

Cooper to stand alone at wide receiver

by Richard Munson

The man that many of the Big West Conference football teams know by name, number and what play is going to be run by where he lines up, will be a little more difficult to spot this season.

At least, spotting which play by where he is going to line up. Because this season Hunkie Cooper will lineup as the outside receiver and will only play another position on offense if the coaches feel that he is really needed.

Besides lining up at the wide out position, Cooper will also play on special teams as a punt returner. Cooper is already being tabbed by the media to be a standout at that position. *The Sporting News* has ranked Cooper as eighth-

best kick returner in the nation. Cooper has also been tabbed as a preseason All-American by the magazine.

"I stay away from that stuff; my mom collects the clippings, but last year was last year," Cooper said.

Last season Cooper tallied 1,705 all-purpose yards, while averaging 155 per game, 11th best in the nation. Cooper has no fears of living up to his accomplishments of last season. He and the coaches decided that he could better contribute to the team playing one position on offense.

"It was common sense. I'm 5-foot-9; I'm not a quarterback," Cooper said.

Cooper is more comfortable playing the role of a set receiver.

Like the man who throws him the ball, Cooper

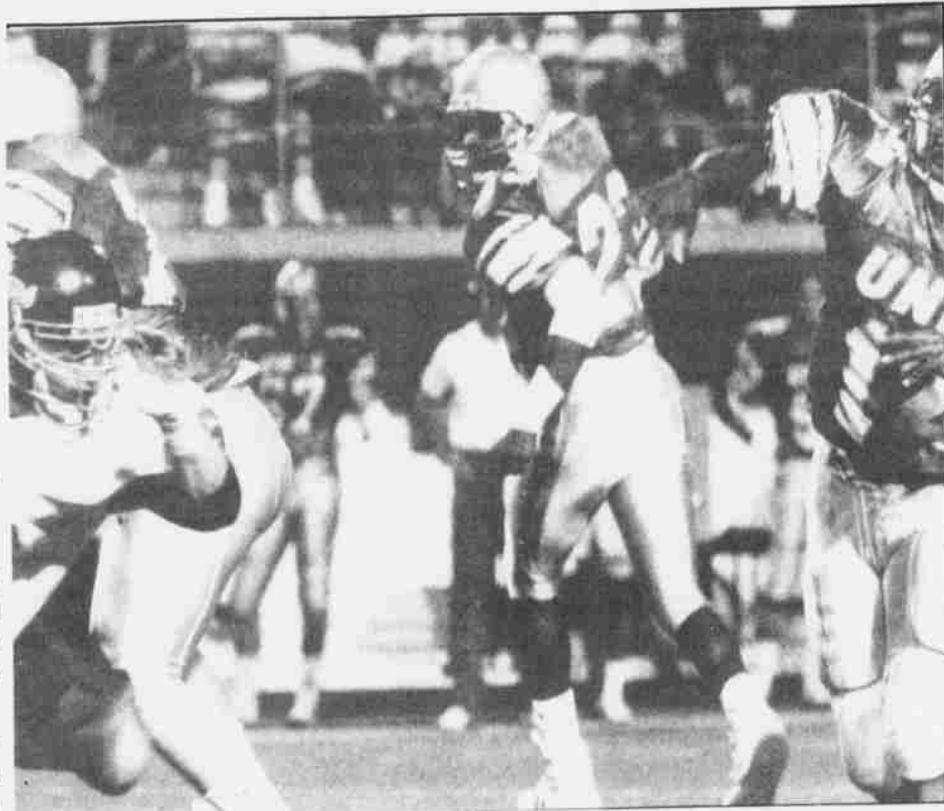
is also a leader, an outspoken leader. He reminds the freshmen in practice to take the harshness of a coach telling them what to do and to pick out the positives and learn from it.

Cooper tries to break down what the coaches tell the recruits in order for them to have a better understanding of what the coaches want them to do.

As for the future of Rebel football this season, Cooper is ready to dive in.

"I'm sick of hearing people say what we could have done and what we should do. I'm ready for it to happen," Cooper said.

"He is a great motivator, team player and he has brought a lot to this program," said quarterback Derek Stott.



Senior wide receiver Hunkie Cooper

Stott is No. 1 at quarterback



Senior quarterback Derek Stott

by Richard Munson

After two seasons of on-again, off-again roles as quarterback, Derek Stott has finally found his role this season.

There is no question that Stott will be the Rebels' number one quarterback under second-year Head Coach Jim Strong when the season opens against Nevada-Reno Sept. 7.

Stott will no longer share the spotlight with the all-purpose player Hunkie Cooper, who will concentrate his efforts at the flanker position.

"I'm comfortable now," Stott said.

Stott is more than pleased with his new offensive line.

"Coach (Strong) went out and got some good people. I'm feeling a lot more comfortable standing behind the line now. (Last season) you had to spend a lot of time looking at your line and you can't look, drop back and throw," Stott said.

The offensive line is now two to three players deep at each position and is much improved from last season, Stott added.

Stott credits coach Strong and first-year quarterback coach Scott Linehan for his newly-gained comfort at quarterback.

"His (Strong) first year is hard on all athletes. Coach has laid down what he expects from everyone," Stott said.

Linehan knows quar-

terbacks and offenses, Stott said, adding Linehan is a teacher and quarterbacks especially respond to teachers.

"(Linehan) makes it easier for us to run our offense and we know what to expect," Stott said.

With Stott at quarterback and three stars missing from the starting lineup, the Rebels plan to spread the ball around on offense. "Once the running game begins, so will the passing game," Stott said.

"(Stott's) the smartest guy on the team," said wide receiver Hunkie Cooper. "He's a quiet leader, and it his going down would be worse than me going down."

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