

The Defense Rests for Horton's Big West Champs

Football: UNLV closes spring practice with a strong defensive showing

BY KEVIN C. LEWIS
STAFF REPORTER

The UNLV football team concluded spring practice Saturday at Rebel Park with a solid defensive performance in its final scrimmage.

After the firing of the Fremont Cannon, the Rebels' defense led a charge that pressured and hit quarterbacks Jared Brown, Jas-

on Davis, Kevin Crook and Todd Floyd for the entire 90 minutes.

"This is where we want to be," a pleased coach Jeff Horton said of his defense after the scrimmage. "They put a lot of pressure on the quarterback and they shut down the running game a lot. I was very pleased and they looked good. If they play like that in the fall, we'll win a lot of games."

Tackle Paul Carrillo, lineman Damien Howard and outside

linebacker Lamont Hicks established the tone in the trenches with their physical play.

"Carrillo could be a good football player if he would get himself in shape," Horton said. "He could become a dominating player in our

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—Jeff Horton on his team's defense.

league. It's up to him." There were some bright mo-

ments with the offense with Shannon Wilson racing up the middle for a 70-yard touchdown and the reliable hands of receiver Jason Toohey, who had seven catches for 56 yards. Starting quarterback Brown completed some crisp strikes to Toohey (15 yards), Kwami Coleman (26 yards) and Jack Gilmore (14 yards).

"There are days we play well against our defense and there

are days we don't," offensive coordinator Steve Hagan said. "We'll be ready in the fall. Both our returning quarterbacks (Brown and Davis) had good springs and they'll be ready."

But on this day the praise from the well-attended event was heaped on the defense. Cornerback Jermaine Webster intercepted passes from both Brown and Floyd.

"It was good to see our guys

rise up to the challenge," defensive coordinator Stan Eggen said. "We're counting on our returners to be our leaders, especially guys like Rossie (Johnson), Webster, Carrillo and Charles Fisher, who have been consistent all spring."

The Throwin' Rebels will begin defense of their Big West crown with the opening of fall camp in early August. The season opener is at Rice Sept. 2.

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two oral commitments from a pair of highly-pursued recruits - Avondre Jones and Warren Rosegreen. Jones ran the high school hardwood with teammate Charles O'Bannon (now starring for No. 1 UCLA) and was featured in *Sports Illustrated* before a disappointing freshman year at Southern Cal. Rosegreen is the leading rebounder in California junior college history. Both are playing at Chaffey Junior College for coach George Tarkanian. But now that Gerg has resigned, Jones and Rosegreen are rethinking their plans.

And what about the assistant coaches?

Cle Edwards left a job as a night operations manager of a floating casino in East St. Louis to come back to UNLV. His apartment was broken into and he will most likely be unemployed with the Rebels' next loss. Dave Rice left Chaffey as an assistant to be a restricted earnings coach at his alma mater where he won a National Championship. Whoever the next Rebel coach is should retain Rice's services. With him, UNLV still has an outside shot at landing Jones and Rosegreen as well as the other players Gerg had been recruiting.

If Gerg takes another job, where's the loyalty to his coaches?

That's why it makes no sense. After being Jerry Tarkanian's top assistant for all those years, Tark would always use just one word in describing Gergurich - loyal.

Upon accepting another coaching position in the near future, Gergurich would not have merely resigned as Rebel coach last week—he quit.

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Over the weekend, I had the opportunity to visit New York

City as part of a recruiting trip for *Sports Illustrated*. While there I ventured into a pub called Brother Jimmy's. I almost lost it.

Deep in the heart of Manhattan was a bar dedicated solely to glorifying the three major universities and their sports teams in the state of North Carolina - UNC, NC State and dreaded Duke.

Pasted everywhere were pennants, flags, bumper stickers and news papers trumpeting the Tar Heels, Wolf Pack and Blue Devils. Particularly upsetting were the assorted "Duke—1991 National Champs" memorabilia.

From what I was told, the owner was a Duke graduate. And though it was depressing being around so much Dookie propaganda, the atmosphere was one of pride and not forgetting one's roots. It kinda reminded me of the old Rebel Pub across the street.

When you were there, you knew you were at a UNLV hang-out, what with the posters, pictures and pride in the place.

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And surprisingly, being from UNLV did not make me the butt of jokes during my interview at *SI*. While past experiences have proven a bit disparaging, the reporters and editors there seemed genuinely interested and somewhat impressed that I study journalism here.

With the controversy constantly engulfing UNLV, the campus has become a working lab for students studying journalism.

—Paul Gutierrez is the Sports Editor at The Rebel Yell.

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