

Recruiting season is a disaster for football team

BY JAY SAPOVITS

Webster's Dictionary defines arrogance as insolent pride or an intolerable presumption.

That does not mean "boasting" when you can back up your words. The term is reserved for a person or group

that inadequately performs up to their spoken

ability. The UNLV football team may behave with those same qualities.

Last week, the *Los Angeles Times* printed featured college football signees of most Pacific-10 Conference, Western Athletic Conference, and Big West Conference schools. Of the teams listed, most had 15-30 players that have already signed national letters-of-intent.

The only player listed for UNLV was Brad Faunce, a 6-foot-2, 180 pound kicker from Glendale Junior College. Either UNLV wouldn't release a list of other newcomers, or they haven't signed anyone other than Faunce, or they haven't signed players of national recognition keeping the list brief avoids ridicule. If any of these reasons apply, the UNLV athletic department should be embarrassed by their actions.

UNLV does not have to release the names of the recruits. It is the university's discretion. They even scheduled a press conference yesterday to announce the recruits. Every school in the Pac-10 released their signees last week. Why does UNLV have a waiting period?

How could the Rebels (4-5 against Division I-A opponents last season) benefit from recruiting to not give a full list of the signees who will play for the university next season?

The Los Angeles area in particular has many quality, high school athletes.

Undecided seniors and other future college athletes may notice a recruit they played with during their career and would like to be with them again. Going to a school in a city where they have never lived before is not a process most do alone. Conforming to a new environment is certainly a key aspect in selecting a place for higher education. And knowing someone where you want to go to school is another

factor.

Often, when top recruits move to play athletics, they bring along other top athletes. If the Rebels' lone signee is travelling alone, then this program should be terminated!

The season ends in November or early

December for UNLV (and will as long as Jim Strong is the

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coach) which means that the recruiting department had at least three, solid months to seek players. Recruiting is a paid responsibility for coaches. It's in their job description. So if the time allowed for the entire staff to round up one kicker, than they are not doing their job this year.

The UNLV coaches had done an adequate job in the past with recruiting. Going on the road and telling athletes to play in Las Vegas is not an easy job.

Some quality athletes have their choice of school to attend. These players are labeled as "blue chip." These players, who are coveted by coaches, are difficult to obtain. Strong has brought two to the Rebels in the past two seasons: Omar Love from Los Angeles and Shannon McLean from Detroit. Both were recruited by major collegiate football powers but elected to attend UNLV.

Another explanation of the covert operations of the football staff simply stated is that they have recruited nobody of athletic value. If that is the case, then it's understandable. Would you come to Las Vegas to play football? Especially now that Strong is in his "lame duck" year as the head coach.

The UNLV football program is arrogant.

But there is justice in recruiting. When you win, you get good players. When you get good players, you win more games and the cycle continues.

One last comment. The Rebel coaching staff also had some problems recognizing local talent. The entire Brigham Young University backfield last season had former Las Vegas high school athletes. If athletes are good enough to play at BYU... well, enough said!

—Jay Sapovits is KUNV's sports director

Rebels down UC Santa Barbara

J.R. Rider contributes a game-high 31 points and reaches his 1,000th career point Saturday against UC Santa Barbara.

BY PAUL GUTIERREZ
STAFF WRITER

The Runnin' Rebels just haven't been the same since their emotional, lopsided win over Georgetown two weeks ago. They've had to come from behind in wins over Nevada and Utah State before dropping a heart-breaker at Pacific.

So after struggling on the road, a Big West Conference home match-up was just what the doctor ordered.

"This was a direction game," said UNLV head coach Rollie Massimino after the Rebels dropped UC Santa Barbara Saturday night 82-69 in front of 14,218 at the Thomas & Mack Center. "As to which direction we are heading. It was very critical."

True to recent form, the Rebels played in a funk for the first 10 minutes of the game. The visiting Gauchos controlled the tempo in the early stages and led 13-7, 6:37 into the game. The Rebels grabbed their first lead of the night on a Dexter Boney jumper, 15-13, at the 10:39 mark. But fueled by a vocal UCSB contingent, the Gauchos roared back to take a 23-19 lead with 4:14 remaining in the half.

"We were somewhat lethargic early on," said Massimino. "We had to make this an our-tempo kind of game."

The Rebels finally put it together in the last four minutes of the stanza, putting on one of those patented UNLV runs, 11-0, to hold a 30-23 halftime lead.

