

Strong stays as UNLV head football coach

BY JAY SAPOVITS

During the semester break, UNLV Athletic Director Jim Weaver tried to run head football coach Jim Strong out of town, but he was hit in the backfield by the coach's attorney, then rattled by the press who were stunting up the middle, and was sacked for a big loss.

If you are not familiar with the proceedings that took place over the break, I will give you a recap of what happened, as reported by the *Las Vegas Sun*. Coach Strong was sent two letters written by General Counsel Brad Booke, which were upon request from the athletic director, asking Jim Strong to get lost. Strong does not want to leave and found a loophole in his contract that will allow him to remain as the head coach for the extent of his contract, or at least to be compensated for one more season.

This is not an issue of who is right or wrong, it is a question of the jobs of the two participants. When Weaver was hired to run this athletic program, President Maxson gave him complete control. This control entails the hiring and firing of the football coach. If Weaver maintains a fair and impartial system of dealing with everyone in this university, including

the students, then he is the boss, end of story.

As for the football coach, if he could find as many holes in opponents' defenses as he did in his contract, this team might have a winning record against Division I-A teams. Last year, the Rebels were 4-5 against the latter. In the life of a college coach, job security means winning and, Coach, you're not winning.

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I was driving through the parking lot with rain pouring down last week and the women's softball team was still outside hitting, and shagging fly balls. It's that type of commitment that has put them in the Top 20 the last two years, and Lori Harrigan didn't hurt either.

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If you haven't attended a basketball game over the winter break, then you've missed seeing Dr. J, who has been regularly attending the Rebel games. As long as he attends, and sits in Gucci Row, there will always be a legend on the court at the Thomas & Mack.

Jay Sapovits is sports director at KUNV.

UNLV hosts No. 18 Georgetown

The Georgetown Hoyas (11-2 overall, 4-2 in the Big East) travel to the Thomas and Mack Center 1 p.m. Saturday to face the No. 11 Runnin' Rebels.

The Hoyas are led by center Othella Harrington and forward Robert Churchwell.

Harrington, a 6-foot-10 center, has averaged 20 points and 10 rebounds in the 13 games played this season.

Churchwell has averaged 13.2 points per game and has shot 36% from 3-point range. In the Hoyas' defeat over Connecticut last Monday 86-69, the 6-foot-6 forward scored a career high 25 points.

John Thompson, 1991-92 Big East Coach of the Year, is in his 21st season at Georgetown. Thompson has defeated UNLV five out of the six times the two teams played since 1981.

However, at their last meeting, the Runnin' Rebels beat Georgetown 62-54 in the 1991 NCAA Tournament.

Lady Rebels travel to Northern California to play two

The UNLV Lady Rebels (10-1 overall, 4-0 in the Big West) will play Pacific tonight at 5 p.m. and to San Jose State on Saturday, Jan. 23, at 5 p.m.

The Tigers (9-3 overall, 2-2 in conference) have lost their last two contests against Big West foes UC Santa Barbara (76-75) and Long Beach State (69-64).

Led by the Big West Conference Career Assist Leader Tine Freil, Pacific is 7-1 at home in

Stockton, Calif. this season. The 5-foot-10 guard from Denmark is on pace to be only the second player in NCAA history to post 1,000 points and 1,000 assists in a career.

"Tine Freil will once again be an important part of our offense," said head coach Melissa DeMarchi.

Freil tied a career high 24 points and 12 rebounds in Pacific's 66-63 loss to the Rebels last season.

The Tigers have never defeated UNLV in 17 meetings.

On Saturday, the Rebels face the much-improved Spartans. San Jose State, which last season compiled a 2-25 overall record and 1-17 in the Big West, have won three out of twelve games played this season and have tallied two conference wins against Nevada and UC Irvine.

"My plan for San Jose State basketball is to bring the Spartans into the top three teams in the Big West Conference. I feel we have a good foundation on which to build a promising future for the Spartans," said first-year head coach Karen Smith.

Returning to the San Jose State line-up this season is 6-foot forward Hulet Brooks. The junior from Seattle, Wash. averaged 8 points per game and 6 rebounds.

"She's in the power forward position, but has played every spot on the court," said Coach Smith.

Like Pacific, the Spartans have also never defeated the Rebels in 17 tries.

Aggie ambush falls short

Rider overcomes slump, scores 38.

BY NICK HALEY
STAFF WRITER

Damon Johnson hit almost every jumper he took Tuesday night at the Thomas and Mack Center, but he couldn't score his last one. It wasn't accuracy that stopped him from scoring, but time.

It had run out.

The lay up that could have given the Texas A&M Aggies an upset victory over the Runnin' Rebels came just a split second after the buzzer, sending the game in to overtime tied at 83, where the Rebels came out on top, 98-96.

"That was a real character game," UNLV head coach Rollie Massimino said. "That was really a team effort."

Johnson and his Aggie teammates allowed a 13-point half-time lead slip away, as Massimino put it "two by two." As late as 1:39 to go, the Aggies held a six-point lead.

J.R. Rider, who had 38 points, hit two 3-pointers in the last minute and a half to pull UNLV within one with 50 seconds left. Rider, who overcame a shooting slump that saw him make only one of his first nine attempts, had his third straight 30-point appearance.

With 40 seconds to go, David Edwards, Texas A&M's leading scorer with 26, hit the front end of two free throws to give the Aggies a two-point lead.

The Rebels' last chance for victory fell in the hands Ken Gibson, who was fouled with four seconds left in regulation. Gibson, who scored eight points, had to hit both free throw attempts in order to tie the game.

"I just tried to shoot like I was in the backyard," Gibson said.

Both free throws were good and after Johnson's last second attempt at a layup came late, the game entered overtime. While Aggies head coach Tony Barone did not refute the call, he expressed great displeasure with the delay of the call—which took about five seconds.

"That's bulls— when you consult with nine guys," Barone said.

With mounting foul totals, attrition took its toll on the Aggies, who fouled out three players—one more than the Rebels. With only four points coming from the

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PHOTO BY WRAY HALTERMAN

J.R. Rider, who fought off a first-half drought, scored a season high of 38 points to lead the Runnin' Rebels past the Texas A&M Aggies 98-96 Tuesday at the Thomas & Mack Center.

Women swimmers take USC off-guard

BY MARY ALICE TORGERSON
STAFF WRITER

A surprise victory fell into the hands of the Lady Rebel swimmers when the team traveled to the McDonald's Swim Stadium in Los Angeles, site of the 1984 Olympic swimming events, to compete against USC on Jan. 9.

Due to an array of illness and injury, UNLV took a small squad of only 11 swimmers and three divers.

The women didn't have any expectations of winning against the nationally ranked Women of Troy.

"We went to do our best and swim tough and weren't really worried about winning. When we



realized that we could win, we pulled together and did what we had to do," Julie Mroziak said.

The squad proved that it didn't take numbers to swim against USC's 18-member team. The Rebels dominated by winning nine out of 16 events.

UNLV women won the meet 150-144.

UNLV's men's swimming team didn't fare as well when put up

against the Olympic-laden Trojan team.

But head coach Jim Reitz was pleased with the meet.

"The men were up against some of the best swimmers in the country and they swam tough," Reitz said. "We schedule tough meets like this because it gives us a great opportunity to see athletes of this caliber compete."

UNLV made a statement in two individual events against USC. Takuo Henmi won the 1000-yard freestyle and Calvin Weis won a close race in the 100-yard freestyle.

USC defeated the Rebels 149.5-114.5.