THE REBEL YELL

18 SPORTS

FEBRUARY 23, 1995

Commentary

Rebs Are Done Without Gerg

Rumors have abounded lately that UNLV men's basketball coach Tim Grgurich will miss the remainder of this season.

If that is true, consider the Runnin' season Rebels' over-effective immediately.

The reason-Cle Edwards cannot di-

rect this year's squad through a successful run in this year's **Big West Tournament.**

Edwards, 2-6 in his tenure as acting coach, has the schizophrenic Rebels on a downward spiral.

Case in point-during Saturday's 73-57 home loss to Nevada-Reno, agame in which the Rebels trailed by more than 20 points for threefourths of the game, Edwards still had the best available players remaining on the floor at the final buzzer.

When asked why he didn't clear the bench in order to rest the players, who had another game two nights later, as well as to prevent any extra-curricular activities (i.e. fights, trash talking) from surfacing, Edwards downplayed the non-move.

"When guys work hard, they want to get in there when it's favorable," Edwards said about the guys at the end of the Rebels' bench. "You don't want to just get in there because it's garbage time.

Yeah. Like Justin Thacker or Jermoine Brantley are going to see any time with the Rebels nursing a lead.

Corner

continued from 17 seven, eight deep. It's hard trying to get up some times. But we have to do it."

As the 9-13 Runnin' (on empty) Rebels embark on their last four regular season games of the

If I'm Thacker, A Rebel's Brantley, or some-one like Mike Cur-View tis, who clearly deserves more playing time than he has received this season, I think the time is ripe to start questioning SEAN DEFRANK

authority. If you're not going to see time in a travesty like Saturday's game, when will you see it? And as for the trash talk-

ing? "I didn't see any of that," Edwards said. "Did you see any fights? Did you see any

trash talking?" As a matter of fact, I did. After Patrick Savoy's dunk

with 3:54 remaining slashed UNR's lead to a miniscule 23 points, 66-43, Savoy got in one Wolf Pack player's face. That should have warranted emptying the entire bench to avoid any escalation.

"He's done that all year," Edwards said in defending Savoy's actions. "You can't just pick out- because we were behind-that it happened. Quit trying to focus on something that's negative, because that's not what happened. I don't think that happened like that."

Okay. Maybe I will start focusing on something positive-the Runnin' Rebels miserable season is almost over. How do I know, Cle Edwards is in charge of the once-proud UNLV basketball team.

> -Sean DeFrank is a sports reporter at The Rebel Yell.

And the way things have been

going this year, it would be no

surprise if the Rebels won the

tourney and went to the NCAA's.

But it would be just as anticli-

matic if UNLV was beaten in the

It's been that kind of year.

first round.

Lady Rebels Runners-up in Arizona

Softball: UNLV finishes second to top-ranked Wildcats

BY MICHAEL MELISSA STAFF REPORTER

After losing a tough game to top-ranked Arizona, the fifthranked UNLV softball team went on to win four straight at the Arizona State Coca-Cola Classic

The Lady Rebels fell to Arizona, 11-3. It was their first loss of the season, with pitcher Amie Stewart getting her first loss. Their record after the tournament is 7-1 overall, and 2-0 in the Big West.

"I was pleased with the entire weekend," coach Shan McDonald said. "There were probably only two bad innings in the tournament."

The final score of the Arizona game was 11-3, but McDonald said the score really did not indicate the type of game it was.

"We made a pitching change late in the game, and we didn't want to bring in Theresa (Branch) because she had already pitched in the last game. So we brought in (Cyndi) Parus, our firstbaseman. Unfortunately she got into some trouble and we had to bring Theresa in."

Sunday was the big day for the Lady Rebels, where they flexed not only their offensive power, but also their pitching power. They pounded the University of Massachusetts, 8-0, with Stewart throwing a no-hitter in the contest on her way to picking up her third win in four games. She also struck out six in a five inning performance.

The game was halted in the fifth inning by an eight-run mercy rule in effect for the tournament.

In the second game of the day, the Lady Rebels stroked Utah for another eight runs, as they won 8-0. The scoring was ignited by a three-run homer in the fourth inning from freshman catcher Julie Crandall, who lift-

ed her season batting average to .800 after eight games. She also collected three more RBIS, knocking in two or more runs in five of eight games this season.

Branch pitched five scoreless innings and gave upjust six hits, earning her third win without a loss. Cyndi Hewitt was brought into the sixth to relieve Branch and earned her first save of the season.

