

Commentary

Notes From the Corner

It was one of the more busy weekends in UNLV sports history as both the baseball and softball teams hosted tournaments in town, the Runnin' Rebels went on their final road trip of the season and the Lady Rebel basketball team paid homage to its outgoing seniors with Senior Day. So without further adieu, it's notes day here in the corner.

In This Corner



PAUL GUTIERREZ

With Major League Baseball still embroiled in its bitter strike, the play of the UNLV baseball team has been a breath of fresh air for the sport.

As in any sport, a little luck, skill and the schedule can make or break a baseball team. Fred Dallimore's Hustlin' Rebels have stormed out to a 12-5 record with all of the above, including playing their first 17 games in the friendly confines of Earl E. Wilson Stadium.

With the second-year stadium providing the backdrop, gone are the days of lounging on the grass hill, catching some rays and taking in a game. But so too are the days of consecutive losing seasons for the Hustlin' Rebels.

The fact that Nate Yeskie was on the mound for UNLV and K'd the Washington batter for the final out as the Rebels won the Coors Desert Classic was, simply put, poetic justice.

Yeskie deserved to be on the hill after striking out 14 Huskies earlier in the tournament. He has been overpowering in the early going, striking out 46 batters in 41 1/3 innings while running his record to 4-0.

The defending Big West and Las Vegas Bowl champion Throwin' Rebel football team has been in full swing for the spring as well. UNLV will host its annual spring game Saturday at Rebel Park.

Success has not come without a price for coach Jeff Horton. The UNLV football program has something in common with the basketball program - it keeps losing coaches. Two assistant coaches have left Horton's staff for positions throughout the country.

Speaking of assistant coaches, interim Runnin' Rebel coach Cle Edwards

Please see Corner—15

Home Cookin'

Baseball: Hustlin' Rebs Capture Classic

BY SEAN DEFRANK
STAFF REPORTER

The UNLV baseball team capitalized on three Washington errors to defeat the Huskies 6-5, capturing the 16th Annual UNLV/Coors Desert Classic Championship.

"I really love this team," coach Fred Dallimore said. "The difference between last year's team and this year's team is last year when we got behind we kind of melted. This year—we get behind—it kind of ruffles their feathers and they want to get back in the ballgame."

The two teams were deadlocked at three runs entering the bottom of the fourth inning before Washington's defense broke down. With one out, Willie Mosher doubled to left before Scott Vincent drew a walk. After a strikeout, Ryan Hankins grounded to Huskie third baseman Ross Junkin, who threw the ball over first baseman Cameron Cleeland's head, allowing Mosher and Vincent to score.

After former Rebel Brian Loucks homered in the sixth for the Huskies, to make the score 5-4, UNLV scored another unearned run in the seventh.

With one out, Brian Anthony got an infield single, followed by a walk to Ted Wilkes. After a wild pitch moved both runners up, Travis McClendon hit a grounder to second baseman Ryan Powell. With Anthony breaking from third, Powell fired the ball towards home plate, but threw wildly over catcher Shawn Mahle's head. Mahle recovered the ball, but fired blindly towards home where no one was covering. The ball rolled to Cleeland at first who gunned to pitcher Tim Campbell, who was covering home, to nail Wilkes, trying

