

No surprise, UNLV No. 1 in the West

Rebels travel to Tucson, face Montana in first round

by Ched Whitney

For quite a while now, there hasn't been much doubt about what seed the Rebels would get for this season's NCAA Tournament. The only question for Rebel fans was where were they would play.

The answer is Tucson, Ariz., Friday and Sunday, for the first and second rounds. UNLV was sent to Tucson because Arizona is the second-seeded team in the West Regional and the NCAA stipulates that a team may not play on its home floor in the first round. Therefore, the University of Arizona Wildcats are headed for Salt Lake City.

The Rebels' first-round opponent is Montana. The Grizzlies (23-7) won the Big Sky Conference—gaining an automatic bid—and they are seeded 16th in the West. They were both regular season and conference tournament champs.

However, it could get tougher quickly. The Runnin' Rebels, if they dispatch the Grizzlies, may very well end up in a second-round meeting with Georgetown. The Hoyas (18-12) are not having a typical—for them—season. They were considered "on the bubble" before winning two games and

advancing to the championship in the Big East Conference tournament last week. Still, Jerry Tarkanian, in a press conference that took place minutes before the pairings were announced, said that one team he did not want to face was Georgetown.

"Right from the beginning, I've been scared of Georgetown," said Tarkanian said. "I still feel Georgetown can beat anybody. I think if you pick a darkhorse in the tournament it's Georgetown."

However, the Hoyas must first get by Vanderbilt in the first round on Friday.

The other matchups in Tucson on Friday include Utah, the regular-season champions from the Western Athletic Conference, going against the Jaguars of South Alabama, the Sun Belt Conference champs; and Michigan State (a team that UNLV defeated, 95-75, back in December) taking on Wisconsin-Green Bay of the Mid-Continent Conference.

The Runnin' Rebels have a record of 7-0 against other teams in the field of 64. In addition to Michigan State, they have beaten Arkansas, Florida State, New Mexico State, Princeton and Rutgers.

Runnin' Rebs cruise to Big West title

by Richard Munson

The Runnin' Rebels have completed step two of three, if they are going to go undefeated and repeat as NCAA champions, by winning the Big West Conference Tournament on Sunday. The Rebels started out slow but fought back to beat the Bulldogs from Fresno State, 98-74.

The Rebels fell behind early when they were unable to make easy baskets.

"We started out the game shooting about four air balls. We really had a tough time getting started," said Coach Jerry Tarkanian.

Fresno State surprised UNLV, jumping to a 16-6 lead (the most points the Rebels have trailed by all season). The Rebels then went on a 11-0 run, however, taking the lead on a Greg Anthony dunk.

But the Bulldogs didn't give up and the Rebels took a one-point lead into the locker room at halftime.

The Bulldogs continued to keep the game close in the opening minutes of the second half, tying the game at 44.

"It's time to suck it up and go out and play," said Larry Johnson referring to the tough play of the Bulldogs.

