

Mike White looks upfield during Saturday's scrimmage.

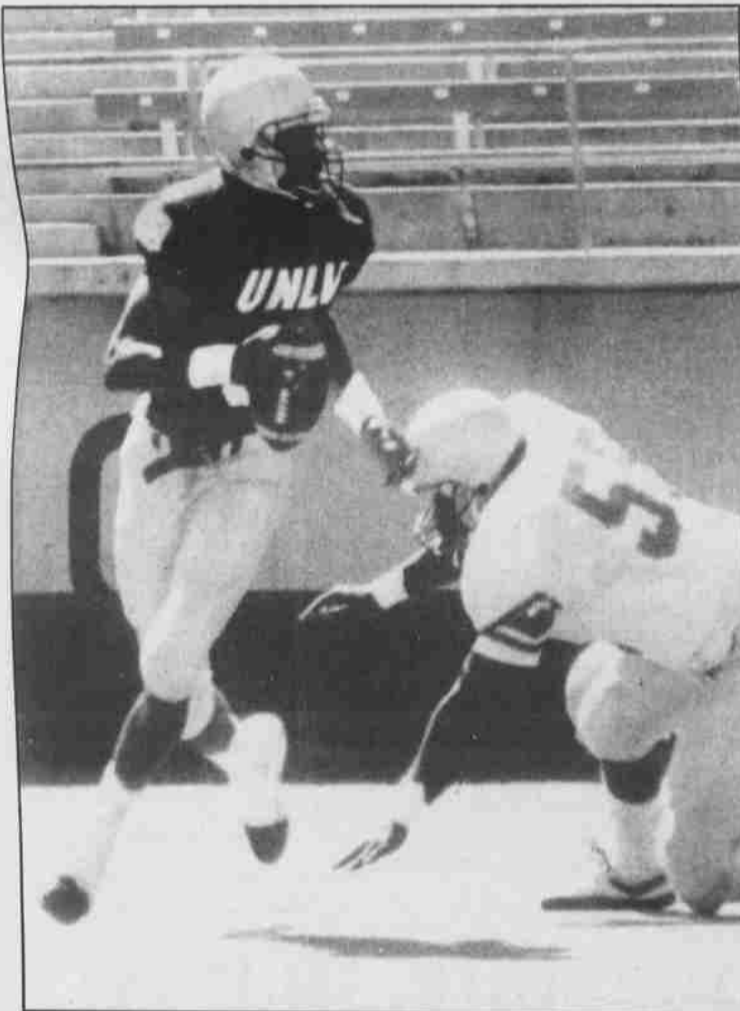


PHOTO BY WRAY HALTERMAN

Quarterback Jason Davis spent much of Saturday scrambling for position.

