

Rebels

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bench, Texas A&M lost its potency.

"We've got four walk-ons on the bench. It's tough to go to war," Barone said.

Barone's starting formation built a comfortable lead early owing to 66.7 percent shooting. A deliberate, persistent offense led to high-percentage jumpers.

"We didn't deny as much as we wanted to," Massimino said. "They shot 58 percent for the game."

The Rebels didn't fare as well. UNLV hit only 35.3 percent of its shots in the first half. Even "gimme" baskets just wouldn't fall—Rider's late first half breakaway slam bounced off the iron.

"We weren't hitting the shots that we normally do," Massimino said.

But where accuracy failed the Rebels, quantity prevailed. A 45-31 rebounding edge allowed the Rebels 12 more shots than the Aggies. Rider, Reggie Manuel and Evric Gray each had nine boards.

Gray, who also contributed three blocks, left the game injured after sustaining his fifth foul. After the game, Gray was optimistic about playing against Georgetown on Saturday.

"It's just a bruise. That's all," Gray said.

As for the Rebels, time has almost expired before their greatest challenge of the year—Georgetown. With the clock winding down, UNLV must find a way to hit the rim, as second chances will come much tougher against the Hoyas.

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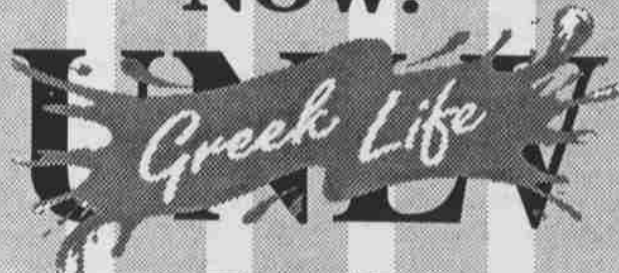
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