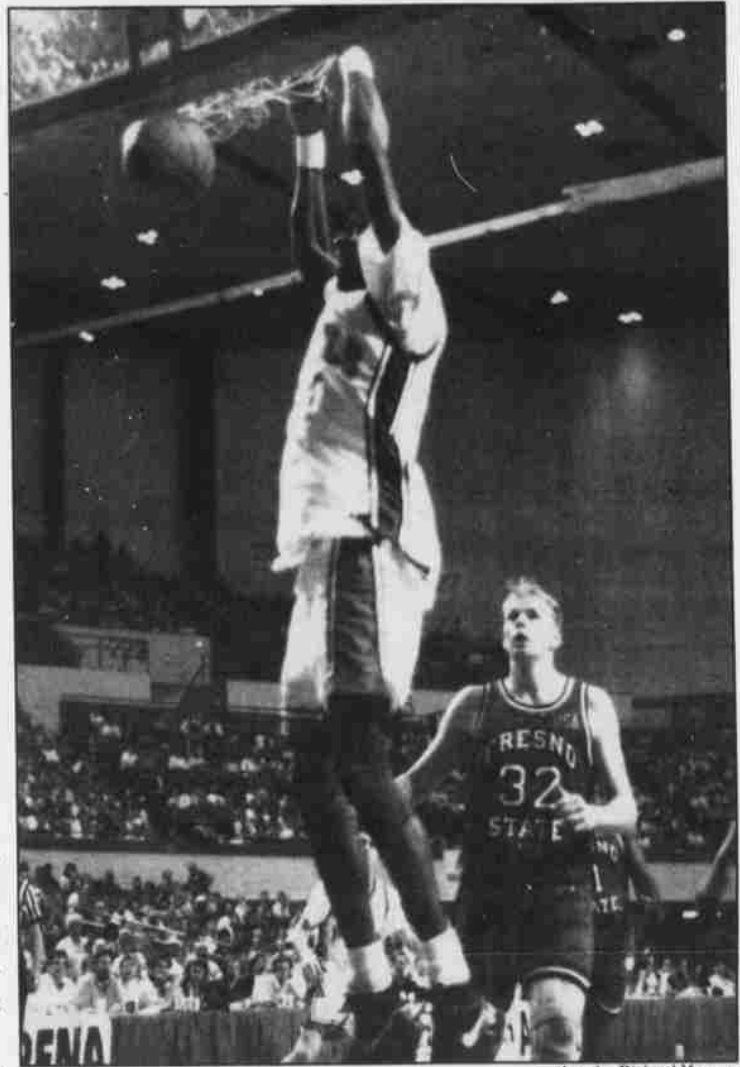


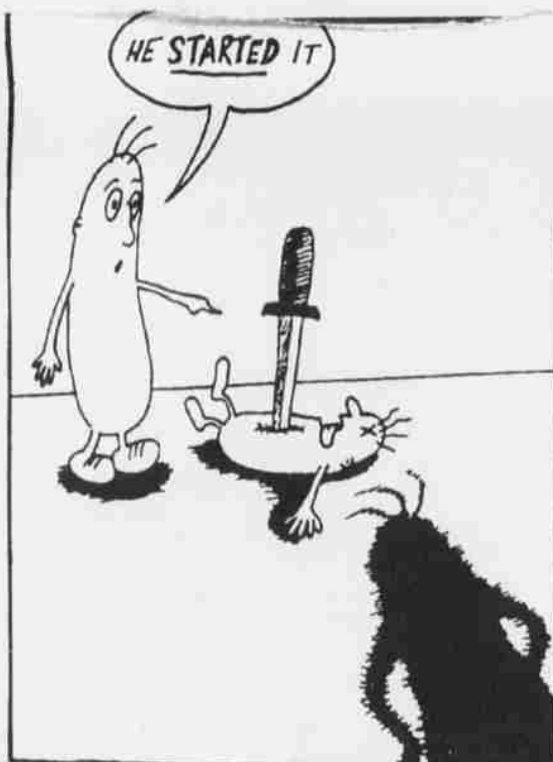
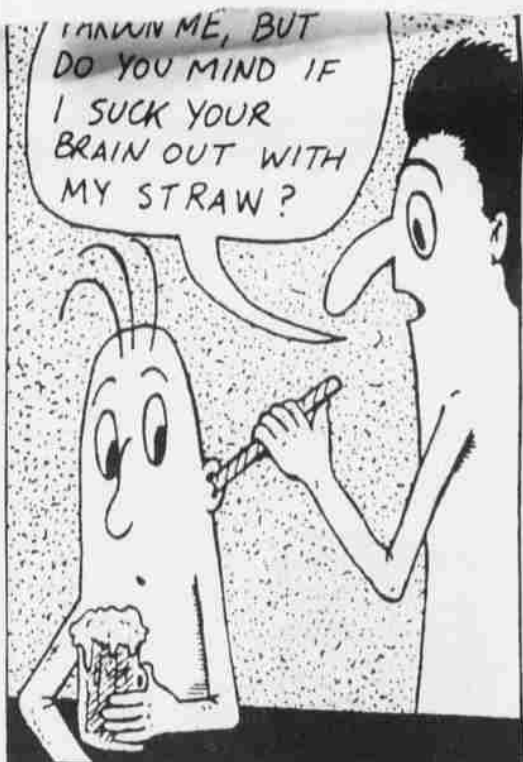
photo by Richard Munson

George Ackles slams down two in the championship game.

The Rebels then went on a 12-5 run and broke the game wide open. The lead was stretched to 26 after Anderson Hunt hit a three-pointer with less than five minutes in the game.

