

Tark's last hurrah

by Richard Munson

Jerry Tarkanian slept in Wednesday morning. Why not? He has completed one of the most successful careers in sports history. The 19-year UNLV head basketball coach coached his final game in front of one of the largest crowd at the Thomas & Mack Center totaling 18,944 people.

While his day might have started off normal, it didn't end that way for the coach who knew his emotions would catch up with him sometime. Tarkanian,

who said he was an emotional guy, said it is difficult for him to talk when he becomes emotional.

"Going into the game I felt alright. All day I felt good. It was after the game that I got emotional," Tarkanian said.

The game was followed by a special film on two large screens placed at opposite ends of the court. The film was full of Rebel heroes past and present. Perhaps UNLV's greatest basketball player, Larry Johnson, summed it up in a short speech he gave by saying, "Coach, I

love you." The film chronicled Tarkanian's history at UNLV from the days of playing under the rotunda at the convention center to the glory days at the T&M. The tape even showed an old wedding picture of Jerry and Lois.

"The emotion started after the game when they showed the film," Tarkanian said. "It brought back so many great memories."

The ceremony was capped-off by the awarding of gifts handed to Tarkanian by new Athletic Director Jim Weaver.

Weaver who drew a chorus of "boo's" when announced, was spoken highly of by Tarkanian after the ceremony. Tarkanian said that the ceremony was beautiful and he was glad that Weaver was there. He added there was a great change when that "interim guy" was gone and Weaver was here.

Tarkanian was given a boxed set of media guides and Final Four programs from the years the Rebels made it to the national championship. His final game towel was sealed in a glass box for him to keep as a personal memento. His seat and his "ghost seat" were also given to him. The "ghost seat" is the seat on the bench next to him that has remained vacant for the 19 years that he has spent at UNLV coaching. He also received a replica banner of the national championship banner that hangs in the T&M. There will always be four seats that Tark can use whenever he wants - as would a 10 hot seat. Four silver plated tickets were given to him that will insure that seats be left open for him.

Finally Tark had his old college number retired; the number two which former Rebel greats Greg Anthony, Stacey Augmon and Larry Johnson are currently wearing in the NBA. All Rebel players, coaches and

some of the people on Gucci Row were wearing black T-shirts with "Tark" written on the front in silver, and the number two on the back in honor of the coach.

"I just want to thank everybody for 19 wonderful years," said Tarkanian who was overcome by emotion. "I can't talk."

