

Same rival coaches, but Rollie has different arsenal

Rebels destroy Georgetown; home-court streak continues at 57

BY JAY SAPOVITS

UNLV has nothing in common with Joe DiMaggio. The Rebels' home court winning streak was not only extended to 57 games Saturday against Georgetown, but the rest of the nation finally got a chance to see what Las Vegas has seen for the past two years, J.R. Rider.

The senior guard definitely won the lottery when

he scored 40 points in an awesome performance against the Hoyas. If Rider continues on this torrid pace of scoring—30 points or more in the last five games—he will leave the Rebels with the record for points per game in a season. Elbert Miller is currently the record holder; in 1966-67 Miller averaged 31.9 points per game.

Rider can look back on a few accolades when he's in Dallas, Miami, Minnesota or Denver, assuming the NBA draft goes as expected. He was nine months old when the last Rebel scored 40 points in a game. On Jan. 11, 1972, Jimmie Baker, scored 40 points against God's favorite team, Oral Roberts, back when UNLV basketball called the Las Vegas Convention Center home.

Rider is also on a pace to score 723 points this season, before the Big West and NCAA tournaments begin. If the Rebels win the Big West tournament and win two games in the NCAA's, the Alameda, Calif. native may eclipse Larry Johnson's seasonal mark of 822 points in the 1989-90 season, and move into third on the all-time list for points in one season.

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The Rebels pounded the Georgetown Hoyas, 96-80, and although J.R. Rider was the focal point, this victory was an entire team effort. Not since last season, when Elmore Spencer shut down Shaquille "the Shaq" O'Neal from Loui-

siana State University, has a team played so inspirationally for 40 minutes. If the Rebels play as well as they did on Saturday, then they won't lose three games all season.

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I was pleased to hear the pep band play the CBS theme song. It created a mood of national importance to the game before the start on Saturday. The band is loud, energetic, and jazzy; I just wish they would play more songs. Yes, I like the UNLV theme song, but not exclusively for

two hours. Instead of a pre-produced, loud-speaker presentation

of "Another One Bites the Dust," let the band play on.

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As great as the 57 straight home basketball wins may seem, UNLV's Ken Gibson has a streak of his own. The 6-foot-3-inch junior has dived into the stands for a loose ball in 98 consecutive games, dating back to his high school days in Bloomington, Ill. During that streak there have not been any serious injuries reported by fans, but Gibson has broken his nose twice and suffered three black eyes. Just kidding, Gibson's aggressive style of play is well-acknowledged and is an adequate representation of the attitude that Coach Rollie Massimino has continued with the UNLV program.

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If you were at the game against Georgetown, see if any of these thoughts went through your mind:

- For being an outspoken man, John Thompson sure is quiet.
- Othella Harrington is to 6-foot-10 as Charles Barkley is to 6-foot-6.
- UNLV is definitely deserving of its ranking.
- Halftime score: J.R. Rider 20, Georgetown 26.
- Imagine the score if Danny Griffin didn't quit the team.

Jay Sapovits is the sports director at KUNV.

Rebels run over Georgetown

BY PAUL GUTIERREZ
STAFF WRITER

In what was probably the most important basketball game for the UNLV basketball program since the Final Four loss to Duke University two years ago, the Runnin' Rebels took a page out of their storied past Saturday against visiting No. 18 Georgetown.

The Rebels were runnin', gunnin', slammin' and generally just having their way with a much taller, albeit younger Hoya squad on their way to a 96-80 win as J.R. Rider raised his NBA stock considerably with a 40-point, seven-rebound effort.

"It's unfortunate that they didn't play as well (as they usually do)," said UNLV coach Rollie Massimino in regard to Georgetown. "Never in my wildest dreams did I think we would play as well as we did today."

With a 56-game home winning streak on the line and the notoriety of being telecast nationwide via CBS Sports (the first time UNLV has been on a major network since the Duke loss), the game was a sellout.

The crowd of 18,723 saw an even contest in the first few minutes, tied at 6. But the Rebels promptly went on a 19-0 run that ended with UNLV up, 25-6, with more than 12 minutes remaining in the first half.

The Rebels were penetrating the inside with amazing ease over the larger Hoyas during the game and particularly during this run. But the Hoyas crept back to within 14 with 6:30 left in the half when the Rebels abandoned the inside game and went to their mainstay of the past few games, the three-point shot.