UNLV continued to set the pace in the second half despite the Gauchos' efforts to play the slow-down game. The Rebels eventually grabbed a 17-point lead 60-43, on a jumper by J. R. Rider, who finished with a game-high 31 points. With the score, Rider notched his 1,000th career point at UNLV, only the fifth Runnin' Rebel ever to accomplish the feat in just two seasons, joining Elbert Miller, Anthony Jones, Gerald Paddio, and Larry Johnson.

Earlier this year, Rider matched Miller's string of six straight games with 30 or more points.

"He's like a man among boys," UCSB coach Jerry Pimm said about Rider after the forward ripped the Gauchos with his 31-point, eight-rebound effort. "We did a very good job on him in the first half. He just elevated his play in the second half. He's very hard to defend."

The Rebels eventually grabbed a game-high 22-point advantage at 77-55 with 2:35 left in the game following a Rider trey. With 2:05 remaining, Coach Mass re-



PHOTO BY WRAY HALTERMAN

J.R. Rider scored 31 points in the Rebels' 82-69 win over UCSB.

BIG WEST CONFERENCE

	Conference		Overall	
	W	L	W	L
New Mexico State	9	1	17	4
UNLV	7	2	14	2
CS Fullerton	7	4	12	6
Long Beach State	6	4	14	5
Pacific	6	5	10	9
Utah State	5	6	8	11
UC Santa Barbara	4	6	11	7
San Jose State	3	6	6	11
UC Irvine	2	8	4	13
Nevada	2	9	7	11

Thursday	Saturday
Pacific 62, UNLV 56	UNLV 82, UC Santa Barbara 69
Utah State 86, CS Fullerton 61	New Mexico State 77, Long Beach State 65
UC Irvine 89, Nevada 79	CS Fullerton 82, Nevada 60
	San Jose State 54, Pacific 50
	Utah State 81, UC Irvine 70

placed all five starters.

Boney added 18 points for the Rebels on 10-of-11 shooting, including 3-3 from trey land. Evric Gray pitched in 13 points with seven boards while both Dedan Thomas and Damian Smith had five points apiece. Thomas also dished off 10 assists.

Reggie Manuel and Lawrence Thomas each scored four and Ken Gibson, the nation's leading three-point shooter percentage-wise, scored two. It was the second game in a row Gibson was

shutout from beyond 19 feet 9 inches.

The Rebels shot at a 47.5 percent clip from the field compared to the Gauchos' 40.7. UNLV converted 18-of-24 free throw attempts while UCSB was 16-22 from the charity stripe.

No. 10 UNLV (14-2 overall, 7-2 in Big West Conference) hosts Long Beach State Monday night as part of ESPN's "Big Monday." The 49ers downed the Rebels in early January at Long Beach, Calif.

In an eventful weekend at Barnson, Hustlin' Rebs win opening series

BY JAY SAPOVITS
STAFF WRITER

The UNLV (2-1) baseball team took two of three games last weekend against NAIA opponent Lewis-Clark State College (1-2). The Rebels won Friday and Saturday before falling to the Lewiston, Idaho, school on Sunday.

The Rebels' offensive star of

the weekend was newcomer Jon Polson, a senior transfer from Arkansas-Little Rock. Polson batted .363 (4-for-11), drove in six runs, and stole three bases in the three-game series. Last season at Little Rock, Polson swiped 38 bases. With his blazing speed, polson could break the Hustlin' Rebel season record for stolen bases which stands at 33 steals. Friday, the Rebels walloped

Lewis-Clark 11-3 behind strong pitching from right-hander Byron Klemaske. The senior from San Diego gave up three runs in the first inning, then settled down to pitch five more scoreless innings in the victory.

The Rebels used 11 different pitchers against the Warriors. Rebel hurlers shutout the Warriors in 25 out of 29 innings.

Saturday, UNLV tied Lewis-

Clark State 5-5 in 11 innings, but won by forfeit as a result of a bizarre event in the latter innings.

In the bottom of the seventh inning with two outs, Warrior head coach Ed Cheff was ejected from the game for arguing a check swing by Steve Biermann. The call could have resulted as the final out of the inning. In collegiate baseball, a coach must leave

the field after the heave-ho. If not, the team must forfeit the game if the coach decides to re-enter the contest.

With a Warrior baserunner on second base in the 11th inning, UNLV reliever Derrek Cotton gave up one-out single to score the go-ahead run for Lewis-Clark. However, the Hustlin'

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