

Rebels Run Past Aggies

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STAFF WRITER

Go figure. The UNLV men's basketball team, after not being able to sustain 40 minutes of solid play all season, did so Saturday as it defeated Big West pacesetter Utah State, 69-63.

"We haven't done it all year," interim coach

Howie Landa said. "And that's why we've lost those close games and just gave in near the end. This game, I would say, we went 37 minutes, and then tried to give it back in three minutes."

UNLV led midway through the second half, 58-46, when center Kebu Stewart picked up his fourth foul and had to go to the bench.

After that, Utah State made a run to decrease the Rebels' lead to 61-59 with 2:52 remaining.

Did Landa get an impending sense of doom?

"Yes, there was a feeling of that," Landa said. "And you get a little worried. But they put it together. They had a great win. Maybe it will carry over. I don't want to promise you anything."

After Utah State's run, the Rebels regained their composure by outscoring the Aggies 8-4, including five by senior guard Reggie Manuel, who finished with 17 points.

"I know we needed this game to get back in the race," Manuel said. "I've been determined in all my games. Things just haven't been going my way right now. It seemed like it picked up (on Saturday). I was just determined to get that game."

Manuel also led the team with a season-high eight rebounds.

"(The coaches have) been wanting me to rebound more, and I

Big West Men's Basketball Standings

	Conference	Overall
Utah State	6-1	12-3
UNR	6-2	10-6
New Mexico State	4-2	13-4
UC Santa Barbara	4-2	9-5
Long Beach State	3-2	7-5
Pacific	4-3	9-6
Cal State Fullerton	3-4	5-10
UNLV	2-4	5-7
UC Irvine	1-6	5-9
San Jose State	0-7	1-14

did go to the glass a lot in that game," Manuel said. "And that's something I'm going to start doing a lot."

Something else Manuel did a lot of against Utah State was post up down low. Aggie guard Covington Cormier was no match for Manuel on the block.

"The second guard can't seem to guard him, and Reggie's our key player," Landa said. "And we feel that Reggie can post-up as well as Kebu."

Landa also said that Manuel's big game was fueled by comments made last year.

"In Reggie's case, he took it as a personal challenge because (Utah State coach Larry Eustachy) had said some bad things about Reggie," Landa said. "And Reggie kind of took that to heart."

The Rebels went into halftime with a 41-31 lead. Unlike other games though, UNLV didn't allow the opposition to make an initial second-half run as junior Clayton Johnson scored the first five points of the second half to make the score 46-31.

Johnson finished with 14 points. Senior forward Patrick Savoy led the Rebels with 18 points. Stewart finished with 12 points.

Stewart, last year's Big West Player of the Year, was outplayed by Aggie center Eric Franson, who finished with 21 points and

nine rebounds to lead Utah State.

Franson, who coming into the game was averaging 20.8 points and 10.5 boards, is considered by many to be the front-runner for the Player of the Year this season. Was Stewart impressed?

"He isn't the premier player in the Big West,"

Stewart said. "I wanted to show who's the premier player in the Big West. He's a good player and everything, but I had the best of him in the first half, and he got away because I was in foul trouble. When he comes here with Utah State (on Feb. 16), then I can really show what everything is all about."

It was the first conference loss for the Aggies, as well as the end of a nine-game win streak, as they fell to 12-3, 6-1 in the Big West. The win boosted the Runnin' Rebels to 5-7, 2-4.

The win took away the sting from Thursday's 84-73 loss at Nevada-Reno.

In that game, the Rebels built an early 27-17 lead as Manuel scored 11 of his 18 points in that stretch.

UNLV took a 40-37 lead into the half, and led 44-43 early in the second half before UNR made an 18-3 run to take control of the game.

The Rebels' problems were compounded when Savoy committed his fourth foul with 16:17 remaining. Landa was forced to play freshman Eric Lee, who finished with no points and two rebounds, for 15 minutes.

UNLV did cut the lead to 65-59 with 6:50 left in the game, but UNR regrouped to come away with the victory.

Stewart led the Rebels with 26

Big West Women's Basketball Standings

	Conference	Overall
UC Irvine	6-1	9-5
New Mexico State	5-2	10-5
Long Beach State	5-2	8-7
UC Santa Barbara	4-2	8-5
Pacific	4-3	11-7
Cal State Fullerton	4-3	7-7
UNLV	4-3	5-9
Hawaii	2-5	4-10
San Jose State	1-7	3-14
UNR	0-7	2-12

Hoops

continued from 11 defense and never gave Steele any free shots at the basket and we really went after the loose balls on the floor and off the boards."

White finished with a career-high five steals and sophomore Loriessa Randle (nine points) bumped and bruised Spartan ballhandlers away from the lane with tough defense.

Titus tied her career high with 14 rebounds.

SJSU was led by junior center Rebecca Hunt's 16 points and fall to 3-13 overall and 1-6 in the Big West.

In Sunday's victory against Hawaii, the Lady Rebels continued to find success with balance scoring by finishing with three players in double figures.

Titus finished with a game-high 19 points while Hobbs added 16 and Randle tossed in 10.

"We're really starting to look

for the better shot," Hobbs said. "We still have plenty of time to get it all together. Just look at the way the bench has been supporting the team."

Freshmen center Nakia Jones (five points) spelled Titus with tremendous success that will only add to her confidence.

"This is the type of effort we've been trying to get out of our bench," Bolla said. "I'm just glad we're back in school because we didn't seem to have much success while we were on winter break. If we can get everybody to play up to their potential, we are in the race. Between the hustle of White and the physical style of Randle, we have examples on this team."

White tied her career high mark of five steals against the Rainbow Wahine

The Lady Rebels take their winning streak on the road to Pacific Friday and to Nevada-Reno on Super Bowl Sunday.

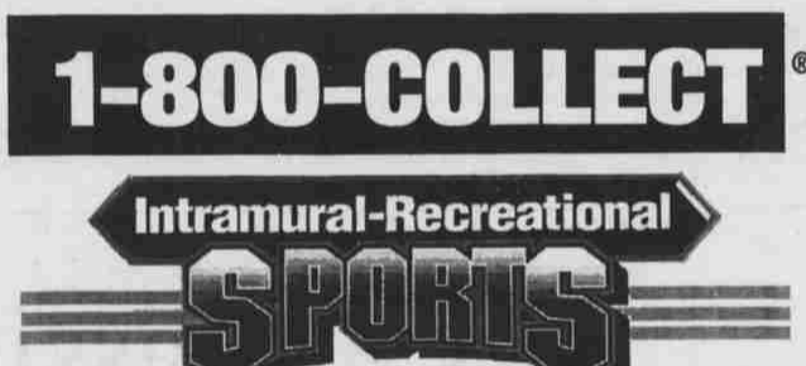
points and 12 rebounds. Junior Damian Smith added 10 points.

UNR had seven players score in double figures, led by Faron Hand's 14 points, and Eathan O'Bryant's 13 points and 14 assists.

The win was the Wolf Pack's

second in a row over the Rebels, and preceded their 74-67 upset over No. 19 New Mexico State on Saturday.

UNR is currently second in the conference with a 6-2 mark, 10-6 overall.



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