

Commentary

More Notes From The Corner

It's been more than a month since *The Rebel Yell* last went to press and much has happened in the UNLV sporting world. So without further delay, it's notes day here in the corner.

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Known as a tireless worker, teacher and coach, Tim Grgurich's succumbing to

exhaustion surprised really no one, considering the hectic schedule and poor

showing on the court the Runnin' Rebels showed in the early part of the season. Gerg is not used to losing so he worked extra hard to try and get his team over the hump. But it wasn't working. The Rebels didn't win their first Big West game until their coach was hospitalized.



In This Corner
PAUL GUTIERREZ

And speaking of the Rebels, it's amazing how generous the local media and fans have been towards the program, what with the losing and all. Some would go so far as to say that if Rollie Massimino was still in charge and the Rebels had the same record, Daddy Mass would not be able to walk down the Strip without an armed escort.

Whispers of "Maybe Massimino wasn't such a bad coach after all" could be heard after UNLV staggered out to an 0-4 record with another home loss to Cal State Fullerton.

But the media and fans knew something would be needed when Gerg was brought in to replace the underachieving Daddy Mass - patience.

Massimino walked into a situation where he had a superstar in J.R. Rider while Gerg met a team that didn't know how to win.

A perfect example of the Rebels' problems can be found in Monday's loss at New Mexico State - UNLV showed flashes of brilliance in holding a 52-51 halftime lead. But the Rebels also looked absolutely dreadful after falling into a late game funk en route to being thumped by 20.

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And though some would say point-guard Lawrence Thomas abandoned ship

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The Dream Becomes Reality

Football: Rebels thrash CMU in Las Vegas Bowl III

BY KEVIN LEWIS
STAFF WRITER

The vision of championship football at UNLV held by first-year coach Jeff Horton 14 months ago is now a reality.

The Rebels completed one of college football's most astonishing turnarounds by finishing its 1994 season with a convincing 52-24 victory over Central Michigan in Las Vegas Bowl III before 17,562 at Sam Boyd Stadium Dec. 15.

"Everything has come true," Horton said. "The dream we have been selling these kids when we got here a year ago has become a reality. Nobody gave them a chance and they proved everyone wrong."

The kids believed in his dream to the tune of 589 yards of total offense that was countered with a swarming defense that harassed Chippewa ball carriers all game.

Senior wide receiver Henry Bailey completed an outstanding career as he walked away with the game's MVP honors by scoring four touchdowns and 180 total yards.

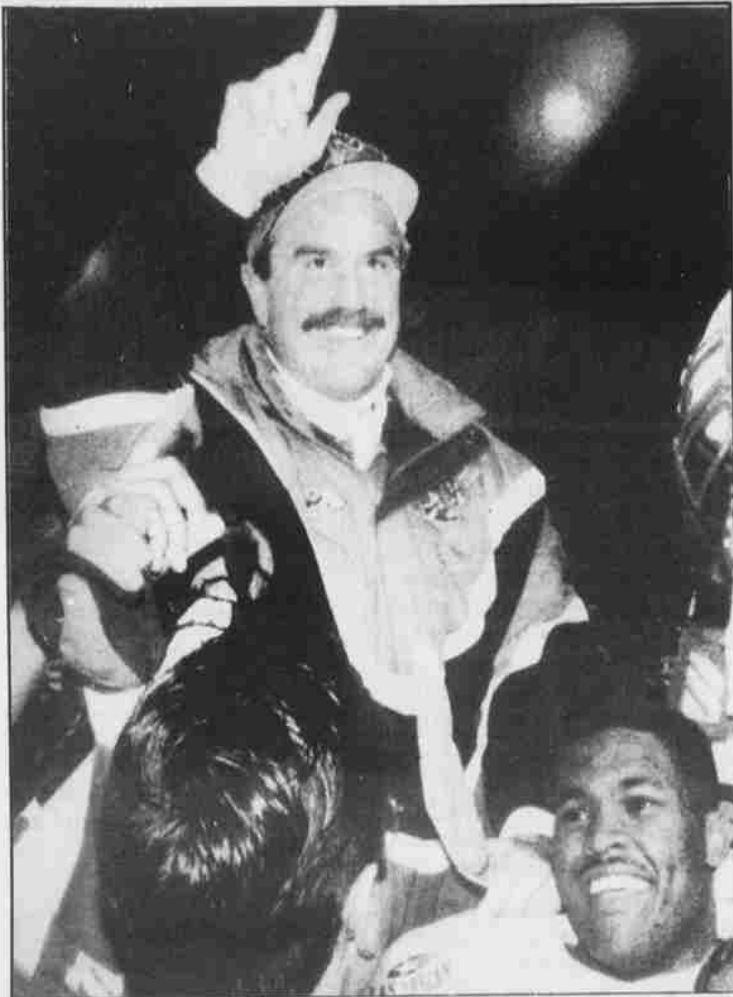


PHOTO BY HYUN-HO HAN
Coach Jeff Horton is carried off the field following UNLV's victory.

