

Rebel Recruits Add Fuel to the Fire

Football: Horton signs 25 to letters

BY KEVIN C. LEWIS
STAFF REPORTER

The UNLV football team will be moving into the Western Athletic Conference in 1996, so coach Jeff Horton decided he'd better cast his recruiting net out far

and deep.

Twenty-five recruits signed national letters-of-intent for an up-and-coming football program.

The catch includes 19 incoming freshmen, one junior college player and five players who are currently enrolled on campus.

Green Valley High quarterback Jon Denton (6-3, 185 lbs.) and Sparks native Quincy Sanders (6-3, 180) of Reed High are the highlighted in-state signings. Five players: UNR transfers Todd

Floyd (QB 6-4, 175), Jason Toohey (WR 5-10, 180), LeRoy Gambrell (OLB 6-5, 220), Bret Gilbert (ILB 6-1, 215) and Alonzo Jones (OLB 6-2, 200) are currently enrolled and plan to participate in spring practice with the Rebels.

"We knew we had to get bigger on both sides of the line," Horton said. "It's no secret that for us to compete in the WAC, we will need bigger and stronger people. And

more importantly, speed."

This is Horton's second recruiting class for the Big West and Las Vegas Bowl champions. He said there's a possibility that most of this year's signings will wear redshirts.

Said Horton: "When we move into the WAC, we plan to take with us as many redshirt sophomores and redshirt freshmen possible that will give us chemistry for three years."

Football Player Arrested

Two former UNLV football players and one current player were arrested Sunday in connection with a rash of robberies and purse snatchings near Caesars Palace.

William Yates, Daryl Wright and Frederick Sowerby were charged with strong arm robbery and larceny after police received a call informing them of a tourist's purse being stolen.

The three men were taken into custody by UNLV police after they drove into a dormitory parking lot.

Police explained the larceny charges are derived from two separate purse snatchings on Saturday.

"This is very unfortunate," said a disappointed coach Jeff Horton. "Sowerby is suspended from the team until we have a chance to meet with him and learn all the facts. I don't want to judge."

Yates quit the team Feb. 1 and Wright quit right after last season.

Sowerby played as a freshman defensive back from Green Valley High and is the son of noted world-class record holder Fred Sowerby Sr., the Lady Rebels' track and field assistant coach.

—Kevin C. Lewis

No. 5 Lady Rebels Open Season at Santa Barbara

Softball: Ladies Eying National Championship

BY MICHAEL MELISSA
STAFF REPORTER

Watching UNLV's softball team is like watching Pablo Picasso collide with Arnold Schwarzenegger.

On one side of the field you have the artistry, and on the other side you have the power. With this combination, coach Shan McDonald has a strong possibility of leading this squad into the College World Series, and a good shot at the National Championship.

Last season, the Lady Rebels were Big West co-champions with Hawaii at 39-17. They went to the regional finals where they beat South Carolina and Georgia before finally losing to UCLA in the finals by one run. Currently the Lady Rebels are

ranked No. 5 in the nation.

"Our goals this season is to be conference champions," McDonald said. "And then go to the College World Series and battle for the National Championship."

Teams like Hawaii, Cal State Fullerton and Pacific could prove to be the troublemakers in a strong division.

"It's hard to predict what is going to happen in the conference," McDonald said. "Each year is different and the conference is always competitive."

With only two seniors gone from last year's squad, this season's team looks ready to reclaim its Big West crown. The majority of players have been here for awhile, McDonald said.

"A lot of the talent on the team comes from the freshman," McDonald said. One of those talented new faces is catcher Julie Crandall. The other newcomer is outfielder Jamie Maher.

Some of the players who will lift this team is junior outfielder Sara Mallett (.283, 3 HR, 21 RBIS), senior first baseman Cyndi Parus (.323, 1, 33) and sophomore short-

stop Kim Rondina (.355, 6, 36).

Another player that figures to play a big part in this team's success is senior pitcher Amie Stewart. Last season Stewart went 24-9 with a 1.22 ERA, striking out 157 with 12 shutouts.

The Lady Rebels are still waiting for Heather Siegal to return from back surgery. She was the third-leading hitter last season, batting .343 with two dingers and 25 RBIS.

As McDonald explained, there really is no one star on this team. Instead they all have matured together, and turned out to be a talented bunch.

"The leadership comes from different directions," she said. "Some players lead on the field, while others are leaders in the clubhouse."

As a team, the Lady Rebels look solid, but it will be tough to match last season's totals. They hit a collective .338, with 16 HRs and 179 RBIS. They also crossed the dish 215 times, 77 more times than their opponents.

"When you go through the lineup, the one-through-nine spots

are essential," McDonald said. "We have good power at the plate. Defensively we are strong and our pitching is among the top 10 in the nation."

"Our pitchers will never lose ball games for us."

The pitching staff combined on a 1.60 team ERA, shutting out its victims 16 times and striking out 220 batters. It also basically dismantled offenses, holding them to a .229 average, and only allowing 138 runs.

So are there any weaknesses in the skeletal makeup of this team?

"No flaws," McDonald said.

That seemed evident in this past weekend's drubbing of Central Arizona. The Lady Rebels dominated all three exhibition games played, outscoring them 26-5.

The Lady Rebels begin the regular season at UC Santa Barbara Saturday, and their first home game is a doubleheader Feb. 22 against Tulsa.

BALLOON BOUQUETS



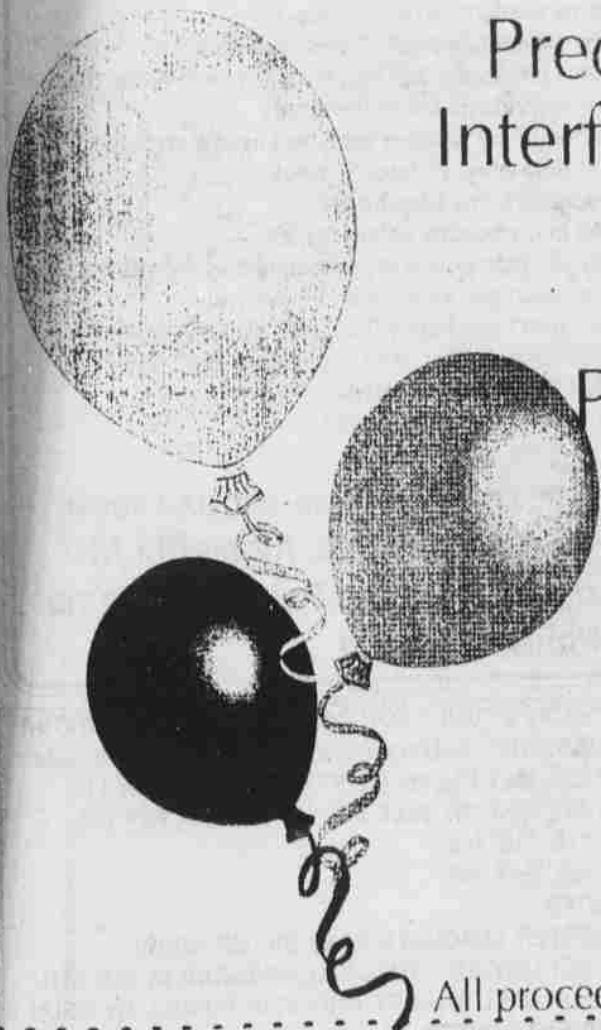
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