

# SPORTS

REBEL  
YELL

## Pennants for sale

BY CHRIS JONES  
SPORTS COLUMNIST

In this day and age, the right amount of money can get you just about anything, including a baseball pennant. Just look at the Toronto Blue Jays, a team who has once again used its enormous bankroll to buy a chance at its third consecutive American League East title and second straight World Series.

The Blue Jays don't play by the same rules as most other teams. While some teams struggle to turn a profit, Toronto's principal owner is the highly successful John Labatt Ltd. brewery. This financially solid ownership allows the team to buy some of the best players in the game. Unlike many of their competitors, Toronto never hesitates to make a deal for a player because of salary issues.

The Jays play in SkyDome, a huge stadium that is an attraction in itself and helps the team draw more than three million fans every year. Considering there are no other baseball teams to divide the support of fans in Ontario (the Expos might as well play on Mars), it's easy to see why the seats are never empty. Full stadiums mean big money.

And it's big money that allows Toronto to stay competitive every year. While the team has developed some great players in its farm system, most of the current Blue Jays were purchased as free agents or traded from teams who no longer could afford to pay their high salaries.

Last year's World Series victory was in no small part due to pitcher Jack Morris and outfielder/DH Dave Winfield, both free agent acquisitions. They added free agent-to-be David Cone in August and rolled through the stretch to take their first championship.

When Winfield and Cone departed over the off-season, Toronto General Manager Pat Gillick again opened the vaults and reeled in pitcher Dave Stewart and DH Paul Molitor. When they weren't enough to guarantee this year's title, Gillick added Rickey Henderson from the A's to

solidify his team.

The Blue Jays make sure they never lack what's required to win.

It's disheartening to see teams play hard to stay in the race until August and then find out their rich rival has bought another ringer. Toronto has tried this tactic the past five years, from Mookie Wilson, Phil Neikro, Tom Candiotti, Cone to now Henderson. Of these past late-season additions, only Wilson remained with the club for more than a few weeks. In essence, the Blue Jays rent players for the pennant race and playoffs, then allow them to leave when their usefulness is up (unless they can't find a better free agent to replace them in the off-season).

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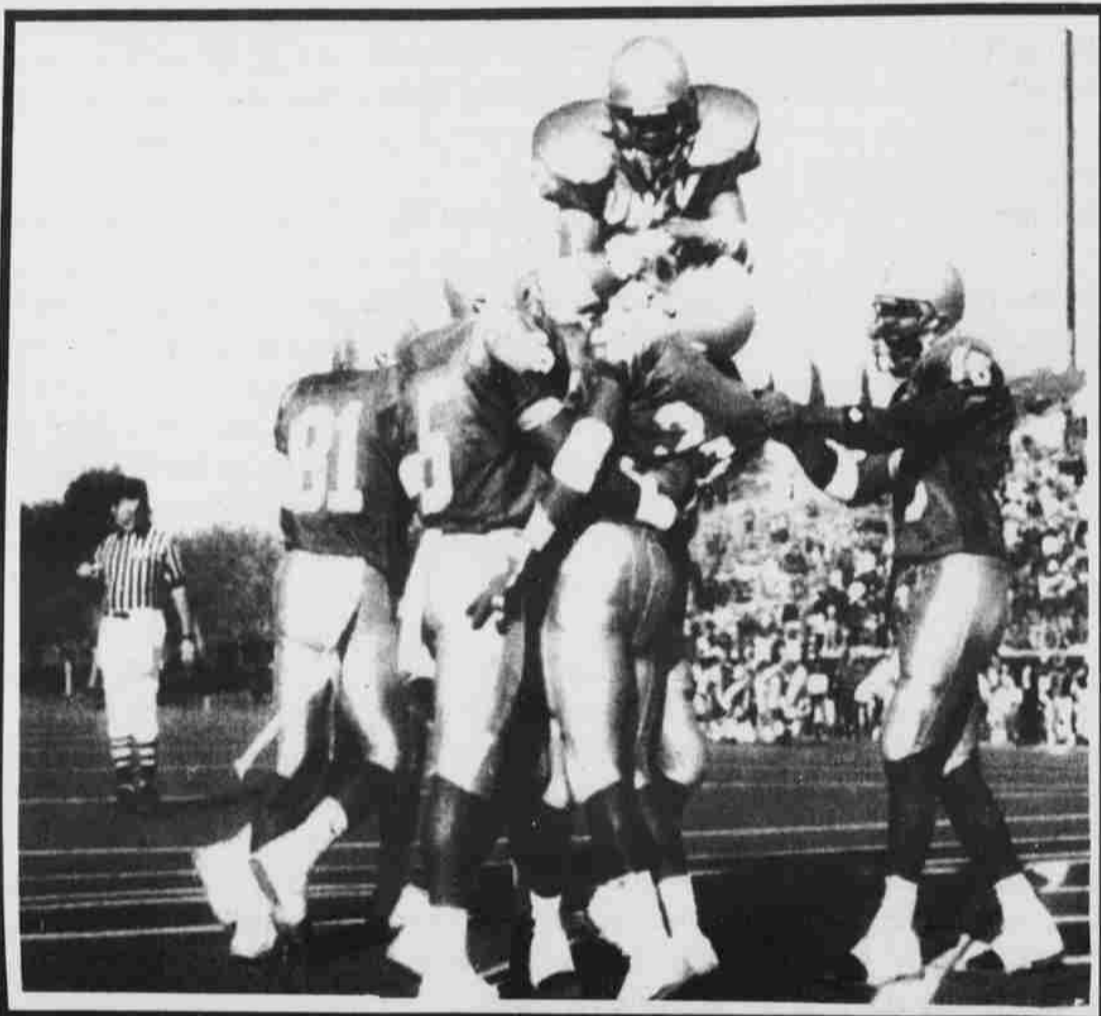
While Toronto isn't the only team guilty of this practice (The Braves have also tried, so far without success), they do it better and more often than anyone and that singles them out. They win with their money. And to fans of teams like the Padres or Pirates, who are losing because of their lack of funds, the Blue Jays are a symbol of everything that's wrong with baseball today.