UNLV went on an 8-2 run featuring breakaway dunks by Rider and Dexter Boney to lead by 20 at the 1:54 mark. The Rebels held a 24-point lead at the half, 50-26, following a Rider jumper with two seconds remaining.

"With this game," said Massimino, "we wanted to establish a semi-inside game. That was our game plan, believe it or not."

"We need to run. That's important. That's the only way we can win (against taller teams)."

Coming into this match-up most figured the Rebels, whose tallest starter is 6-foot-7 Evric Gray, would have trouble with the Hoyas, who boast two 6-foot-10 frosh starters, Othella Harrington and Duane Spencer. But in the end, it was the Rebels' speed that beat Georgetown, which fell to 11-3 overall.

Said Georgetown coach John



PHOTO BY WRAY HALTERMAN

Not even Hoyas' guard Joey Brown could stop UNLV's J.R. Rider, who scored a career-high of 40 points in their victory at the T&M.

Thompson: "The very thing that people cite as (UNLV's) disadvantage is their advantage—their size. I would rather face a 7-foot center than a team with all the mobility and flexibility they have."

"Quickness is as much a factor as size is."

The Rebels utilized their natural athleticism in the opening moments of the second half to all-but-secure the win. Following an alley-oop dunk by Rider with 17:37 left in the game, UNLV led by 30 points, 60-30. The Rebels eventually expanded their lead to a game-high 35 points, 80-45, following a bucket by Lawrence Thomas with just over 10 minutes left in regulation.

Rider scored his career-high 40th point on a trey with 9:21 on the clock. The all-American can-

didate has been on a tear since falling in a scoring funk against Cal State Fullerton in late December with a mere seven-point effort, setting career marks in scoring his past two outings.

When asked what he thought the nation saw in terms of his ability against the Hoyas, a victory cigar-wielding Rider answered with a smile, "Something that I've been dying for the people to see, as far as the notoriety of being on TV goes."

"I think Georgetown was overconfident," Rider said, "because they were talking a lot before the game. We went right after them and showed them we weren't scared of them. We blew 'em out. We destroyed them. We whipped them."

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No April fools joke: Rollie leaves 'Nova for UNLV

BY PAUL GUTIERREZ
STAFF WRITER

PART 1 of 4

April 1, 1985—Villanova stuns defending champion Georgetown in the NCAA basketball title game in what is one of the greatest upsets in sports history. The victorious Wildcats return to their Philadelphia abode as collective Davids who had just conquered the mighty Goliath. The city of Ben Franklin as well as the nation falls in love with the wild-eyed, fiery, and over-achieving 'Cat coach, Rollie Massimino.

April 1, 1992—The Villanova campus is again abuzz with excitement. Nevin Fieldhouse is rocking with an enthusiastic

student body singing that famous sports song echoed by the victorious team's fans. The na, na, hey, hey, goodbye, one.

No, Villanova did not win another championship and vanquish another dreaded foe, such as Penn. Rather, it was announced that Massimino was leaving the school for the vacant post at UNLV, and the crowd cheered his departure.

What happened? How did one of the most colorful coaches in the East leave a seemingly secure post to replace one of the most colorful coaches in the West?

"A lot of days, I wake up and say 'What the heck am I doing at UNLV?' And that's not in a derogatory sense. All I can say is it's another beautiful day in the desert."

—Rollie Massimino

"A lot of days," Massimino now says with a grin, "I wake up and say 'What the heck am I doing at UNLV?' And that's not in a derogatory sense. All I can say is it's another beautiful day in the desert."



City of Brotherly Love.

"The only thing a national championship did for me was to make my private life very public," he said before adding that it was worth it. "I don't look at that film now because I still think we're going to lose."

The problems for Coach Mass

Despite winning college basketball's ultimate prize only seven short seasons prior, Massimino's popularity faded fast in the

reached a crescendo in the summer of 1991 due to Villanova's alleged part in the dismantling of the round-robin non-conference Big Five coalition comprised of Philly-area schools 'Nova, La-Salle, Pennsylvania, St. Joseph's, and Temple.

Villanova, a member of the Big East Conference, had 18 league games with the addition of Miami to the group. The NCAA mandates that 'Nova play a 27-game schedule. So when a tournament is thrown in the mix, along with a couple of other cross-country exposure tilts, getting in the four Big Five contests pose a problem.

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