

Rebels dunk Lady Blazers, win 7-UP Classic

by Tony Llanos

It's a new season—and a new direction.

This weekend the Lady Rebels got started in the right one, winning the 14th-annual 7-Up Desert Classic. UNLV captured the title by defeating Alabama-Birmingham 80-65 at the South Gym Saturday.

The Lady Rebels, who started off last year with losses to Stanford and Texas in this tournament, begin the young 1992-93 season with two consecutive victories.

Teresa Jackson, led the Lady Rebels with 24 points and pulled down nine rebounds in the UNLV victory. The 5-foot-11-inch forward, who struggled in the exhibition game against the Lithuania National team, also had an off day the previous night against Tennessee-Chattanooga. Jackson only shot two of 11 from the floor, but had eight rebounds.

"(Jackson) was a little down on herself," said head coach Jim Bolla. "To get out of a slump, you have to shoot the ball."

"If you're not playing well, and you hit your first couple of shots, then things tend to get easier. She missed a couple of lay-ups early, but she didn't put



7-UP Desert Classic

Friday	
Lady Rebels	83
Tenn.-Chatta.	69
Saturday	
Lady Rebels	80
UAB	65

her head down."

Tournament MVP Trudie Hopgood shot 57 percent from the field. Starting forward Vivian Johnson contributed 13 points and pulled down nine rebounds in the victory.

Point guard Gwynn Hobbs struggled against UAB with no three-pointers and only posted eight points.



photo by Wray Halterman

Trudie Hopgood, Co-Big West Player of the Week, was named the 7-Up Desert Classic Tournament's Most Valuable Player.

Rebels down UTC, 83-69 in first game

by Nick Haley

If UNLV women's basketball coach Jim Bolla was uncertain about his starting lineup before Friday night's season opener against Tennessee-Chattanooga, he really has a problem now.

Not to say the starters looked bad in the Lady Rebels 83-69 victory over the Lady Macs in the first round of the 7-Up Desert Classic at the South Gym, but stellar performances by Cherie Hogg and Tracy Titus could force Bolla to make some difficult decisions.

"It's going to give us a different look," said Bolla of his seven-player rotation. "It's a good problem to have."

Titus alternated with starting center Iris Dinerman, scoring a career-high 13 points and seven rebounds in 16 minutes. Despite a mediocre preseason, Bolla anticipates better play from Titus as the season progresses.

"She has a nose for the ball," Bolla said. "When she's focused, she can be a real influence on

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Runnin' Rebels pull out Massimino debut

by Ched Whitney

The way the Runnin' Rebels struggled in their opener Saturday night against Loyola-Marymount was enough to give anyone nightmares about the Georgetown and Louisville the Rebels face later this season.

But nevertheless, the Rebels' 84-80 victory counts as a "W." As head coach Rollie Massimino said after the game, "A win is a win."

It may not have been exactly the debut Massimino had hoped for—the Lions were just three-point winners earlier in the week over the College of Notre Dame, a Division II school—but at crunch time, the Rebels were equal to the task.

Both teams shot under 30 percent from the field in the first half. The Rebels, who trailed by as many as six, but went into the intermission tied 29-29 after an Evric Gray three-pointer.

UNLV, which seemed on the verge of a run a couple times in the game, could never shake the Lions. Even when the Rebels opened a 61-47 lead midway through the second half, they allowed the Lions to climb back into it.

LMU guard Bill Mazurie's shot in the final minutes cut the Rebels' lead to 2.



Runnin' Rebels	84
Loyola Mmt.	80

But J.R. Rider, who overcame a slow first half to score 29, hit two free throws with 28 seconds left to give UNLV a 82-78 lead. After Mazurie again brought the Lions to within two, Air Force-transfer Ken Gibson sank the final two free throws for the Rebel win.

A plus for UNLV was Danny Griffin's return after an injury—he had three rebounds and three blocked shots in eight minutes of action. The 6-foot-9 Griffin, the Rebels' only player taller than 6-7 missed both of the UNLV exhibition games with a strained knee.

The game pitted Massimino against his former

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'Small' forward is big on rebounds

by Nick Haley

She's been dubbed Larry Johnson's little sister by one coach. She's listed Magic Johnson as a big influence in her life. She's Vivian Johnson, the Charles Barkley of women's basketball, UNLV's Little Big Woman.

Coming out of Long Beach City College in California, the 5-foot-9 forward leads the Lady Rebel in rebounding in her first year at the Division I level. Despite going toe-to-toe against women half a foot taller than herself, she has the makings of one of the Big West Conference's premier small forwards.

"She says 'I'm getting the ball' and if she's hungry, she's going to get it," said Jim Bolla, UNLV women's head basketball coach. "That's something a 5-9 player shouldn't be able to do. That's heart."

But don't tell Johnson a 5-9 player can't do that. To her, a rebound is anything but height. Instead it's...

"It's called positioning, timing, determination and willpower," she said.

"You have to want to do it," Johnson said. "It's my job to get the ball and I get it. It's mental. I want the ball. You've got to be in there ready to get a bang or a hit. I like the contact."

Rebounding is nothing new to the Long Beach, Calif. native. As long as she's been in basketball she's been a rebounder.

"Anywhere I went I've had to do it. It was my role," she said.



photo by Wray Halterman

Johnson: 'It's my job to get the ball, and I get it. It's mental.'

Where the rebound provides defense, Johnson's outlet pass provides the offense. Given the speed of Johnson's teammates, the baseball pass should lead to a number of easy baskets.

"That gets our fastbreak going," she said. "I look up to the quick people and I get it down court to them."

Building on a foundation of rebounds and long, sharp pass-

es, Johnson believes she can add an array of moves to the basket to improve her halfcourt set. something her coaches would like to see more of.

Making herself a more all-around player has been a lifetime effort, one she hoped would lead her to women's basketball's highest level of competition—

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