

Rebels drop fourth conference game at New Mexico State

Chances for 11th straight title slim

BY PAUL GUTIERREZ
SPORTS EDITOR

After 39 minutes and 55 seconds of furious play, the outcome of Monday night's UNLV-New Mexico State game came down to, appropriately enough, the last shot.

Runnin' Rebel point guard Dedan Thomas lofted a desperation shot from the top of the key as time expired. The shot hit nothing but iron and the Aggie faithful rushed the floor—90-88, New Mexico St.

The Aggies (13-3 in Big West Conference, 21-6 overall) hold the upper hand in terms of a league crown over No. 16 UNLV as the Rebels fell to 12-4 in conference action, 19-5 overall.

The four league losses insure the worst BWC record ever for a UNLV basketball team.

Still, similar to last week's loss at the hands of UC Santa Barbara, the last time a UNLV squad lost to the Aggies, the Rebels went on to win the National Championship. That game also came down to a last-second shot that was missed by UNLV. Larry Johnson just missed at the buzzer and NMSU won by one, 83-82, back in 1990.

Monday, the Rebels came back from a 14-point deficit less than two minutes into the second half, 54-40, to knot the score at 69-all, courtesy of a Ken Gibson trey at the 10:30 mark.

After the squads had traded leads numerous times down the

Rider named player of the week

Runnin' Rebel J.R. Rider was recently named Big West Conference Player of the Week for the third time this season. Rider averaged 34.7 points and eight rebounds in three contests. The senior swingman leads the BWC and is No. 2 in the nation with 28.8 ppg.

stretch, J.R. Rider stepped up to the free-throw line. With a chance to give the Rebels a one-point advantage with 40 seconds to go in the game, Rider sank the first charity toss but missed the second. NMSU grabbed the rebound and called a time-out with 11 seconds showing.

Following an Aggie miss, Marc Thompson grabbed the rebound and put up the eventual game-winner with five seconds to play.

Dexter Boney led the Rebels in scoring with 23 points, including four treys, while Evric Gray hit on 9-of-11 from the field to finish with 22 points.

Rider had a terrible night shooting the ball (6-17) and committed eight turnovers, yet he still had 20 points in 40 minutes. Gibson converted three treys for nine points and Thomas pitched in eight points with 10 assists. Fred Haygood played his best game of the year with five points, seven rebounds, two assists, and a steal in 17 minutes. Lawrence Thomas made a free throw.



PHOTO BY NICK HALEY

The Rebels and J. R. Rider, here hitting the deck against Utah State, fell short at NMSU Monday.

UNLV shot just at a 51.6 percent clip from the field while the Aggies were at 57.9. The Rebels converted 11-of-16 free throw attempts and NMSU was 17-24.

Both teams finish with road games at UC Irvine and Cal State Fullerton. The Rebels face the Anteaters tonight at 7:30 and finish the regular season Saturday night against the Titans.

BIG WEST CONFERENCE

	Conference		Overall	
	W	L	W	L
New Mexico State	13	3	21	6
UNLV	12	4	19	5
Pacific	11	5	15	9
Long Beach State	10	6	18	8
CS Fullerton	9	7	14	10
UC Santa Barbara	8	8	15	9
Utah State	7	10	10	15
San Jose State	4	12	7	17
UC Irvine	4	12	6	18
Nevada	3	14	8	17

Cheerleaders dazzle crowd; Stevens fired; Dedan for three?



PHOTO BY PAUL GUTIERREZ

UNLV students will have a chance to vote for their favorite Rebel Cheerleader in the KUNV-sponsored contest.

BY JAY SAPOVITS

The unsung heroes of television timeouts bounce onto the floor of the Thomas & Mack Center with exuberance and glee. They dance a hole through the floor in just over a minute then surrender the highlights to their male counterparts. The group spoken of is the UNLV cheerleaders and song leaders.

It's hard to be a cheerleader. Most have dance training and work long hours on aerobic maneuvers. They must practice their routines just as the competitive sport athletes.

When was the last time you smiled for two straight hours—dancing and yelling at the same time? It's tough work and they should be commended.

For the first time ever the KUNV sports department is sponsoring the Cheerleader of the Year Award. Each student will have a chance to choose their favorite cheerleader based on these criteria: spirit, appearance, style and dance ability.

All of them are good entertainers and now the campus' favorite will be discovered.

Unlike the Homecoming and Student Government elections, no campaigning will take place. It's just a simple tally of who you, the students, choose as your favorite cheerleader.

Entry ballots can be obtained in this issue of *The Rebel Yell* and a voting box is located in the

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Student Government office.

The winning cheerleader will be awarded a plaque and gift certificate. Lucky voters will have a chance to win prizes on *Sportstalk* every Friday on 91.5 KUNV at 10 a.m.

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Len Stevens will not return as the head men's basketball coach for the University of Nevada, Reno next season. He was informed of this Monday by Wolf Pack Athletic Director Chris Ault. Stevens had been the head man at Nevada for the last six seasons. This is the first year that Nevada failed to have an above-even record. It also was their first year in the Big West Conference.

Ault, who also is the head football coach at Nevada, acted rashly and irresponsibly in firing Stevens. You can't expect Nevada to win much in their first year of Division I-A basketball. Unlike the football team, the basketball team was not dominant at their level of play. The football team should have expected instant success. But instead Ault's team ended up failures.

Maybe Ault should have resigned his post after his football team played haplessly and pa-

thetically in the first half of the Las Vegas Bowl. Against Bowling Green they were unprepared to play and lost the game as a result. I can't imagine Ault having a broader explanation than court performance.

I guess recognizing your own faults isn't as easy as punishing others for theirs. It's incidents like this that make college athletics stink!

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I want to know something—did basketball coach Rollie Massimino design a play for Dedan Thomas to shoot the ball from 30 feet away or was that totally improvisational?

If the first reason—Why?

If the second—Why wasn't a play designed for someone? Second-guessing and arm-chair coaching is easy. But in this case it may have been better.

When the Rebels lost Monday, they equalled their combined total of conference defeats over the last four seasons. They also will not have a share of the Big West regular season title for the first time in the league's history.

—Jay Sapovits is sports director at KUNV 91.5 FM and Rebel Yell columnist