"I thought we had the approach right, but in the second half we let Hunt get away from us," said the Bulldogs' coach Gary

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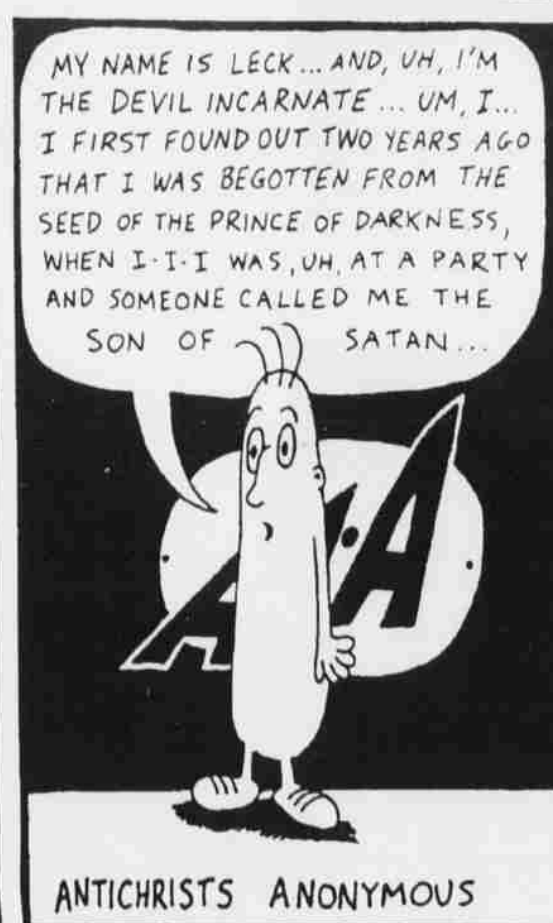


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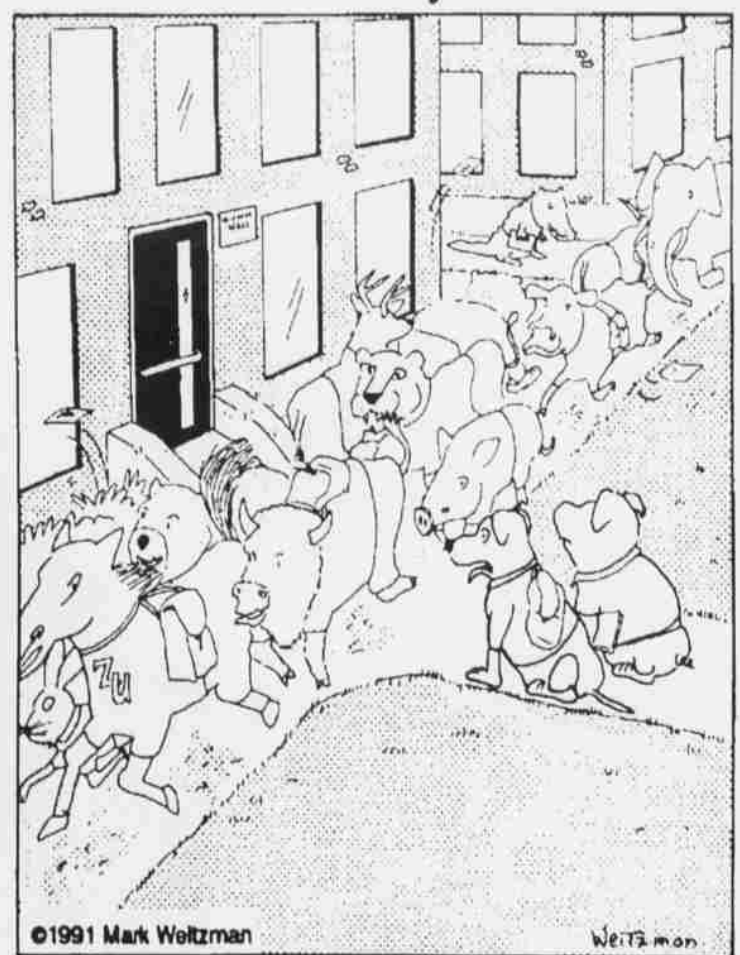
by M. Weitzman



PESSIMISM REACHES NEW HEIGHTS



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"So close and yet so far." CPS