

# All-America Rebel follows his instincts

by Gregory Quinn

Cool, damp and bleak, it's an unusual Las Vegas night at Peter Johann Memorial Field for a divisional matchup between UNLV and Cal. State Northridge. Fans of the Rebel soccer team bundle in sweaters and coats and huddle tightly in the stands to keep warm.

Down 2-0 in a must-win game, Rebel Coach Barry Barto sends his defense and midfield up to attack. From the left wing, a Rebel player crosses the ball into the penalty box. Danny Barber, his back to the goal and surrounded by defenders, meets the ball with an acrobatic bicycle kick, hurling himself up high with his legs scissoring as his right foot hits the ball. The ball rockets toward the goal...and misses.

"That would have been like a Pele goal!" said an amazed fan.

The fact Barber missed is irrelevant. The play ignited his sluggish team to a 3-2 overtime victory and kept the Rebel post-season hopes alive. "I was behind the ball," Barber says, "so I couldn't shoot it properly." The bicycle kick "wasn't anything that I thought of doing as the play developed. It was instinct."

Since coming to UNLV four years ago, Barber and his keen instincts have made the spec-



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taular a common theme. But early on, he didn't always follow his instincts. Growing up in Orange County, Calif., with its bristling sports scene, Barber found it hard to make a choice. Teams like the Rams, Lakers and Angels enticed him to try his hand at the mainstream sports. In fact, had it not been for his brother, he may never have touched a soccer ball. "All my friends were playin," he says. "(But) my brother turned me on 'cause he wanted to play and I just said 'Ok, I'll play.'"

He started playing soccer when he was eight and hasn't stopped since. Baseball and basketball would distract him but not enough to contradict his instincts.

"I liked it and it came naturally to me," he said. "It was something I could put a lot of energy toward."

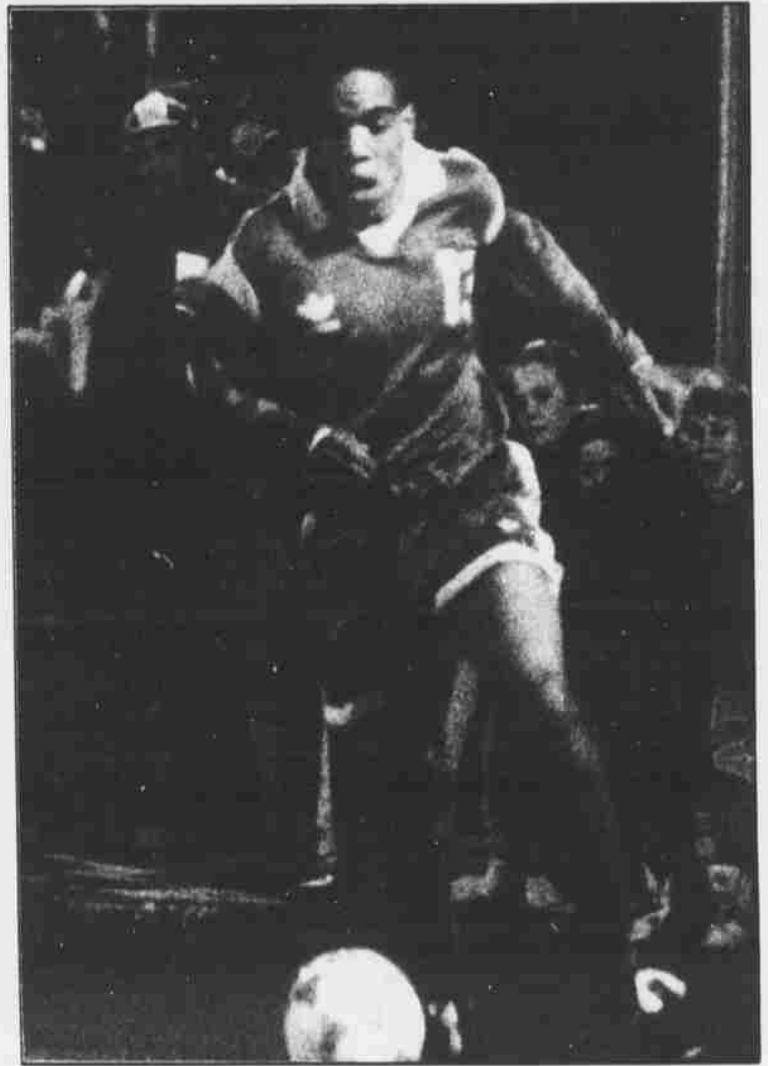
Barber went on to play for the North Huntington Beach Untouchables, one of Southern

California's premier club teams. He mostly played in his age group, but when he got older, around 15 or 16, he moved up and played with the big kids. With a successful farm system, the Untouchables would guarantee him a chance to be seen by some of the top college scouts in the country. "We had about 8 or 9 players (who got) Division I scholarships to UCLA, to Harvard," says Barber. "I really developed there."

Barber had his share of offers—UCLA, Santa Clara, San Diego State, the West coast heavyweights. He considered UCLA, where every top high school player dreams of going, but was put off by their blasé attitude. "UCLA is the premiere soccer program on the West coast," he says. "And he (Bruin coach Sigi Schmid) could get who he wanted. He knew he could have his pick...from the top players in California and across the country."

"We're disappointed that he didn't make it here," says Schmid. "We recruit heavily every other year. The year we recruited him was a light year, and we didn't have a lot of scholarships. In that situation you get a few and you lose a few."

On the other hand, UNLV's Barry Barto showed a lot of interest. "I like coach Barto and he



The Rebel Yell

Senior Daniel Barber plays his final games for UNLV this weekend.

gave me a good offer," says Barber. "I just thought it'd be good to come out here. I felt that coach really wanted me so I thought I'd give it a shot."

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## Did you know?

The Rebel football team is 2-2 lifetime when they play on Halloween.

Year	Opponent	Score
1970	at Santa Clara	(W) 35-25
1981	at Hawaii	(L) 21-57
1985	NEW MEXICO STATE	(W) 17-12
1987	at Fresno State	(L) 10-45

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