

Dedan Thomas runs the point

The Rebels and NMSU will battle it out for the top spot in the Big West Conference Saturday night.

BY PAUL GUTIERREZ
STAFF WRITER

Even though Saturday night's game against New Mexico State is already a huge one in terms of hype and the top spot in the Big West Conference, the match-up also promises to showcase the top two point guards in the nation in ways of assists.

NMSU's Sam Crawford leads the country in assists with 8.9 per game while Dedan Thomas is second for the Runnin' Rebels, averaging 8.3. But while many see the game as a personal grudge match between the two-floor generals, Thomas does not see Saturday's matchup as a personal duel with the Aggie's point guard.

"I don't think it's going to be a Sam Crawford versus Dedan Thomas affair," Thomas said. "It's going to be New Mexico State versus UNLV. I'm sure the press and media is going to try and play it like that but it's not going to be like that at all."

The Rebels, who lately seem to have to find an emotional spark in order to get up for a game, have all the motivational tools necessary for this one. Not only did the 59-game home winning



streak come to a surprising and stunning end Sunday against Louisville, but the Aggies were also picked to finish ahead of UNLV in the pre-season conference poll. The Aggies advanced to the Sweet 16 of the NCAA

tournament last spring before falling to UCLA while the Rebels sat home as a resolution to a 1977 infractions case.

NMSU enters the contest half a game ahead of the Rebels in BWC action with a 10-2 mark compared to UNLV's 9-2 slate.

"This (New Mexico State game) is going to be a tough game," said the Rebels' point guard. "Especially after losing to Louisville and breaking the win streak. But all good things come to an end. We're going to be all right."

Thomas also spoke of the how he and his mates felt shunned when the pre-season poll came out.

"A couple of the guys were pretty ticked off about it," he said. "But now we're just looking forward to playing them and starting a new streak."

Personal Profile

Born: January 22, 1971
Height: 6-0
Weight: 170
Position: Guard
Major: Social Work
Hometown: Los Angeles, Calif.
High School: Taft High School, Woodland Hills, Calif.
Junior College: Antelope Valley (Calif.) in Lancaster, Calif.

So far, this season: Thomas had 14 assists against the Texas A & M Aggies on Jan. 19. The 6-foot junior also tallied a career-high against CS Fullerton on Jan. 2.

What you didn't know about Dedan: Enjoys listening to music and cooking in his spare time.



PHOTO WRAY HALTERMAN

Dedan Thomas, UNLV's starting point guard, is averaging 8.3 assists per game this season

BIG WEST CONFERENCE

	Conference		Overall	
	W	L	W	L
New Mexico State	10	2	18	5
UNLV	9	2	16	3
Long Beach State	8	5	16	6
Pacific	8	5	12	9
CS Fullerton	7	5	12	8
UC Santa Barbara	6	7	13	8
Utah State	6	7	9	12
San Jose State	3	8	6	13
UC Irvine	3	9	5	14
Nevada	2	12	7	15



Tonight's Games
San Jose State at Nevada
Pacific at Utah State
Long Beach State at UC Santa Barbara

Saturday
New Mexico State at No. 15 UNLV, 8:05 p.m.
Long Beach State at UC Irvine
San Jose State at Utah State
UC Santa Barbara at CS Fullerton

Did you know..

the UNLV women's basketball team is not the only Big West squad ranked in the Associated Press Top 25 women's college basketball poll? The No. 18 Lady Rebels are joined by No. 25 Hawaii. UNLV hosts San Jose State 7:30 p.m. tonight at the Bolla Bowl.

Lady Rebels down Thunderbirds

Victory over Southern Utah pushes win streak to 17.

BY NICK HALEY
STAFF WRITER

If ever there was a night for the Lady Rebels to have an off game, Tuesday was that time. A team that has casually blown away all its major opponents thus far has had difficulty of late.

By defeating Southern Utah State 84-62, UNLV women's basketball won its 19th game in 20 attempts Tuesday night before a capacity crowd of 1,500 in the Bolla Bowl.

The 22-point margin of victory is nothing new to UNLV. Before Thursday's victory over Nevada, only Tulane, which beat the Lady Rebels, had come within 13 points of UNLV. But the Lady

Rebels' last three winning margins have been seven, four (against New Mexico State) and now 22. The 22, however, came against a much smaller university.

With the game in hand early on and Trudie Hopgood out to injury, Coach Jim Bolla took the opportunity to grant playing time to seldom-used post players. As a result, the Lady Rebels scored over half their points from inside players—something of a rarity for a mostly guard-driven offense.

Bolla said, "In our two games against New Mexico State and Reno (Nevada), we didn't get the ball into our post so we wanted to get them a little more time and have our people look in. We had some good plays (tonight) with our post people."

Led by senior forward Teresa

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Saturday's Rebel Game
Who: Rebels vs. New Mexico State Aggies
Where: Thomas & Mack Center
When: 8:05 p.m.

- **Where they stand:** The No. 15 Runnin' Rebels are 16-3, 11-1 at home, and in second place in the Big West with a 9-2 record. The Aggies are 18-5 overall, 5-3 on the road, and in first place in the conference at 10-2.

- **Streaks:** The Runnin' Rebels lead the series by a count of 19-1 and have won five straight from NMSU since the Aggies posted their only win in the series, 83-82, on Jan. 8, 1990 in the Pan American Center.

- **J.R. Rider, Rebel on a mission:** Rider is averaging 29 points and 8.9 rebounds per game and leads the team in both offensive categories. The 6-foot-5 senior scored 26 and 27 points against NMSU last season.

- **Sam Crawford leads New Mexico State:** The 5-foot-8 guard is the Aggies' leading scorer over the last four games and assist leader with 12.0 points per game and averaging 8.9 assists per game respectively this season.

- **Overall series:** The Aggies will be seeking their first win ever in the Thomas & Mack Center as the Rebels hold a 9-0 homecourt advantage over NMSU.

- **UNLV suffers first loss at home since 1989:** Louisville snapped the Rebels' home win streak at 59 games last Sunday with a 90-86 upset victory.

- **Rebels' Outlook:** UNLV returns to action next Thursday at home against upstate rival Nevada at 8:05 p.m. and hosts conference foe Utah State at 8:05 p.m. next Saturday.

UNLV

