

Rollie replaces a legend

BY PAUL GUTIERREZ
STAFF WRITER

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These days, Coach Mass is more worried about picking up the pieces of a program that has always seemed to be rocked with scandal.

"What happened in the past here is really none of my business," said Massimino. "Jerry Tarkanian was a dear friend of mine. Jerry did it his way and we are doing it our way."

Taking over from legends is never an easy chore. Yet Massimino feels more than up for the challenge. The fact that Tark and Mass are friends should help heal the rift between Vegas boosters and the administration. But a situation almost evolved following a comment Massimino made after accepting the job.

"I very innocently made a statement," he said. "I said that nobody would ever embarrass this institution. If someone continually embarrasses the institution that person should not be a part of a program and/or a school."

"Jerry kinda took offense to that and said 'Coach, what do you mean?' But it wasn't aimed at Jerry," Massimino said.

That incident put Massimino in the Vegas spotlight immedi-

ately as Tark the Shark is seen as the valiant yet vanquished knight here. Massimino is under heavy scrutiny by the Runnin' Rebel faithful in this, his inaugural season.

"As we define it, (UNLV basketball) is the only show in town," Massimino said. "Back in Philadelphia, there are professional teams as well as collegiate teams, Division II and Division III, right in the city of Philadelphia. You're talking about the fourth largest media outlet in the country. Therefore, the scrutiny is big there, but here, it's even bigger. Only because we're the only show in town."

Under the microscope is Massimino's style of play. Las Vegans take a special pride in affixing the "Runnin'" to the front end of the mascot's name. Whereas UNLV was running and gunning opponents to death during Tark's tenure on their way to a title in 1990, Villanova was known for its slow, methodical style and four corners offense which held off the Hoyas in 1985.

Said Massimino: "That's the difference between perception

and reality. Quite frankly, (here at UNLV) we've done the same drills we did back there (at Nova). Only people think we run now. It's great.

"We run and these (UNLV) guys are dying. I mean they've never run this much in their lives. But you do have to have people to run with that kind of athlete."

When Massimino arrived on campus, he found a different breed of athlete in the UNLV Rebel, one scarred and toughened by years of inane turmoil.

"Different? Yes. But only because of what has taken place," said Coach Mass. "I don't think Las Vegas is different than any other college community setting. I've always told my recruits, even at Villanova, that you can still have your privacy of the institution and yet still go out in the community, get involved with your people, and still have the opportunity to go to the city, the Strip here, and enjoy yourself."

"Because to me, there are three critical parts of a student's life - academics, athletics if you're an athlete, extracurricular activities if you're not, and your social life. There has to be a place for these three portions. And if you're unhappy in one, then you're going to be unhappy in the other two."



PHOTO BY WRAY HALTERMAN

UNLV head coach Rollie Massimino compiled a 391-257 record in his 19 seasons with Villanova.

Rebel Classic dedicated in memory of Brian Fischer

BY MARY ALICE TORGERSON
STAFF WRITER

The UNLV swim team will dedicate its last home meet of the season to teammate Brian Fischer at the 13th-annual Rebel Classic this weekend.

Fischer died Jan. 21 in a fire in his apartment.

"Our goal is to have some good races and see where we stand with only five weeks until the conference championships," Coach Jim Reitz said.

This meet attracts swimmers from club teams all around the western United States. Approximately 300

swimmers will compete at the Buchanan Natatorium.

This meet is a great opportunity for the top swimmers in the area to compete in a quality, senior-level competition Reitz said. The swimmers can expect some tough races.

"Fewer swimmers are entered than usual but the competition at the top is very good," Reitz said. "We'll finalize our conference meet line-up through this weekend."

Preliminaries begin at 10 a.m. with finals starting at 6 p.m. on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday.

Rebels tackle a new set of giants

UNLV and Nevada debut as conference foes

BY NICK HALEY
STAFF WRITER

The Runnin' Rebels begin three of four northern road games tonight in Reno. The Rebels, ranked 10th in the latest AP Top 25 poll, will continue an old series with a new twist—tonight's game is the first between UNLV and Nevada as Big West rivals.

Nevada, 7-7 overall and 2-5 in the Big West, has struck the barrier of reality in playing at the Division I-A level since conference play started. Pushed by the Wolfpack's successful football program, Nevada's other pro-

grams are forced to play "catch-up" as quickly as possible, resulting in a few tough years ahead.

The Pack hasn't been without its successes though. Surprise victories over Loyola-Marymount and UC-Santa Barbara have granted the program legitimacy, but the worst is yet to come. Aside from hosting Long Beach State, Reno still has its toughest games ahead—two against UNLV and New Mexico State and an away game against Long Beach. While currently in seventh place in the Big West, the Pack's victories could come few and far between with no more Div. I-AA games remaining.

For UNLV, it will be a match-up they've quickly become accustomed to—a larger, slower

team. Nevada's frontline contains Ric Herrin, 6-10, Kirk Davidson, 6-10 and Eric Morris, 6-5, giving them a tremendous height advantage—three inches on average.

It's doubtful, however, that the Rebels are alarmed by the difference, coming off a surprise blowout of then 18th-ranked Georgetown, also a team with more height than the Rebels and much more talent than Nevada.

Though competitively the Wolfpack appears overmatched, the intrastate game is anticipated to bring in a near sell out crowd at the 11,200-seat Lawlor Events Center, an impressive number for a program averaging just over 4,000 in attendance per game.

UCSB to face No. 23 Lady Rebels

BY TONY LLANOS
SPORTS EDITOR

The UC Santa Barbara women's basketball team will soon discover just how really good it plays.

UNLV (11-1 overall, 7-0 in the Big West) hosts the Gauchos (8-7, 6-1) at 7:30 p.m. Saturday at the South Gym. The Lady Rebels have defeated UC Santa Barbara 19 out of the last 22 times the teams played.

However, UNLV has dropped two straight games against the Gauchos, the defending Big West champions. UC Santa Barbara compiled a 27-5 overall, 16-2 conference record last season.

The Gauchos lost three starters to graduation following their first-ever, Big West Championship season: guard Barbara Beainy, 1991-92 Big West Confer-

Theresa Jackson led the Lady Rebels against Long Beach State last night with 25 points. For details of the game, see page 6.



**When: Saturday
January 30
9 p.m.
Where: South Gym
UNLV
Series Record:
UNLV leads 19-3**

ence Player of the Year, forward Erika Keinast, Big West Tournament Most Valuable Player, and second team All-Big West Lisa Crosskey.

UC Santa Barbara head coach Mark French will now look for leadership from seniors Cori Close and Becky Brown this season.

"With eight newcomers in our program leadership from our veteran players is very important, and with Cori and Becky the returning starters, it's natural for them to pick it up," said French, the 1991-92 Big West Coach of the Year.

"Cori has been a leader for us since the first day she stepped foot on campus and that has been well documented," said the Gauchos head coach. Close, a 6-foot-2 guard, averaged 11.4 points and 6.8 rebounds last season.

"Becky has really emerged as a strong team leader. She has really stepped up to provide leadership, not only to the young post players, but to everybody," said coach French on center Becky Brown, who averaged 11.4 points and 6.5 boards per game this season.

At UNLV's meeting against the Gauchos last season, UC Santa Barbara staged a stunning 72-67 comeback to defeat the Lady Rebels. Forward Erika Keinast led the Gauchos from a 19-point deficit with a game-high 21 points. The Gauchos held UNLV without a field goal in the last seven minutes of the game and outscored the Lady Rebels 41-22 in the second half.



PHOTO BY NICK HALEY