

CHIP

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Davis, who sat out practice for two days with a sprained left ankle.

"I was ready to practice Tuesday, but they wanted me to sit out," Davis said. "But I will be ready to practice Wednesday."

The Central Michigan game will mark the Rebels' first appearance in that state for a football game.

New Chippewas Coach Dick Flynn, who moved up from an assistant role, replaces the winningest coach in Mid-American Conference history. Herb Deromedi (110-56-10) now serves as CMU's athletic director.

After 27 straight non-losing seasons, Central Michigan posted back-to-back 5-6 records, which were blamed on defensive shortcomings. The Chippewas, who led the MAC in defense six times in the past 16 seasons, were next to last in total defense (382 yards per game) and last against the run.

Quarterback Erik Timpf replaces Joe Youngblood, who led the MAC in passing with 423 yards per game, and Flynn is optimistic he has the right signal caller.

"We lost a good quarterback in Joe Youngblood, but we feel good about Erik," Flynn said. "He has game experience although it's not extensive. He had a good spring."

Last weekend, the Iowa Hawkeyes pounded the Chippewas 52-21. The Chip's scored three short rushing touchdowns with running back Brian Pruitt, netting 97 yards on just 14 carries. Timpf passed for only 155 yards, but in his only other career start last year against Michigan State, he set a school record for total offense with 361 yards.

The Throwin' Rebels are poised to crank up their offense after a

lackluster performance last Saturday. And Henry Bailey will undoubtedly be under close scrutiny, unlike a week ago when the obliging secondary of Eastern Michigan allowed prolific Bailey and Randy Gatewood a pair of long touchdown strikes. Bailey is closing in on a series of UNLV records as he needs only 201 yards to pass Demond Thompkins and become the school's all-time reception yardage leader. He will also pass Mike Morton as UNLV's all-time reception leader with 42 more catches.

While winning their fourth straight home opener, the Rebels' offense drew the "disappointment" of Coach Jeff Horton and Bailey with at least a dozen of Davis' passes being dropped.

"It's something we will have to improve on if we are going to be a passing offense and compete for the championship," Bailey said. "Everyone was a little anxious and we didn't concentrate."

The Rebels bounced the Chip's 33-20 at the then-Sam Boyd Silver Bowl in their first meeting. Flynn remembers that game as a CMU assistant.

"That was one the best collection of athletes we faced all year," Flynn said of UNLV.

WIN

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defense and the big turnover we got from the special teams really helped us along," Horton said. "I was most disappointed with the offense. We dropped way too many passes. It was a lack of concentration."

Sporting new uniforms with a new attitude to match, the Rebels hit the Eagles' ball carriers with vengeance, especially in the redzone. Senior defensive end Keith Washington, playing on sore knees, played the role of anchor during the struggles on the line in the redzone.

"My knees still bother me, but I'm one of the older guys on the team so I have to come through for the younger guys," he said. "And I told them to stay focused and not let them drive us off the ball and for us to play the redzone defense the way we practiced it everyday."

Eastern Michigan Coach Ron Cooper, who at 32 became the youngest head coach in Division 1A and once served as defensive coordinator and linebacker coach under former Rebel coach Jim Strong, believes he sees a change in this year's UNLV program.

"I praise Jeff Horton," Cooper said. "I know the kinds of

"... I'm one of the older guys on the team so that I have to come through for the younger guys..."

—Senior defensive end Keith Washington

players he has. He got them tougher and has made them a better ball club."

But he said some of the Rebels' success was due to the Eagles' inability to move the ball.

"I thought for the most part we would put three or four touchdowns on the board," Cooper said. "We stopped ourselves a couple of times. If we had punched one of those in and it's 14-10, maybe UNLV plays it a little different."


Senior receiver Henry Bailey believes good things are here and no longer around the corner for the Throwin' Rebels.

"We were just a little anxious, not looking the ball into our hands and running before we even had it," he said "But we will get the offense together and have it gel with the defense and get ourselves in the championship game."

The three points allowed by the defense were the fewest allowed since Oct. 12, 1991, when UNLV beat Cal-State Fullerton, 25-3.

Posey, while leading the Rebels with 13 tackles, eight of those solos, and a crucial interception was named Big West Defensive Player of the Week.

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