

Cook seeks perfection with every kick

by kim alpert

staff writer

Generally speaking, a 54-yard field goal is a statistic that most place-kickers can be quite satisfied with. Apparently, UNLV All-American Candidate Jim Cook is not like most place-kickers.

During UNLV's 48-6 loss to Nebraska a couple of weeks ago, Cook tied the school record with a 53-yard field goal. This was not good enough for Cook, however, who went on to break the record with the before mentioned 54-yarder in that same game. This incredible display earned Cook the honor of being named Sports Illustrated's Special Teams Player of the Week (in the 10/10/88 issue).

None of this, however, seems to be enough to work much self-praise from Cook.

"I'm not as happy with the season so far in terms of me and my stats. I'm not happy with my performance thus far," Cook said.

His performance so far has included connecting on 7 out of 10 field goal attempts as of the Pacific game.

"I'm happy with (the season) because I've had the long field goal attempts (3 over 50 yards). But 7 out of 10 I'm not happy with."

Obviously, not being satisfied with himself is one reason Cook is an All-American candidate. Cook's record-breaking year is an extension of a successful 1987 season. In that season he made 15 of 17 attempts and scored 72 points making him the co-leader for top scoring honors in the PCAA. He was also named a second team All-PCAA selection last year.

His accuracy is apparant in PAT attempts as well, as he connected on all 27 attempts in 1987.

Cook was kicking a soccer ball for 14 years before he even discovered his talents as a football kicker. In his freshman year at Western High School, Cook and a friend tried out for the football team, and all those years of playing soccer had paid off. Kicking the football seemed to come naturally for him and he decided to stay in his home town to use those talents to play for UNLV and his home crowd.

A senior, Cook has been at UNLV for five years as he red-shirted as a sophomore.

Cook feels that the Rebels are a steadily improving team. The loss to Nebraska doesn't loom over him, in fact, it's just the opposite.

"That was the first time in a long time that I've seen our team come together and play as a team. It was good to see that comradery," he said.

He also notes that the win the following week over Pacific was a carry over of that comradery.

Of course, from the Nebraska game also came the new school record and the national recognition.

"I felt really good after that because I didn't expect to kick in that game," Cook said. "To get two long field goal attempts late in the game and then making them made me feel really good."

Cook is a Sociology Major and will earn his Bachelors Degree in May. His ultimate goal is to get drafted in the National Football League.

"I want to at least get a shot," he said. "My whole life doesn't revolve strictly around football, but ever

since I was a kid I've wanted to play pro football."

Other than the NFL, Cook considers counseling kids at the Mt. Charleston Juvenile Detention Center and, perhaps opening his own bar and restaurant here in Vegas. "The Extra Point," he considers a possible name.

Until then, Cook has the remainder of the season to "improve" his stats.

"I want to have a perfect

season and not miss, but I blew that already".

He said that he considers the possibility of being named All-American as a positive motivating factor.

"It's a goal of mine. It's important to have a goal like that because you push yourself. It's not real important (that I win) but it would be great if it would happen."

