

Commentary

It's All About Respect

Get over it. Cries of foul, cheating and stealing are no longer heard in this part of Nevada.

Ever since Jeff Horton bolted the University of Nevada, Reno to establish his own program and identity here at UNLV, screams of bloody murder have been greatly exaggerated.

All Horton has done has rebuilt a program in total disarray. Talk of canceling the Rebel

football program was heard shortly before Horton was introduced as the new coach, succeeding Jim Strong.

And the people in Reno are crying about it, calling Horton a traitor?

Get over it. Talk of Horton being an ingrate is inane. Simply put, Horton had bigger and better plans than staying in "The Biggest Little City in the World."

While there, Horton took an overachieving Wolf Pack team within a game of winning a second consecutive Big West title. All he needed was a vote of confidence from UNR Athletic Director Chris Ault (the Dean of Division I-AA) to stay on in Reno. He didn't get it.

After UNLV unsuccessfully tried to woo Ault down south, UNLV AD Jim Weaver went after Horton.

Now why in the world would you want to remain in obscurity, unless you like being a big fish in a little pond?

Horton had an opportunity to come to the "Entertainment Capital of the World." And he has been entertaining and winning. Horton has UNLV one win away from either a tri or quad-championship of the Big West Conference. And irony of ironies, standing in Horton and the Throwin' Rebels way are Ault and the Pack.

Banners around the UNLV campus are proclaiming the northern campus as "UNR - the University of No Recognition," and "The University of No Respect." There's even a banner that says "Friends Don't Let Friends Go To UNR."

It's all about respect. And UNR has none. Why else would UNR want to be simply called Nevada?

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In This Corner

PAUL GUTIERREZ

The Battle For Nevada

Football: *Pride, championship and bowl bid on the line in game's 20th meeting*

BY KEVIN LEWIS
STAFF WRITER

It's like two ships on a collision course.

The 20th Battle of Nevada kicks off Saturday at Sam Boyd Stadium, with UNLV (5-4 overall, 4-1 in Big West Conference play) hosting Nevada-Reno (9-1, 5-0). Besides state bragging rights, a Las Vegas Bowl bid could ultimately await the winner of this showdown.

UNLV, coming off a bye week, needs to win Saturday and also have San Jose State (2-8, 2-3) upset Pacific (6-4, 4-1) to get the nod from the league's tie-breaker rules. UNR gets the bid if it defeats the Rebels. Awaiting the Big West winner in the Las Vegas Bowl is Mid-American Conference champ Central Michigan.

The Wolf Pack bounced Utah State 56-28 last week in winter-wonderland conditions at Mackay Stadium in Reno. Their quarterback, Mike Maxwell, continued his streak of fine games by passing for 329 yards and four touchdowns. At his disposal in



UNR coach Chris Ault

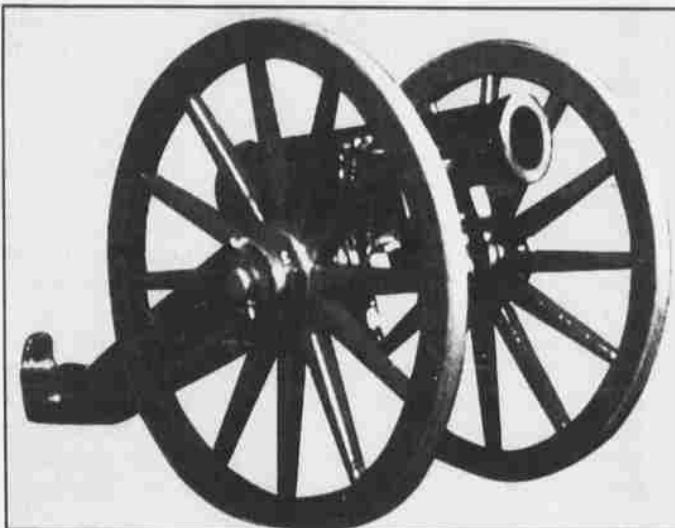
the backfield are the tandem of Marcellus Chrishon (943 yards rushing) and Ken Minor (691). They also have the nation's current leader in receptions per game with Alex Van Dyke (8.7 rpg), which gives the Wolf Pack a potent offensive attack (333.4 yards per game). The Pack's offense ranks second in the nation behind No. 2 Penn State.

However, don't look for the Throwin' Rebels to run and hide. "Oh...I have something up my sleeve for these guys," Rebel coach Jeff Horton said with a sly grin. "We'll be ready for them."

The Pack will expect the unexpected from their former coach, but sometimes that is not enough.

Look for Horton to attempt to keep the Wolf Pack's offense on the sidelines with a ball-control

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Fremont Cannon Up For Grabs

BY MICHAEL MELISSA
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

It has been seven years since UNLV has beaten the University of Nevada-Reno and been the owner of the Fremont Cannon. Seven long years.

The last UNLV win came in 1987, when Wayne Nunnley was head coach. They won 24-19, with Ickey Woods as the running back.