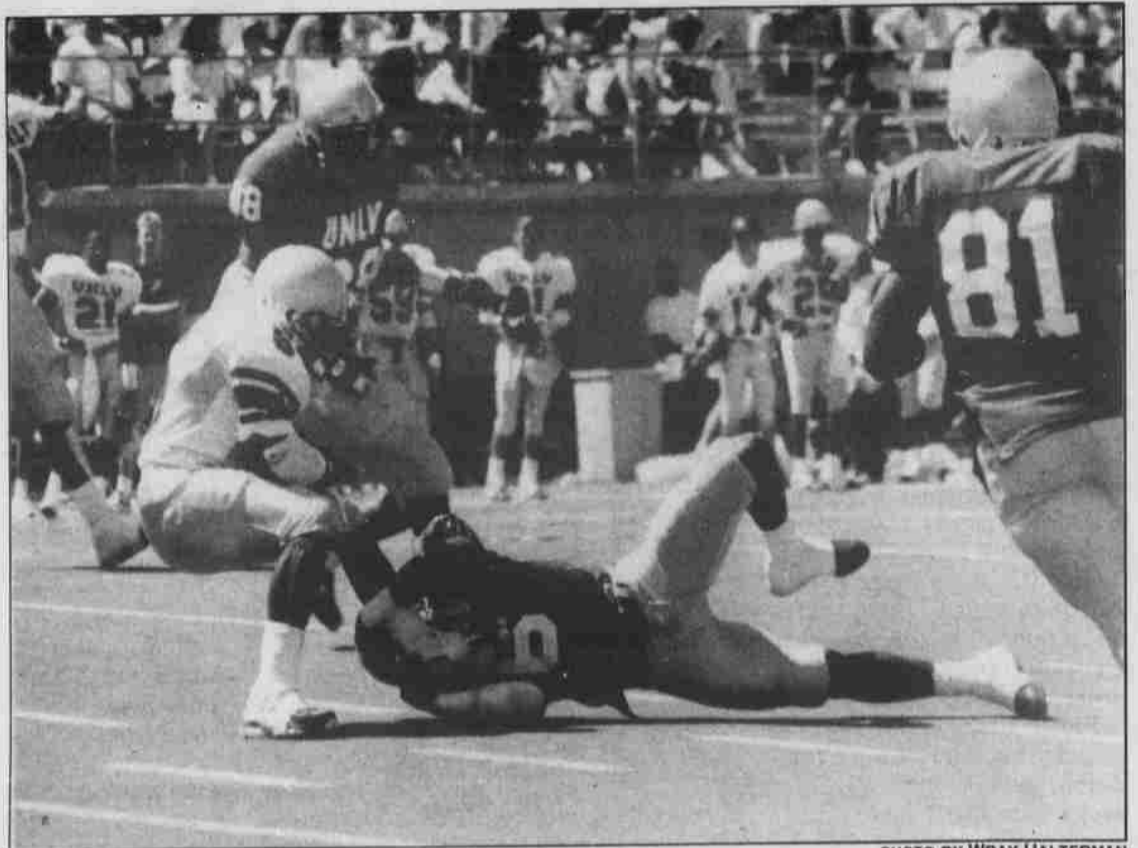


PHOTO BY WRAY HALTERMAN

Defensive back Jason Davis takes out an Alumni player with a low tackle.

Alumni hold back Rebel Varsity, 14-7

Turnovers the difference in game between former and current Rebels.

BY NICK HALEY
STAFF WRITER

In years past, the annual Spring Alumni Game was traditionally the forgotten vs. the nameless. It wasn't until this spring season that UNLV football coach Jim Strong had some familiar faces to work with in practice.

Not holding much value in exhibition wins, Strong opted to let 10 starters from last year take the bench while letting his untested players come in and prove themselves. The result was a defensive stalemate that saw the Alumni capitalize on two Varsity turnovers, turning a seven-point deficit into a 14-7 victory.

"We didn't look at this as a life-and-death game," Strong said. "We came into this game wanting to look at certain players and giving them a chance to play."

By certain players, Strong meant untested players. The likes of John Ma'ae, Demond Thompkins and D'Mentrie Lacy didn't so much as put on pads and for good reason. While the sparse crowd of 400 UNLV faithful may have enjoyed a few snaps to the first string, Strong was more interested in filling out his depth chart and protecting his blue-chippers.

"I wanted to see what (players like) DeJohn Branch could do," Strong said. "I already know what Henry Bailey can do."

"Bailey can help us win in the fall, those guys (the alumni) out there are capable of hurting him."

Instead of hurting Bailey, the



Coach Jim Strong

Alumni vented themselves on the Rebels' offensive line and quarterbacks Bob Stockham and Jason Davis. A greatly outsized offensive line was pushed around by former Rebels Patrick Harden, Elgin Lofton and Chuckie Reed—each of whom looked noticeably heavier than their playing days with the Rebels.

"They sacked. They beat us on the pass rush," Strong said.

But the Rebels had more problems than the rush to contend with. Like the secondary. Though Davis and Stockham threw only 22 passes, four of them were picked off.

Unable to move the ball unassisted, the old guys made both of Stockham's errors count. A floater in the first and a broken timing-pattern up the middle in the fourth gave the Alums all the

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offense they needed.

"We aren't gonna face a better secondary in the conference than these guys," Strong said. "We run a screen and he throws one blind. You execute that in practice and it looks great. You execute that in a game (and it's intercepted)."

Along with the lowlights, Stockham also had one of the few highlights of the game—a 37-yard bomb to Bailey who promptly took a seat after scoring the Varsity's only touchdown.

While it was difficult to use the game as a measure of his squad, Strong liked some of the things he saw.

Said Strong: "I thought we showed drastic improvement defensively. The two scores we gave them were both on offense."

They had to be. With the Alumni outgained 154 to 135 in total yardage, there simply wasn't enough offense to sustain a drive.

As for the the current team's difficulty moving the ball, Strong's play selection and more importantly player selection indicated that perhaps Strong was looking at something other than the scoreboard.

"It's a long time off before fall rolls around," he said.

One expert estimates 90 percent of all accidents could be avoided if drivers had reacted one second sooner.

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