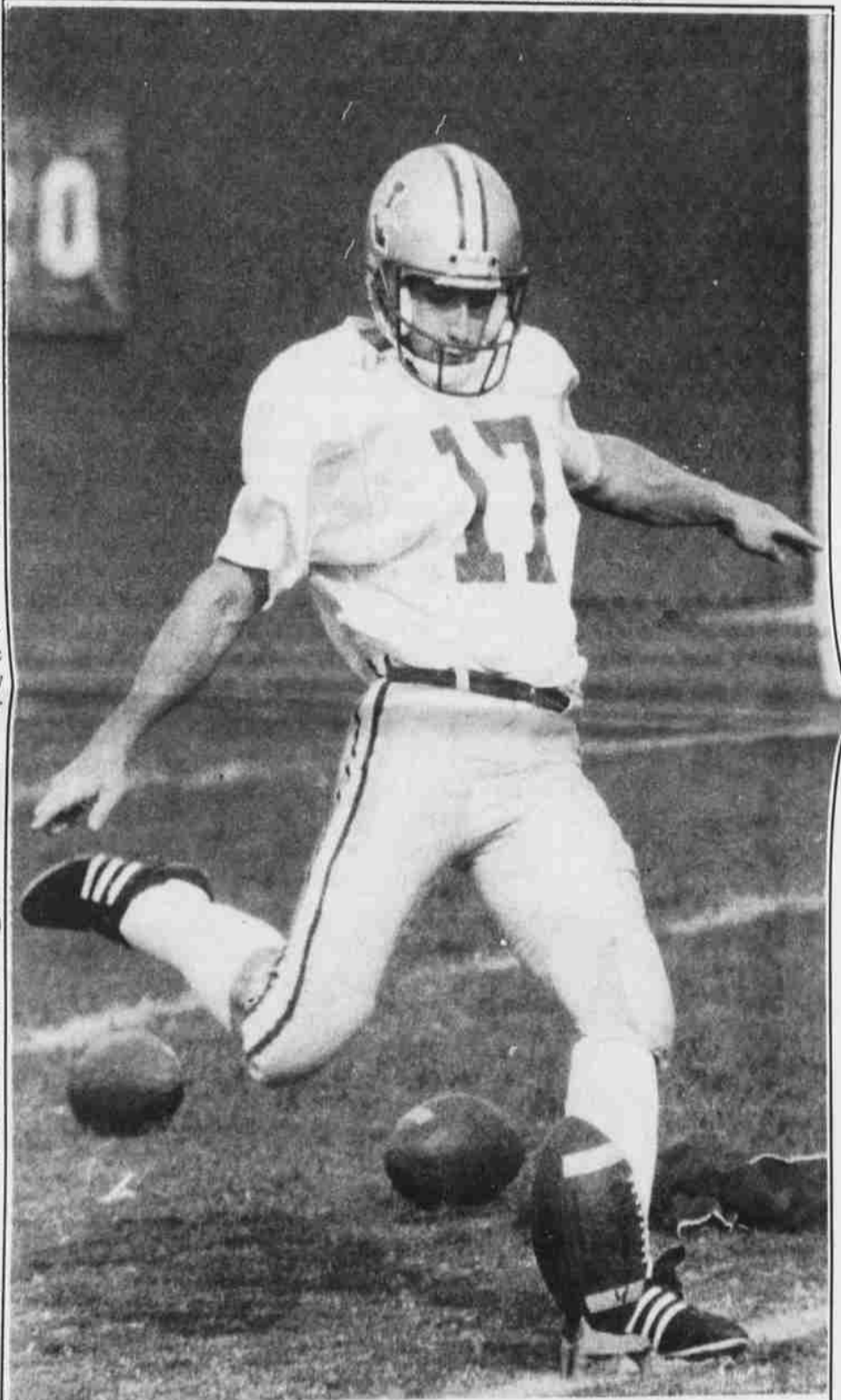
Cook also aims for break-

ing former UNLV kicker Joey DiGiovanna's record of 35 career field goals.

As for the new school record he set with his 54-yarder, Cook said, "I'd like to get a longer field goal attempt this year."

Longer than 54 yards? "57 would be nice," he said.

Some people are never satisfied.



Three points- Rebel place-kicker, Jim Cook, set a school record with a 54-yard field goal earlier this year. photo by steve spatofore

Spaulding followed in friend's footsteps

by andrea reitan

staff writer

Gavin Spaulding, a native of Johannesburg, South Africa, has been playing soccer since he was 8-years old. He came to UNLV after being influenced by a fellow South African, Gary Soresman.

Gary came to Las Vegas for a vacation and ended up trying out for the UNLV soccer team. He made the team and talked Gavin into coming here and also trying out.

Gavin took his advice, and walked on the team in 1984 with a scholarship. His soccer skills came from hard work and his father's influence. Gavin's father played semi-pro soccer in the 1960's and taught Gavin almost everything he knows about the game.

Gavin thinks the competition is higher in South Africa but has noticed improvements in the United

States. The reason for the higher competition is the early age at which the children start playing. South African children start as early as 5 years old in club soccer. By the age of 13 they are striving for the pros. However, Gavin chose to take a different route.

In 1979 Gavin and four of his club teammates went to England to practice with the Norwich City team. And again in 1980 Gavin choses to return to the team.

In 1984 he began his soccer career with UNLV against then No.1 ranked Indiana. This game is Gavin's most memorable moment. Although UNLV lost the game 2-1 Gavin scored the only UNLV goal. That is when Gavin's responsibility of scoring goals began.

Gavin is the 3rd all-time leading scorer in UNLV's history. He is also the leading scorer this year with 6 goals. A majority of his goals are

netted with his head. He relies heavily on the cross pass in front of the goal from the corner of the field. He praises his teammates because these passes have to be timed exactly in order to be successful and his teammates do this very well.

Gavin's latest accomplishment was being named Big West Player of the Week two weeks in a row.

His comments on the team were positive in the fact that he feels they have good talent, but negative because the teams full potential is not being utilized. Their intensity level is inconsistent which needs to be improved in order to be prepared for the NCAA tournament coming up. All of the teams remaining on UNLV's schedule are critical in order to be invited to the tournament. UNLV must win all the remaining conference games to be guaranteed an invitation, Gavin said.

Boxing

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tist, they are both tremendous crowd pleasers. The key for Pazienza will be to get inside early and work the body. By taking Mayweather's wind away, he may be able

to nullify the champs' speed. great matchup that could possibly upstage the main event. Mark November 7, at Caesars Palace on your calendar.

In any case, it should be a

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