



## Despite probation, Rebels still picked No. 1 in Big West

by Richard Munson

UNLV.

The name says it all, but does it?

It must, because UNLV has been picked to win the Big West Conference by both the coaches and the media. Even though the Rebels lost all five starters from last year's squad and have only two players, Evric Gray and Elmore Spencer, who saw any major amount of playing time last season, they are still considered the best team in the conference.

The Rebels received all but one vote by the 10 Big West coaches. The other school receiving the vote was Fresno State. The bulldogs were given the vote by none other than Jerry Tarkanian.

The media gave the Rebels 46 votes, New Mexico State one, Fresno State and Long Beach State received two votes each.

The main point of discussion surrounded junior J.R. Rider. The guard-forward possesses a 41-inch vertical leap and may be the answer to replacing Anderson Hunt in the starting lineup. Rider played last year at Antelope Valley Junior College where he averaged 36.5 points.

With the absence of the Rebels, due to their being voted out of the conference tournament by Big West administrators, another team will have a chance to win the post-season conference tournament and an automatic birth into the NCAA tournament.

## Golf team places fifth

With defending NCAA individual champion Warren Schutte shooting under-par the final two rounds, sixth ranked UNLV placed fifth in the 18-team field at the Golf World/Palmetto Dunes Collegiate at Hilton Head, S.C.

The Rebels finished with a team score of 880. The No. 1 ranked Arizona State Sun Devils won with a score of 863, followed by Georgia Tech, Arizona, Oklahoma State and then UNLV.

The Rebels are ranked third by Golfweek Magazine and sixth by Golf World and the Wilson/Golf Coaches' Association of America.

# Strong gets birthday wish, 38-28 win over Aggies

by ShaRhonda Ramos

The Rebel football team gave Coach Strong a birthday present as they handed the New Mexico State University Aggies a sound 38-28 beating Saturday afternoon.

With Hunkie Cooper starting at quarterback, Matt Wills back in the line-up and a few other freshmen starting, a Rebel squad that should have, been seen all year finally showed up.

This game was all UNLV. The Rebel defense, as usual, came on strong and stifled the Aggies' first drive of the game. The Aggies drove 50 yards in 7 plays and came up empty as junior Dan Amos missed a 31-yard field goal wide to the right.

The Rebel offense on their second possession, drove 80 yards on 12 plays, capped off by Hunkie Cooper scoring on a 9-yard dash and the Rebels led 7-0.

After a 43-yard Brian Parvin punt, the Aggies went 74 yards on 10 plays and scored on an 11-yard pass from junior quarterback Charles Puleri to sophomore wide receiver Ezell Brown and the score was tied at 7-7.

Things looked good for the Rebels as Matt Wills went 37 yards on first down on the Rebels next possession. Two plays later Hunkie Cooper threw his first touchdown pass of the season to Henry Bailey for 31 yards and the score was 14-7.

The Aggies came back and tied it up on a 7-yard, 8-play drive topped off by a 35-yard pass from Puleri to junior wide receiver Fred Montgomery. The Aggies tied the score at 14.

The Rebels went into the locker room with a 21-14 lead after a 66-yard drive that took 13 plays. An unnecessary roughness call against the Aggies and a 13-yard gain by Matt Wills set up a 1-yard score by Shannon McLean.

The smallest crowd of the season, 4,771, was treated to what would prove to be the best offensive showing by this Rebel squad all season. The Rebels started the third quarter with a 73-yard scoring drive including a 12-yard scramble by Cooper and a 50-yard pass from Cooper to Bailey. A Matt Wills fumble was recovered by senior center Joe Biritz on the two yard line and the drive was topped off by a 2-yard run from Derek Black who scored his fifth rushing touchdown of the season and the Rebels led 28-14.

On their next drive the Aggies went 43 yards on 9 plays. UNLV made a goal line stand on three downs, but senior fullback Jimmie Mitchell scored on a 1-yard run on fourth and goal and the score was 28-21.

Rebel football had its most exciting moment this year as senior free safety Carlton Johnson acrobatically pulled down his third interception of the season to end the third quarter.

