 25th, and Utah State was placed 33rd.

If the season ended today, and the National Collegiate Athletic Association Tournament Committee were to announce its 64 team field, there would probably be three representatives from the PCAA conference.

These PCAA accomplishments might seem miniscule when you compare the PCAA to conferences like the Big East, Big Ten, Big Eight or the Atlantic Coast Conference, but those conferences receive unlimited East Coast publicity and get most of the big-name high school players.

However, if you compare the PCAA to other West Coast conferences,

the PCAA shapes up as one of the "best in the west."

In the past, the glamour conferences of the west have been the Pacific Athletic Conference 10 and the Western Athletic Conference, but this year the PCAA is easily outclassing the PAC-10 and is giving the WAC a run for its money.

According to the latest college basketball computer ratings which are printed each Tuesday in the USA Today, the PCAA has four out of the top 53 teams in the nation. Whereas the WAC has only three teams.

The PCAA still has a long way to go before it can compete with the elite conferences of the nation, but with UNLV, UC Santa Barbara, and Utah State leading the PCAA into the NCAA tournament, teams around the nation will take notice and realize the West Coast can be competitive.



### PCAA Men's Basketball Standings as of Feb. 15th

Team	Conference	Overall
Utah state	11-2	16-6
UNLV	10-2	21-3
UCSB	9-4	17-5
LBSU	8-5	14-8
UCI	6-6	11-10
NMSU	6-7	14-12
SJSU	5-7	10-11
FSU	5-7	8-13
CSF	2-10	6-15
UOP	0-12	5-17

## Get behind the Rebels

The UNLV Basketball Alumni Association wants you to get behind your UNLV Runnin' Rebels and support the Basketball Alumni Scholarship Program. You can lend your support by purchasing

"Tark Attack" Music videos, Record albums and/or clothing from the following Las Vegas area merchants:

Smith's Food, Kings, Major Video, 4 Season Sports, Rebelbilia,

Odyssey and Wherehouse Records and Rebel Pride

All proceeds benefit the UNLV Basketball Alumni Association's Scholarship Program.

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