"Many of the players who were not stars at the beginning of the season are coming to the forefront and are stepping in as impact players," McDonald said. Allie Henderson, Ronnie Salcido, Amy Watkins and the two freshmen are playing big. (Julie) Crandall has become an offensive threat, and Jamie Maher is leading the team in on base percentage."

This coming weekend, the Lady Rebels will be hosting the UNLY Softball Classic at Freedom Park with an eight-team field participating. Three nationally-ranked teams will be attending, including powerhouse Oklahoma State.

Throwin' Rebels Open Spring Practice

Football: First week comes to an end

BY KEVIN C. LEWIS STAFF REPORTER

The UNLV football team began the role of defending Big West Conference champions with approximately 80 players expected to participate in this year's spring program.

Quarterback Jared Brown looked crisp in Saturday morning's scrimmage when he connected on a 45-yard touchdown pass to Demond Thompkins.

Thompkins' sure hands have the immediate attention of a coaching staff that must replace the prolific receiving corps of Randy Gatewood (88 receptions, 1,203 yards), Henry Bailey (44, 586) and Daemon Keener (37, 387). Thompkins (62, 1,068 in 1993) was ruled academically ineligible to compete last season but has worked towards succesfully meeting the requirements for the upcoming season.

"He's worked his tail off."

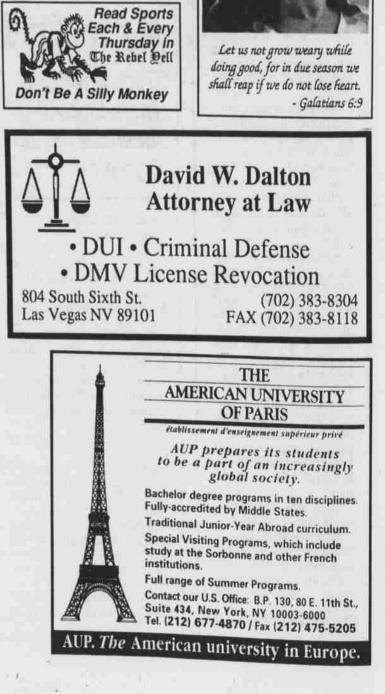
"Maybe we'll get lucky and someone will step up. Jeff Horton

"He has his work in front of him and I have all the confidence in him to meet those requirements."

Junior running back Tony Burton also had a splendid scrimmage with a 35-yard touchdown run along with a couple of impressive runs of 20 yards or more.

The kicking game of departing Brad Faunce and Nick (The Kick) Garritano was valuable to UNLV last season but is entering spring drills as a question mark.

"Maybe we'll get lucky and someone will step up," Horton said. "We're looking at a couple of guys right now and maybe we can get some walk-ons to try out.



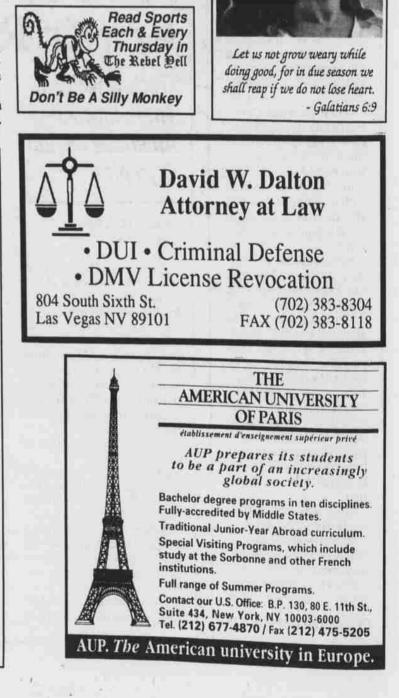
But we also need some guys to step up in the secondary where Jermaine Webster is the only returner with playing time." The Throwin' Rebels return

25 lettermen, 15 on offense and 14 on defense and 46 redshirts.

The March 4 spring game at Rebel Park is free and open to the public.

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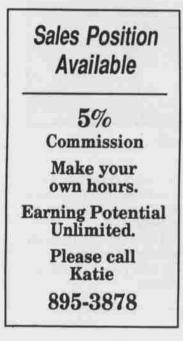




ear, they may just become only the second team in school history to post a losing record. The other? The inaugural 1958-59 squad which went 5-13.

But with this year's team, which has endured everything from bought-out coaches to sick coaches to players bailing, to AWOL players, anything is possible.

"That's what's nice about having the (Big West) tournament at the end of the year," Edwards said. "We still have our opportunities."



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the Sports Editor at The Rebel Yell.

-Paul Gutierrez is

Jeff Horton said of Thompkins.



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