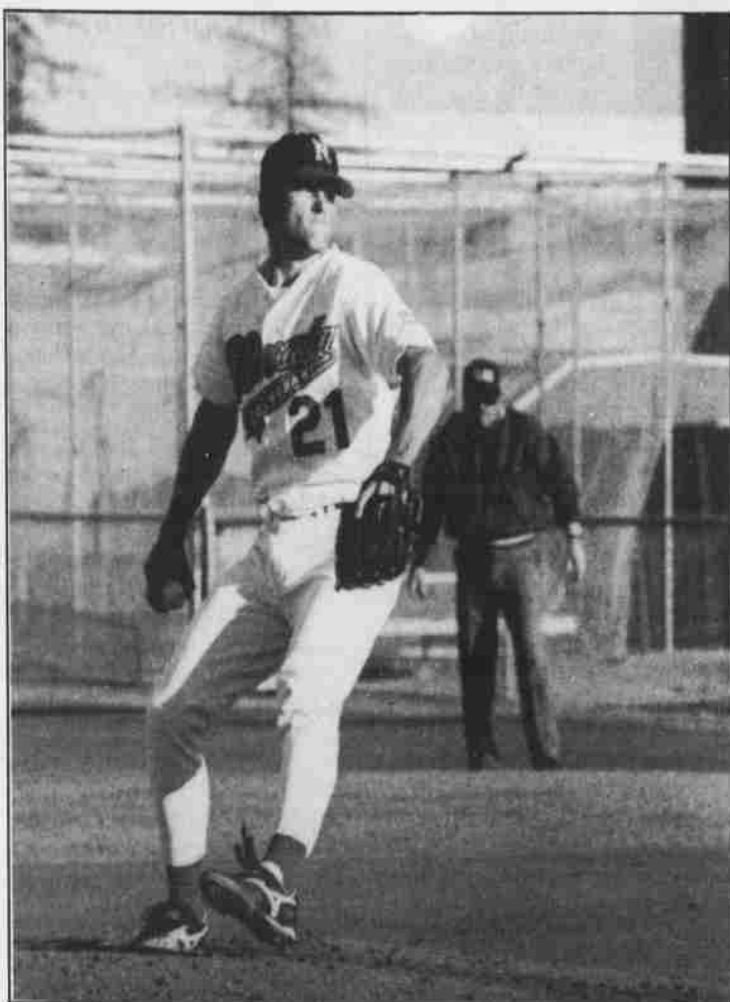


PHOTO MICHAEL LACY

Nate Yeskie is 4-0 with 46 strikeouts in 41 1/3 innings.

to score on the play.

"We were in a ground-ball contact situation, and the second baseman just panicked and threw the ball high," Dallimore said. "We made a base-running mistake. Wilkes should have never (run)."

Washington came back with one run in the eighth off Erik Oliver, appearing in relief for starter Mike Bauder.

In the ninth, Denny DeMartini, in relief of Oliver, walked the Huskies' Lawyer Milloy on a 3-2 pitch to lead off the inning. Nate Yeskie then came in for DeMartini.

A fly ball to right moved Milloy to third base with two outs. Yeskie ended the Washington threat by striking out Cleeland on three swings to gain his first

save.

"When I had him 0-2, (McClendon) gave me the sign for the slider, and I said, 'I've got this guy. He's mine,'" Yeskie said. "I knew if I threw it anywhere close to the zone, he'd swing. Because he had a lot of pressure on him to score that run. There's no pressure on me because I know what I'm going to throw, he doesn't."

The win, climaxing a 4-1 weekend, improved the Hustlin' Rebels record to 12-5.

Washington swiped four bases in the first inning, including steals of second and third by Milloy, to contribute to their initial run, but didn't steal again the rest of the game.

"(Bauder's) break time was

Please see Baseball—13

Softball: Lady Rebs claim Softball Classic

BY MICHAEL MELISSA
STAFF REPORTER

On the arms of pitchers Amie Stewart and Teresa Branch, the Lady Rebels captured the UNLV Softball Classic championship Sunday by beating seventh ranked Utah, 8-1.

The No. 5 Lady Rebels finished the tournament at 5-1 and ran their season mark to 15-2 overall, 2-0 in the Big West.

"We have had some good performances early on," coach Shan McDonald said. "Both Stewart and Branch have been swapping on the mound and helping each other out."

Branch went 4 2/3 innings for the victory, improving her record to 5-1 on the season. The only trouble Branch faced came in the fifth inning when the Utes loaded the bases with one out. A single to left knocked one run in, and Branch was able to get the next batter to pop up to third baseman Andrea Balandran.

Stewart was brought in to record the final out of the inning and she finished the game for Branch.

Branch picked up two strikeouts and a walk while scattering four hits and Stewart mopped up the final 2 1/3 innings by striking out two and not allowing a hit.

The Lady Rebels did not wait long to get on the board as Kim Rondina doubled in Ronnie Salcido and Amy Watkins in the first inning. Rondina came up big again in the second inning when she nailed a pitch to left-centerfield, splitting the two outfielders. The ball rolled to the fence and Rondina trotted home with a three-run homer.

Rondina finished the game,

Please see Softball—13

Rebels Fall Short On Road

Basketball: Rebels drop sixth straight at UOP

BY SEAN DEFRANK
STAFF REPORTER

Fall far behind.
Play great to catch up.
Lose.