"Tonight was our night," said Bailey, who will be headed to next month's Hula Bowl. "I don't think they were a step slow. I

think we were a step quicker." Quarterback Jared Brown, 11-of-21 passing for 195 yards and two touchdowns, executed the

game plan with a surgeon's precision by balancing the fine running of DeJohn Branch (125 yards) with the reliable hands of Bailey and Randy Gatewood (six catches).

The turning point of the game came with the Chippewas trailing 14-10 midway through the second quarter and threatening to take the lead. Keith Washing-

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—UNLV coach Jeff Horton

ton threw receiver Andy Korytkowski for a 7-yard loss on a reverse.

"This win is absolutely the best," said Washington, who recovered two fumbles, including one for a 15-yard touchdown in the second quarter.

The Chippewas were without their All-American running back Brian Pruitt because of a bruised right knee and sore foot. Pruitt

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The Soap Opera Continues

BY SEAN DEFRANK
STAFF WRITER

Where does it end?

The ongoing soap opera, known as UNLV men's basketball, continued its triumphs and tragedies during the semester break.

The Rebels were the last team in America to find themselves a coach. Now that coach is gone, at least for now.

Tim Grgurich was hospitalized for an undisclosed ailment Jan. 6 for symptoms related to exhaustion. Gerg told the media Wednesday that his medical problems are not life threatening.

"The doctors advised me to take six weeks off and to evaluate my lifestyle," Grgurich said. "I was at the end of my rope, and I needed to get away for a little bit."

Grgurich said there was no timetable for his return and downplayed rumors that he wouldn't return this season.

Assistant Howie Landa has taken over as head coach.

The Rebels are also without their starting point guard. Lawrence Thomas left the squad Friday and said he will transfer to either Duquesne or Hofstra, which is coached by former Rollie Massimino assistant Jay Wright.

Sophomore Jermaine "Sunshine" Smith is now the squad's starting point guard, although Landa has hinted towards a lineup that would include 6-foot-11 freshman Eric Lee, making senior Reggie Manuel the point and moving junior Clayton Johnson to the wing.

There have been other, more subtle, oddities to this season.

The Runnin' Rebels have more victories in the state of Florida this season than in the Thomas



PHOTO BY HYUN-HO HAN
Damian Smith scored a career-high 19 points against CSUN.

& Mack Center.

Grgurich won his first home game and gained his first oral commitment from a recruit, all from a California hospital.

Lets now take a closer look at the contests and comedies that transpired over the break.

Dec. 11—The Rebels got outplayed in both halves as they fell to Seton Hall 99-79. The loss put UNLV at 0-2.

Kebu Stewart led the Rebels with 24 points. Patrick Savoy

chipped in with 13 points and 12 rebounds. Manuel had 11 points and five assists.

Seton Hall put the Rebels away by making 37 of 62 shots, a 60 percent clip. The barrage included 9-14 shooting from 3-point range.

UNLV hit 28 of 56 shots from the field, but made only 53 percent of its free throws. The Rebels' problems were compounded as the team was outbounded 39-30 and committed



Lawrence Thomas

22 turnovers.

Dec. 17—This was the game which really set the tone for the early part of the season as the Rebels were shocked at home by lightly-regarded Cal State Fullerton, 82-80.

Sophomore guard Chris St. Clair hit the biggest 3-pointer of his career with 9.1 seconds left to give the Titans the win, which dropped UNLV to 0-3 overall, 0-1 in the Big West Conference.

The Rebels blew a 63-51 lead, but still led 80-77 with 1:55 remaining. UNLV had a final possession after St. Clair's basket, but LT traveled while driving the lane to seal the win for the Titans.

An announced crowd of 9,361 attended Gerg's first home game, a contest which resulted in the Rebels' 14th loss over 12 years of playing in the T&M.

Manuel led UNLV in scoring with 26 points. Stewart had 14

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