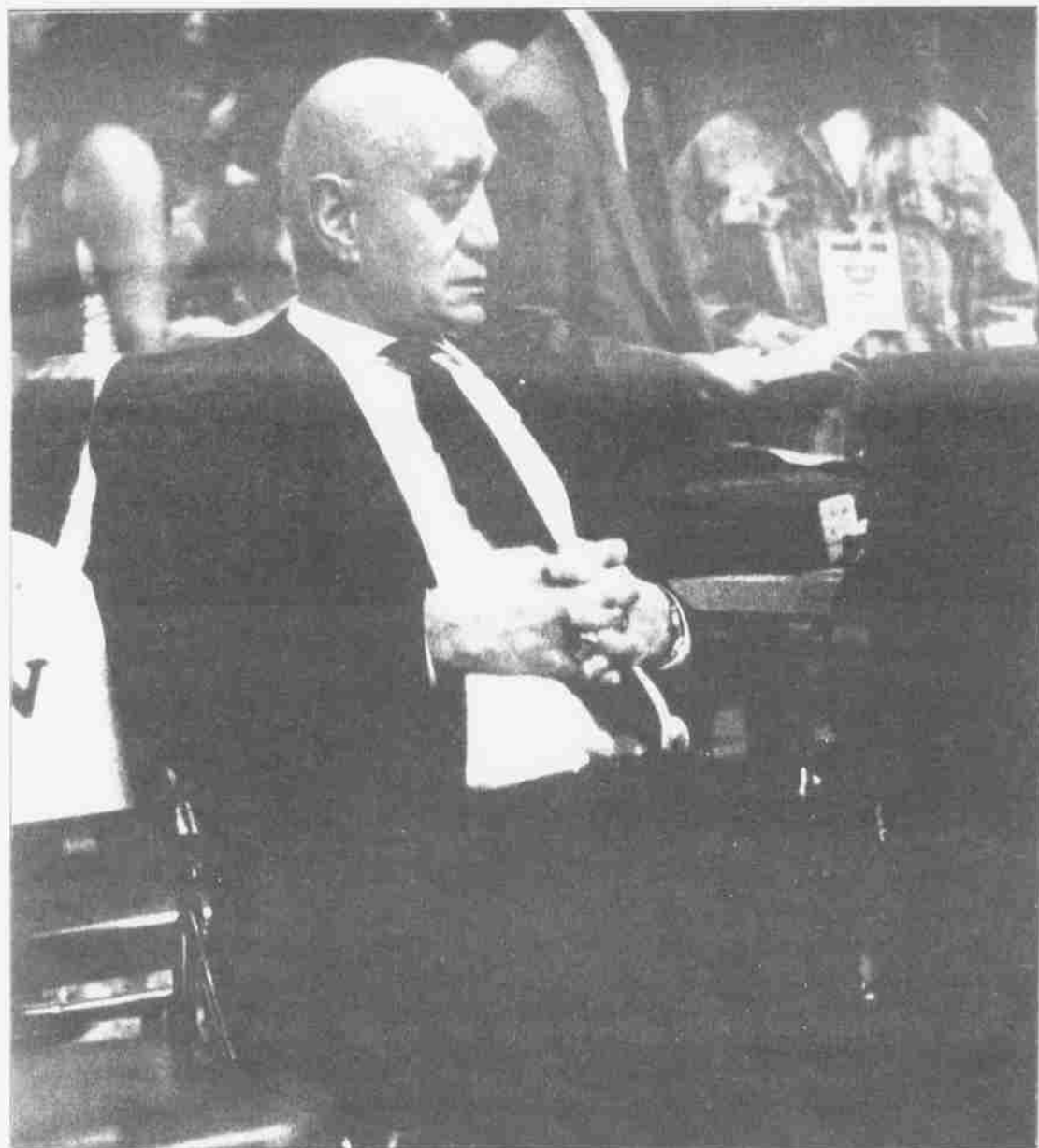
Rebel fan Walter Payton was in attendance and said that he didn't talk to the team before the game as he had in the past.

"This is the coach's moment. There's no need tonight. They know the significance of their play," Payton said.

Longtime assistant coach Tim Fargue summed up what was probably on the minds of everyone in attendance with his usual "once a rebel, always a Rebel."

Gratified who also fell prey to the emotion gave a tearful speech. He thanked his coaches and players for their support.

Tarkanian said he was at UNLV because of the unique family atmosphere that was created between the coaches, players and the community. He also said all of the adversity that he and his players have gone through have brought them together rather than destroying the team, which usually happens with adversity.



Tark finished out his 19-year UNLV career with a 65-53 win over Utah state.

photo by Fred Whitney

Rebs escape with win

Lethargic play keeps game close

by Richard Munson

With all the hype at the Thomas & Mack Center Tuesday night everyone nearly forgot there was a game going on—including the Rebel players. But after noticing that there was a game, the Rebels held off an Aggie attack to win 65-53.

"This team really was capable to play better than they did," Jerry Tarkanian said.

As he usually does on senior

night, Jerry Tarkanian started all of his seniors—all three—Bryan Emerzian, Melvin Love and Elmore Spencer. Emerzian played for three minutes and 52 seconds registering two missed shots, one defensive rebound and one assist. To Rebel fans it didn't matter that it was the beginning of the game because they continued to yell "shoot" every time Emerzian touched the ball.

The Rebels jumped out to an early eight point lead after an Elmore Spencer layup that made the score 22-14. Utah State came back after the two Carlito DeSilva free throws cutting the halftime lead to 29-

22.

Utah State went on a 10-4 run to start the second half making it 33-32 with 17 minutes to play. The Rebels scored three consecutive three-pointers to open a six-point lead. Evric Gray hit two consecutive and J.R. Rider added another.

But after a three-pointer by Utah State's Jay Goodman, the Rebel lead was three with seven minutes to play. Goodman's three-pointer would account for three of the Aggies' last seven points during the last eight minutes.

Both Spencer and Evric



photo by Chad Whitney

Elmore Spencer played his last game at the Thomas and Mack Tuesday night. Spencer scored nine points and had seven rebounds.

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