That pretty much sums up the UNLV men's basketball team's two road games this past week.

The Runnin' Rebels lost a nationally-televised game Monday at Pacific 84-83, and at San Jose State, 86-75, on Saturday. The Rebels led once the entire road trip, 1-0 over UOP, before falling behind.

The losses dropped the Rebels to 9-15, 5-11 in Big West play. The 15 losses established a new high, or low, breaking the record of 14 set in the 1972-73 season, the year before Jerry Tarkanian's arrival.

The losses also assured the Rebels of having to play a preliminary game in the Big West Tournament, putting UNLV in the unenviable position of having to

win four games in four days to make the NCAA tournament.

The Rebels had a chance to tie UOP in the closing seconds of the game, but Sunshine Smith elected to shoot a pull-up jumper in the lane, instead of going for a 3-pointer which would have tied the game.

"It was things that were supposed to have been done, and (they) didn't happen," Smith said about the play that was called in the team's last timeout for Damian Smith before Damian fouled out with 5.9 seconds left. "So I was stuck in the middle."

Sunshine was left without a set play since UNLV had used its last timeout with 11 seconds left. Still, Smith admitted he should have shot a 3-pointer.

"I was aware of how many points we were down and everything," Smith said. "There was a couple of things that were supposed to have been happening, and they didn't. I was stuck."

Charles Jones scored 30 to lead the Tigers, while Adam Jacobsen poured in 22.

UNLV trailed 37-26 at the half, and fell behind even further, 58-43, with 12 minutes left before

Please see Basketball—12

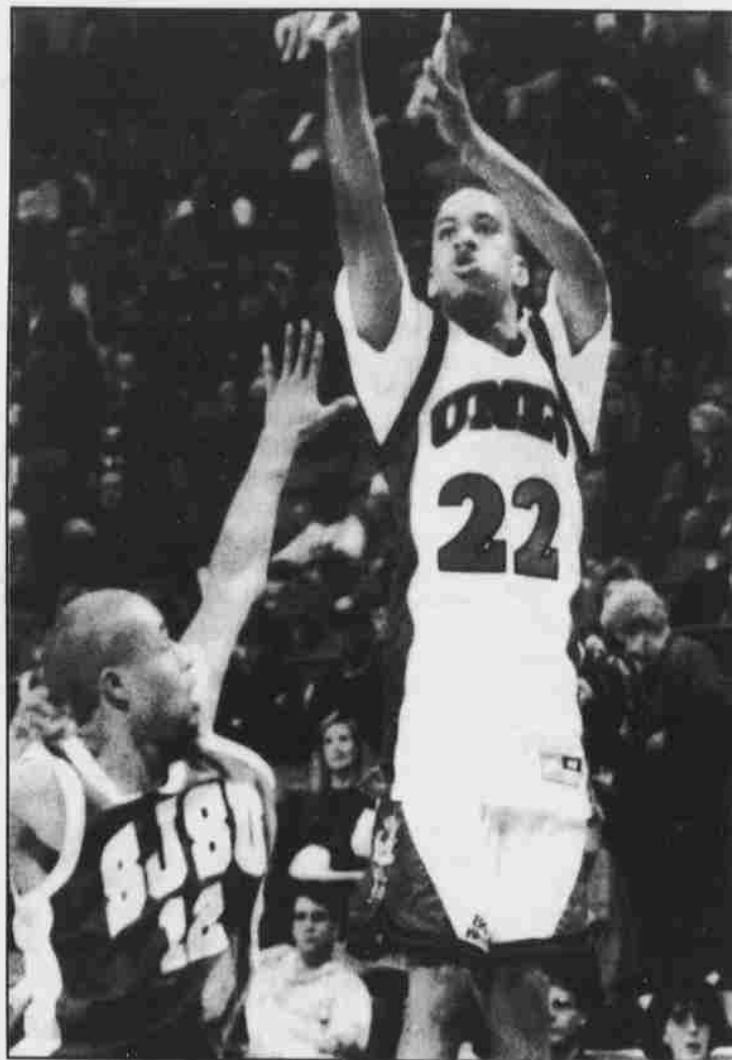


PHOTO HYUN-HO HAN

Damian Smith scored a career-high 30 points in Monday's loss.