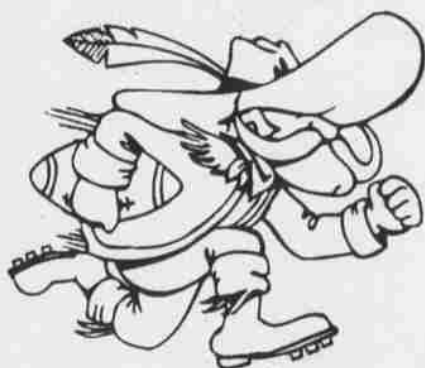


# SPORTS

REBEL  
YELL



Football team draws  
a bye.  
Next game:  
Utah State  
(Homecoming)  
Oct. 23

## Uncertain forecast for Thunder

### Sports Talk

BY CHRIS JONES

Like anything born in an ice age, the Las Vegas Thunder will soon be extinct.

The Thunder has spared no expense in signing talented players, and features a mix of NHL veterans and young talent. Make no mistake—the Thunder will be a good hockey team in its inaugural season. This franchise won't fold because of a lack of talent.

Nor will the Thunder fail from lack of press. Team owner Kenneth Stickney opened up his wallet and purchased a ton of advertising featuring two of the city's most recognizable personalities, Jerry Tarkanian and Rollie Massimino, to promote hockey in Las Vegas. The local newspapers and television stations have devoted extended coverage to the team in an effort to make sure everyone knows about them.

So far, the Thunder has done everything right.

But the best laid plans of mice and men leave us naught, and the Thunder have one major flaw that will ultimately bring about their downfall.

That flaw is evident in the team's name: *Las Vegas Thunder*.

Yes, Las Vegas. The city known as Glitter Gulch, with a population nearing 1 million, wouldn't support a team if the games were free. Only UNLV basketball has remained popular for an extended period, but even its attendance began to slip last season even though the team was nationally ranked for most of the year and featured one of college basketball's most exciting players in J.R. Rider.

History has shown that no matter how good you are, it's just not good enough for Las Vegas to care.

The lone exception to this rule has been Stickney's other team, the Las Vegas Stars baseball club. The Stars have thrived for close to a decade but there are other factors that allow them to stay afloat. Baseball's popularity, the fact that kids grew up playing the game, and the idea of going to a ballpark for base-

ball is as American a tradition as any.

How many kids in Las Vegas grew up playing hockey?

How many kids in Las Vegas have *watched* a hockey game?

Las Vegas is a city with so many things to do that few people will take the time to watch a sport they have never cared about in the first place.

The idea that tourists visiting the city will boost the Thunder's attendance is ridiculous. Imagine a family leaving Chicago in the middle of winter for a trip to Las Vegas. Do you think they'll make it to a minor-league hockey game when, more than likely, they can see an NHL game at home anytime they wish, or to the casinos, shows, and mega-resorts that have made this city popular for the past 40 years?

And once the locals get over the novelty of having a professional team, the old Las Vegas apathy will kick in and the seats in the Thomas & Mack will be as barren as the desert surrounding the city.

Hockey's status as the nation's fastest growing sport is misleading. Other sports like baseball, basketball, and football have been popular for years. There are few new markets for these sports to grow into.

Hockey, on the other hand, has been primarily confined to the northeastern United States and Canada. As people from these areas move across the land, the fan base for hockey will move with them.

A sport like baseball can see the addition of a new team do nothing to its growth rate. What's one more team when there are already hundreds.

Add one more hockey team to the few that already exist and you get a huge percentage for growth. Both sports may have added the same number of teams, but hockey would be growing the "faster" simply because you started with fewer teams.

Have enough people from hockey-popular areas moved to Las Vegas in the past few years to support a professional hockey team? Probably not. Add in the minimal support Las Vegas natives are renowned for and the Thunder face a very stormy- and short- future.

Two years, tops, before the Thunder go under.

## Rebels return for Coors Light Soccer Classic Weekend

BY JOE A. MARTINEZ  
STAFF WRITER

For the first time in four weeks, UNLV does not have to concern itself with packing up and setting camp.

The Rebels will return to the exotic lights and fresh air of Las Vegas to host Federation rival San Diego State in the first match of the Coors Light Soccer Classic Weekend at Peter Johann Memo-

### UNLV Coors Light Soccer Classic Weekend

Friday, October 15  
UNLV vs. San Diego State  
7 p.m.

Sunday, October 17  
UNLV vs. Cal State Fullerton  
1 p.m.

rial Field. This weekend's festivities will bring in two of UNLV's biggest soccer rivals.

UNLV and the Aztecs of San Diego State will renew their rivalry on Friday at 7 p.m. Both teams come into the match in must-win situations. Since both teams

have records under .500, hopes for the postseason lie in making the MPSF Tournament and winning the automatic bid.

The Rebels will battle Cal State Fullerton, the team that handed them their worst loss in school history. Last year, the Titans ruined any postseason hopes UNLV had with a 9-0 rout in Fullerton.

The Rebels will enter into combat with the Titans Sunday at 1 p.m.



## Iron man Louis has seen it all at UNLV

### Rebel soccer star has missed only one game in four years

BY JOE A. MARTINEZ  
STAFF WRITER

Richie Louis is one of the most explosive players in the game today.

He seemingly has it all—speed, strength, leaping ability and shooting accuracy. He is a playmaker that makes things happen every time he touches the ball.

But even with the senior All-American candidate, the Rebel soccer team has struggled out of the gate this year, sporting an overall record of 4-8, 1-2 in Mountain Pacific Sports Federation play.

"As one of the veterans on the team, I have to pick up the the younger guys and help them out," Louis said. "We have a lot of youth on the team, which results in lack of experience. But we are coming around since the start of conference play."

Louis began his career at UNLV in 1990 and has missed only one game. He attended La Cueva High School in Albuquerque, N.M., earning four letters in both soccer and baseball. A 1989 Parade High School All-American, Louis was named Player of the Year his senior season when he led La Cueva to the state championship and a No. 4 national ranking.

UNLV was chosen by Louis because of its proximity to home and the way Coach Barry Barto runs the team. Louis first had the chance of playing for Barto at the Olympic Development Camp for a week. Barto had a lot of influence on Louis' decision to attend UNLV, Louis said.

Louis started all 19 games in his freshman season, finishing fourth on the team in scoring with

10 points. He has steadily improved each year. In his sophomore year, he was second on the team in scoring with 25 points earning All-Big West Conference honors. As a junior, he was named first-team All-Mountain Pacific Sports Federation and considered to be an All-American Candidate this year.

Louis believes that the Rebels'

see Louis pg. 12



Louis, on right, was named first-team all-MPSF-Pacific Division.

UNLV football has a bye this week but will return to action Oct. 23 against Utah State for Homecoming.

HYUN-HO HAN/REBEL YELL