

SPORTS

REBEL
YELL

THE REBEL YELL



Look for
the annual
football preview
Thursday!

Tearing down a Strong tradition

by Chris Jones
Sports Columnist

One year from now UNLV will be preparing for another football season, with the school's seventh head coach. Barring divine intervention, 1993 will see the curtain fall on the Jim Strong era at UNLV.

Few in Las Vegas thought it would end this way. After Strong's hiring in late 1989, many felt the university had found the right coach to turn the struggling football program around. Strong had a successful background in both recruiting and coaching, especially during his tenure at Notre Dame where he was the offensive

coordinator for the 1988-89 National Champions. No one expected the Rebels to become a football powerhouse overnight, but in 1990 the university had enough confidence in their new coach to display billboards across the city with the slogan "UNLV Football - Building a Strong Tradition."

Three years later, where is UNLV football?

The only tradition being built at UNLV is that of lame-duck coaches. Athletic Director Jim Weaver, who took over after Strong was in place, decided after last season's 6-5 record it was time for a coaching change. Strong balked, citing his five-year contract that wouldn't expire until 1994. The two eventually reached a compromise: Strong would maintain his position for one more season. He would then be free to seek employment elsewhere while collecting his final year's salary from

see Jones p.18

Lady Rebel season ends with playoff losses to Connecticut

After riding high in the early stages of the season, the Lady Rebel softball team faltered down the home stretch and ended up with a third place finish in Big West Conference action at 23-8-1, 37-17-1 overall.

The Lady Rebels ended the year ranked No. 6 in the nation.

UNLV still managed to qualify for postseason play and entered the NCAA Region 6 playoffs in Hempstead, New York. The Lady Rebels started on the right track, defeating Connecticut, 2-1, and Hofstra, 6-0. But consecutive 2-0 losses to Connecticut brought the Lady Rebels' season to a close.

But the Lady Rebels did not go out silently. UNLV received recognition in the form of a conference co-coach of the year in Shan McDonald, two All-Americans and six all-conference selections.

Sophomore first

baseman Cindi Parus was named first team All-America, first team All-West Region and first team All-Big West Conference on the strength of her .335 batting average and 44 RBI's.

Senior second baseman Tricia Reimche (.357, 70 hits) was third team All-America, first team All-West Region and first team all-BWC.

Junior catcher Kim Fritts (.357, 3 HR, 30 RBI) was also an All-West Region first teamer and first team all-conference.

Junior outfielder Steph Gonzalez (.337, 22 stolen bases) was both first team All-West Region and first team All-BWC.

Pitcher Kim Smith (22-5, 105 K's, 0.90 ERA) finished her career at UNLV by being named both first team All-West Region and first team all-conference.

Senior shortstop Lisa Wilkins-Eames (.370, 34

runs scored) was a second team all-conference selection and a third team GTE Academic All-America.

- Paul Gutierrez

When you party
remember to...



Don't get wrecked. If you're not sober—or you're not sure—let someone else do the driving

A message provided by this newspaper
and Beer Drinkers of America



Rider looking for new beginning with Timberwolves

By PAUL GUTIERREZ
SPORTS EDITOR

Rebel Yell sports editor Paul Gutierrez served an internship at The Oakland Tribune this past summer. While there he interviewed former UNLV basketball star J.R. Rider at his home in nearby Alameda two weeks after being the NBA Draft's No. 5 pick. Following is the first of a two-part series.

Isaiah Rider Jr. is not a bitter man.

Not even after being ignored by his hometown media and getting nothing but negative

press in his three collegiate stopovers.

These days, the 22-year-old is content to kick back in the Alameda, Calif., neighborhood he grew up in, playing pickup basketball and signing autographs for area kids. The children know nothing about his shrouded past. They know only that J.R. is back in town and willing to spend his spare time with them.

Bitter? Not Rider. He is, after all, the NBA's No. 5 draft pick. And playing for the Minnesota Timberwolves will allow him a chance to

redeem himself, he said.

"It's a new identity, a new start, a new life," he said, adding that is why he now prefers to go by his given name. "Being drafted is the realization of my lifelong dream. I'm just glad that most of the drama and nonsense is over with and I can go on with my professional and business life. It's time to move on and face new challenges."

The drama and nonsense Rider spoke of was the academic scandal bearing his name here at the University

see Rider p. 18



Rider takes time out on the Rebel sidelines last year.