



photo by Wray Halterman

Mar Love carried 16 times for 176 yards in the Rebels' 33-16 win over Cal State Fullerton. UNLV finished the season 6-5, their first plus-.500 campaign since they went 6-5 in 1986.

Rebels down Titans, secure first winning season since '86

by Anthony E. Zuiker

Matching their 1986 record of 6-5, the Rebels ended their 1992 campaign with a 33-16 victory over Cal State Fullerton. UNLV tied for fourth in the Big West Conference along with New Mexico State at 3-3.

Although UNLV head football coach Jim Strong ended the season at the Sam Boyd Silver Bowl with the first winning record of his career, his longtime friend, Titan coach Gene Murphy, ended the season with an overall record of 2-9.

Murphy retired as Cal State Fullerton head coach after last Saturday's game. The Titans, who finished winless in the Big West this season, may not have a football program next season due to dismal attendance and lack of interest.

"I had a chance to talk to Gene before the game," Strong said. "Ten years ago he was the hottest coach around, but things just didn't go his way. To me, he was and always will be an excellent coach."



Rebels	33
CS Fullerton	16

"Our hearts were bigger, but hearts aren't enough to win consistently," Murphy said.

The Titans caught the Rebels off guard and took an early lead in the first quarter, 10-0. But on the next Titan series, Henry Bailey roughed Titan kicker Julio Ocana following a field goal that gave the Titans a 13-0 lead.

Coach Murphy got greedy. Thirsting to go up 17-0, Murphy took a field goal off the board only to experience a fierce Rebel's goal line stance.

The game was never the same after that.

UNLV rallied with four field goals and scored 33 unanswered

points. Nick Garritano tied the school record of most field goals.

In the second quarter, Garritano cut the lead to 10-3. Four plays later, Bailey returned Noel Prefontaine's 41-yard punt 74 yards for a touchdown, evening the score at 10-10.

With less than a minute left in the half, quarterback John Ma'ae threw a 35-yard strike to Demond Thompkins to put the Rebels up by a touchdown, 17-10, at the intermission.

"At halftime, I told my players to play hard-nosed solid football," Strong said.

Garritano, Thompkins, and Garritano again, the Rebels found themselves burying the Titans 30-10 at the end of three quarters.

"I felt that I played well at Hawaii, but I wanted us to win the last game of the season," Thompkins said. "Everybody's worked very hard all season."

In the fourth quarter, Garritano kicked his fourth field goal from 31 yards and Titan Steve Danzy scampered in from a yard to end the game 33-16.

Smith's jumper lifts Rebels over Marathon

by Nick Haley

When UNLV head basketball coach Rollie Massimino sent starting five out Friday night, it appeared as though he had made a mistake.

Massimino's post players, Ken Gibson and Damian Smith, stood 6-2 apiece. Of his regular starters, only Dedan Thomas took the floor. And J.R. Rider, last year's leading scorer, sat on the sidelines—uninjured.

But Smith and Gibson proved it was no mistake, scoring 18 and 23 points respectively en route to an 81-80 victory over Marathon Basketball in UNLV's final exhibition game of the season at the Thomas & Mack Center.

With eight seconds remaining in the game and the Rebels trailing by one, Smith, a freshman from Las Vegas' Chaparral High School, hit a baseline jumper for the winning basket.

"Damian (Smith) didn't play like a freshman tonight," Gibson said.

Many spectators were surprised that the shot came down to Smith, the team's youngest player. According to Massimino, he was the third option behind Rider and Gibson. The option was intended to give Smith



Runnin' Rebels	81
Marathon Oil	80

an outside shot, but with no coverage between him and the hoop, Smith drove in for the easy jumper.

"I was surprised it was that wide open," Smith said.

Even more surprising was the shooting touch of Gibson, who went seven of eight from three-point territory—about half from NBA distance. Five of those came in the last 12 minutes, setting up Smith's last-minute heroics. Gibson's feat was made even more amazing by the fact that he and most of his teammates were matched against men over half a foot taller than themselves.

"It's difficult," Gibson said. "I have to really work at my position. It basically came down

to heart. We hit some big shots, but we had to earn them."

The size mismatch came in part because Dexter Boney, Evric Gray and Danny Griffin could not play due to injuries. In addition, Rider, suffering from what was only identified as "personal problems," did not start but played 33 minutes off the bench. Instead, UNLV started a mostly untried squad whose tallest players were 6-2.

"I thought we got a very good effort out of the group that played," Massimino said. "It was a major confidence builder for the younger kids."

Holding a 36-34 edge at halftime, UNLV had to rely on 55.6 percent three-point shooting in the second half to keep pace with Marathon Basketball's 64.5 field-goal percentage.

"Obviously our post play was kind of difficult since (Smith) was playing a 6-11 guy and Kenny (Gibson) had four fouls," Massimino said. "I thought we could have defended a little better at the perimeter. Defensively, we have to get some stops."

UNLV opens regular season play at Loyola Marymount in Los Angeles on Saturday. With the exception of Griffin, the Rebels should be at full strength.



photo by Wray Halterman

Kent Gibson hit seven of eight three-point attempts and scored 23 points to lead the Runnin' Rebels to a come-from-behind 81-80 win.