

Ruckin' Rebels Pull Big Upset over Occidental

BY DONALD HICKEY
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

PASADENA, Calif. - Last Saturday at Rose Bowl Park, the UNLV rugby team proved that there's still excitement in UNLV athletics.

Occidental, one of those brainy schools in Southern California, is the toughest team in Southern Cal Div. III rugby. Last year they came to Las Vegas and routed the Rebels by almost 70 points, severely hospitalizing at least one Rebel in the process. And with the Rebels having to face the juggernaut Tigers on their turf in Pasadena, the hosts looked to seriously "unleash the Tiger" on UNLV.

UNLV coaches were worried that this would be a repeat of last year, with the

team not being very deep, mostly due to injuries. And conditioning was believed to be shaky at best.

A perfect day for rugby, it was cool and foggy on the steps of the historic Rose Bowl. The Tigers came out brash and confident. And they had a right to, as the Tigers came out running seemingly unstoppable. They scored a try and the two extra points quickly in the first half, making the score 7-0. The Rebels were getting nervous as Occidental came within striking distance on several more occasions.

But UNLV stymied them on each occasion with some good rugby. The first half ended quickly with the score the same, and a glow of optimism still fueled UNLV.

The second half started slow with both teams exchanging volleys, both with the

ball and verbally. With more than a few Rebels believing that Occidental's captain should have been ejected for unruliness and dissent. They also accused Occidental of using screens (shepherding) the whole game (illegal in rugby).

Sophomore fullback Randy Milmeister's confidence grew, as he was finding holes throughout the game in the Tiger backfield. Half way through the second half he received the ball and blew through the Tiger backfield scoring wide in their tryzone. Team captain Shinzo Koizumi kicked the extra point from wide, barely missing it, leaving the score at 7-5.

With time running out, it looked like the "Tiger would be unleashed." But the Rebels unleashed their Dragon instead - the ref - who finally called shepherding on

the Tiger backs. Then Koizumi quickly started play catching the Tiger front-line offside. He called for the penalty kick. Teeing up the ball, his three-point kick was low.

Gut check time again. As the game was expiring, Koizumi's kick was on the money, putting the Rebels on top 8-7. It was a major upset. Bedlam, chaos and all-out celebration reigned throughout the UNLV contingent. Unfortunately, Koizumi was unavailable for comment as he was emotionally overwhelmed after the game.

The Rebels are now 2-1 in division play. They host Westmont College March 4 at the Intramural Field.

—Donald Hickey is a member of the UNLV rugby team.

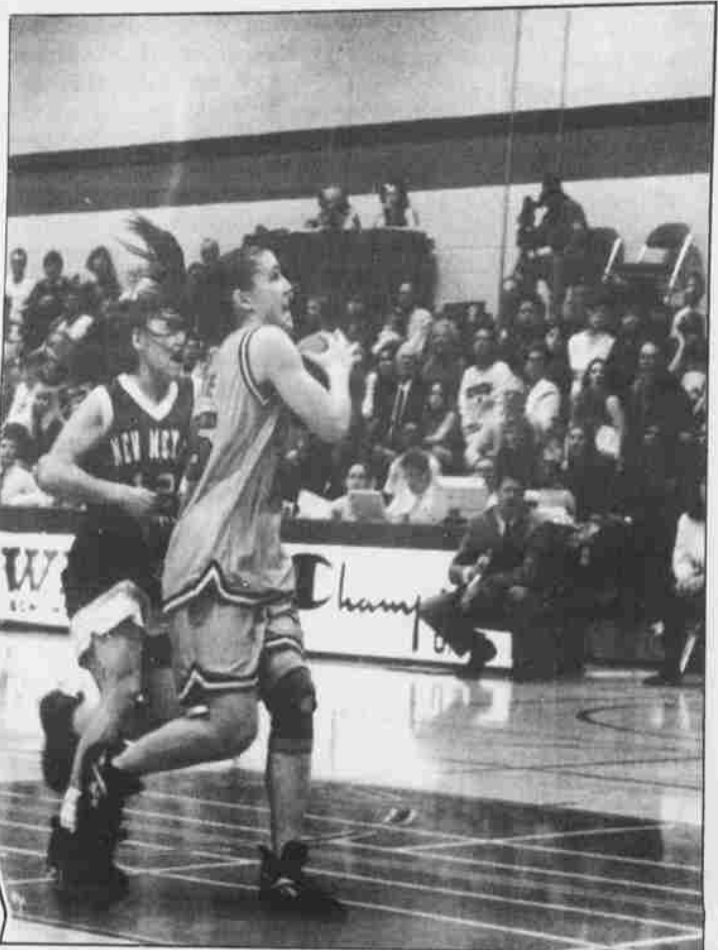


PHOTO BY MICHAEL LACY
Angie White drives for the layup against NMSU

Big West Women's Basketball Standings — As of Feb. 13

	Conference	Overall
UC Santa Barbara	10-2	14-5
New Mexico State	9-3	14-6
UC Irvine	9-4	12-8
Long Beach State	8-5	11-10
Cal State Fullerton	7-6	10-10
UNLV	6-6	7-12
Pacific	6-6	13-10
UNR	3-9	6-14
Hawaii	2-10	4-15
San Jose State	2-11	4-18

Rebs

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Rebels shot well from the field, it was their lack of involvement under the offensive boards that spelled this defeat. Freshman center Summer Peterson injured her right hand and did not dress which didn't help the rebounding effort. She is expected to return to action against Hawaii this Saturday.

The Lady Rebels have lost three of their last four games.

Hawaii will try to avenge the 72-61 loss the Lady Rebels handed them on Jan. 22 at South Gym. Tracy Titus scored 19

points and 14 rebounds and Gwynn Hobbs added 16. UNLV leads the series against the Rainbow Wahine, 30-5.

UNLV defeated San Jose State 75-59 on Jan. 20 at South Gym. Titus scored 18 points and had 14 rebounds and Angie White added 18 and LeAnn Kazmer had 16.

UNLV will play its final two regular season home games against UNR on Feb. 24 and against Pacific two days later. The season will close out on the road at first-place UC Santa Barbara on March 2 and at Long Beach State on March 4.

The Big West Tournament will begin March 7 at the T&M.

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