After a Henry Bailey fumble which

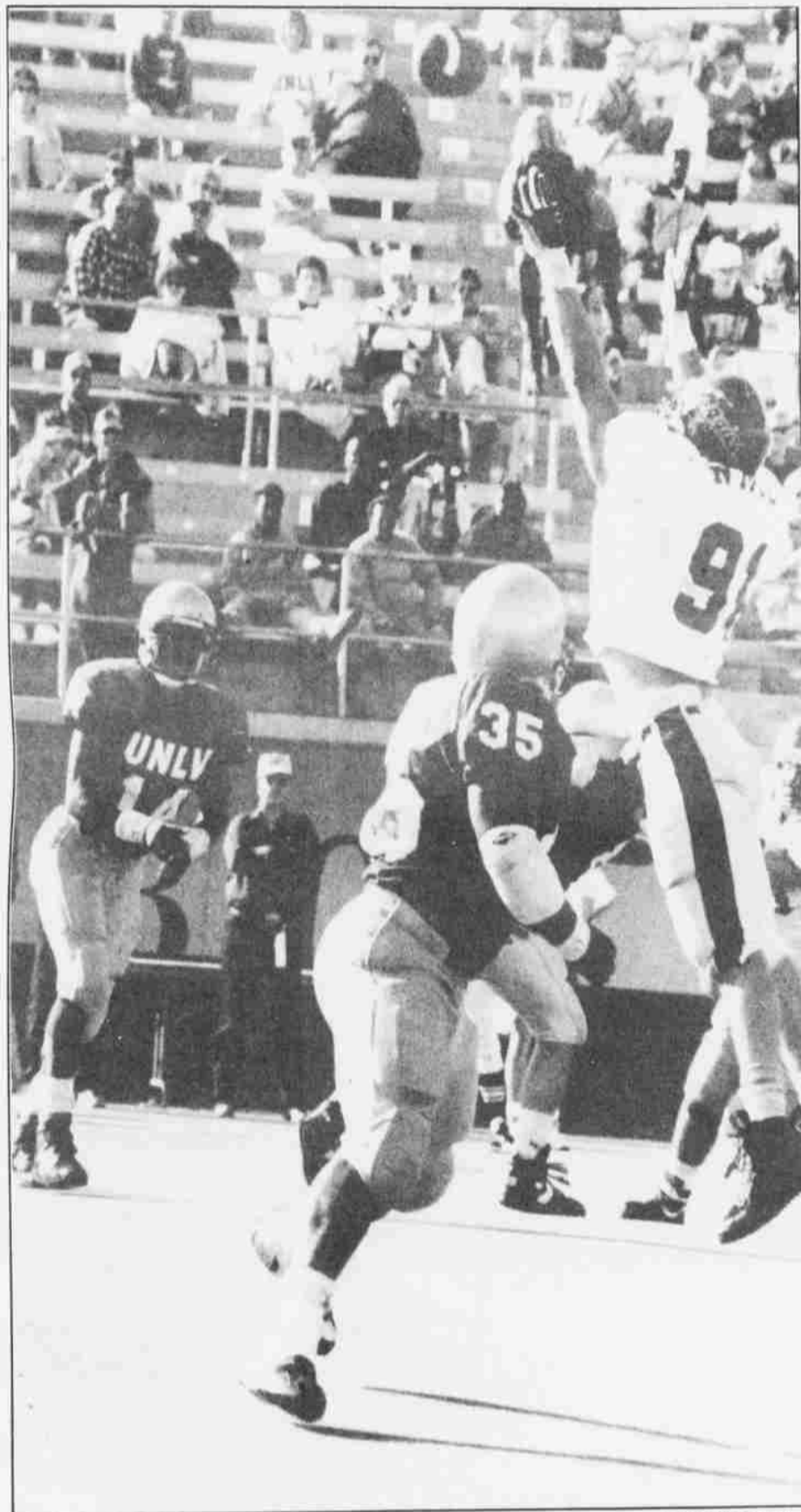


photo by Morgan Fisher

Hunkie Cooper (#14) throws to running back Matt Wills (#35) during the Rebels' 38-28 win over New Mexico State. Cooper was named Big West Conference co-offensive Player of the Week after his 301 yards total offense.

was recovered by Hunkie Cooper, Nick Garritano kicked a 41-yard field goal to make the score 31-21.

With 6:04 remaining in the game, Cooper hit freshman flanker Demond Thompkins on a 51-yard touchdown pass and the Rebels were in control 38-21.

NMSU came back quickly with a 50-yard, 4-play drive that took only 43 seconds. Puleri hit Montgomery on a 30-yard pass that set up the 15-yard touchdown

pass to junior flanker Atlas Reagor making it 38-28 Rebels.

The Rebels made their best offensive showing this season getting 28 first downs, 321 rushing yards, and 212 passing yards. Matt Wills rushed for a career high 137 yards, Cooper ran for 89, Shannon McLean ran for 55, Derek Black ran for 31, and Henry Bailey for 9. The Rebels play their last game of the season at the Sam Boyd Silver Bowl at 1 p.m. next Saturday against the Pacific Tigers.