The rivalry between the Rebels and the Wolf Pack dates back to 1969, when the two teams met for the first time, the Pack winning, 30-28. Since the first Battle for Nevada, UNR holds a 10-9 edge.

While most trophies are gold-plated constructions with some figure standing atop it, the trophy for Nevada is slightly bigger and louder. It's a cannon. The Fremont Cannon is awarded to the winning

team at the end of each year's game and is fired each time the owners score at the next season's game.

The cannon is a replica of the howitzer used by John C. Fremont as he traveled west towards Nevada in 1843. Legend has it that Fremont stole the cannon from the U.S. War Department. He abandoned the howitzer in a Sierra Nevada snowdrift.

The cannon was first used by UNLV coach Bill Ireland, who was hoping to generate interest for the north against south game by awarding the trophy to the winner.

Prior to 1957, the only University in Nevada was UNR. As a satellite campus in 1957, UNLV, then Southern Nevada University, felt they wanted to "rebel" against the parent of the north. Hence, the nickname "Rebels."

Commentary

Ault-led 'Pack Will Beat Horton's Rebels

Let's break with the formalities right from the start.

The Rebels are going to lose Saturday and the Wolf Pack will clinch another Big West football championship.

UNLV is going to lose like a group of drunk sailors at a blackjack table—and you know why? Simply put, we have the superior team in every aspect.

But wait sports fans, there's much more at stake than just a cannon. The scenario that occurred in Reno Nov. 23, 1993 couldn't have been better scripted by a veteran soap opera writing staff.

As a result of that fateful day, it is entirely possible to sum up why the Wolf Pack will win in one simple sentence:

The University of Nevada has Chris Ault while UNLV has Jeff Horton.

But basing Saturday's victory on coaching staffs would be too easy, and besides, there's no reason to bag on Horton personally. But the fact is, we pulled a royal flush while you guys hit for two of a kind.

After Horton scampered out of town on two days notice last November, Ault was forced to rescue a program on the brink

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of disaster. Horton deserted this team and ran back to UNLV after his rookie season, leaving our football program disoriented and confused because he said he "didn't like being in Ault's shadow."

Nothing like stepping up to a challenge, right Jeff?

By the way, the 1993 Pack team, with Ault's one-back, four-receiver offense in place (look familiar Rebel fans?) had the No. 1 offense in the country, but Horton managed to guide them to a 7-4 record. Oh, I know that seven wins sound like a lot to a school accustomed to mediocrity, but maybe that's why Horton calls UNLV home now.

Let's not forget why Horton returned to Las Vegas. It was because Ault, who was reportedly offered almost \$250,000 a year to head south and reconstruct a truly dismal football program, ultimately decided that 17 years as the Wolf Pack coach was more important than the obscene amount of money being thrown at him.

Even though he gave it serious consideration, Ault was ultimately guided by loyalty, which is more than can be said for some people. Besides, what school wouldn't want Ault to head their football program? He has a career average of more than eight

victories a season and has recorded only one losing year (1982) in 18 years as the coach at Nevada. He has an overall record of 154-59-1.

Even the bottomless pockets of UNLV boosters can't solve a problem every time. Looks like the motto "If you can't beat 'em, buy 'em" didn't apply here.

UNLV's team appears to be an all-around decent squad—speedy receivers surrounded by an average team. It's definitely nothing to be embarrassed about and I do hope for a competitive contest, although it won't happen because as you already know, the Wolf Pack has accomplished much more this season than the Rebels could ever dream.

This Nevada squad is so tight, if it were a towel drenched with water even Jerry Tarkanian couldn't suck a drop out of it.

After an embarrassing loss to Boise State in the third game of the season, Nevada has made a full recovery. They've reeled in six straight victories by an average margin of 19.4 points a game and are ranked No. 30 in both the AP and CNN-USA Today polls.

The offense, led by Mike Maxwell, is averaging 44.5 points a game during the winning streak. Maxwell is No. 2 in the country in total offense at 323.8 yards a game. The 6-4, 200-pound junior has led the team to 513 yards in total offense this year (No. 2).

His favorite receiver is Alex Van Dyke, No. 3 in the NCAA with 116.6 receiving yards a game. The 6-1, 195-pound junior sits alone atop the national charts with 8.7 catches a game and is also sixth in the country in all-purpose yardage per game (161.2).

Nevada has two running backs with more than 700 rushing yards apiece. Senior Marcellus Chrishon, who will probably run over more than a few Rebel defenders Saturday, has 943 yards on the season (No. 13), despite suffering numerous injuries.

With Chrishon sidelined, junior back Kenny Minor has filled the spot admirably. The 5-11, 200-pound titan has 723 yards on 163 attempts with 13 touchdowns. With UNLV's woe-ful run defense (giving up 233.9 yards per game), we might not throw the ball 10 times.

The offensive line has given up four sacks the entire season. That's not a misprint folks. Four sacks. No wonder Maxwell has thrown 23 touchdowns in the last six games. The "Union," as they're affectionately called, is the backbone of the team.

On the defensive side, this team has more than held their

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