No team should be faulted for their success on the field or at the ticket windows, but it's not fun to see a team like Toronto buying their wins every year. For that reason, I hope the best team money can buy comes up short in the days ahead.



"Got no friends, you see. 'Cause they stab you right in the back."

- Mad Dog Vachon



REBEL YELL FILE PHOTO

The Rebels (0-2) host Central Michigan Saturday at the Sam Boyd Silver Bowl at 7p.m.

## Rebels blow early lead, lose to UTEP 41-24

BY SCOTT GULBRANSEN  
STAFF WRITER

Chuck Noll, former head coach of the four-time Super Bowl Champion Pittsburgh Steelers, once said, "Before you can win a game, you have to not lose it."

The UNLV football team should have heard that before leaving for El Paso.

The Rebels began the game looking like the team that had only lost to Clemson by 10 points. They jumped out to a 17-7 halftime lead and looked poised to win their first game of the season.

How dominant were the Rebels in the first half? They had a total of 265 offensive yards and their defense was tougher than a Louisiana bulldog on a stray cat. The Rebels seemed invincible and maybe they thought so too.

Rebel quarterback Bobby Stockham began the game by marching his team 60 yards in six plays and capped it off with a 9-yard pass to Randy Gatewood that put the Rebels ahead 7-0.

The Rebel defense then held the Miners' offense in 7 downs and UNLV got the ball back

once again.

This time Stockham wasted no time as he hit Demond Thompkins with a 59-yard pass for a touchdown and the Rebel lead was now increased to 14. The scoring drive only took the Rebels 19 seconds and the game began to look like a joke.

But things can change fast. And they did.

UNLV led UTEP 17-7 at the half. Things looked even better as the Rebels increased their lead to 24-7.

That's when the Rebels quit.

**"Their trash talking didn't help them at all. They really disrespected us."**

-Barron Wortham  
UTEP linebacker

UTEP went on to score 34 unanswered points and hand the Rebels their second straight loss to begin the season.

UTEP had revenge on its mind from last year's upset at the Silver Bowl.

"We remember what happened last year and we didn't want it to happen again," UTEP

inside linebacker Barron Wortham said. "Their trash talking didn't help them at all. They really disrespected us."

The Rebels seemed to do every wrong in the second half. They did not protect their quarterback, and the defense buckled. The lack of defense seemed to be the Rebel's undoing.

"In the second half, no one was covering the quarterback," UNLV defensive back Dion Thompson said. "I don't know what happened, but we had Gray covered in the first half."

Despite the loss, quarterback Bobby Stockham improved his numbers by hitting 11 of 17 passes for 206 yards and three touchdowns. He also had three interceptions.

Junior college transfer Randy Gatewood led the Rebels with five receptions for 79 yards and two touchdowns.

DeJohn Branch led the Rebels in rushing with 58 yards.

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Gulbransen's  
Rebel Report Card