

## Lady Rebels Sweep UCSB...Again

**Softball: No. 5 UNLV runs its record to 17-3, 4-0**

BY MICHAEL MELISSA  
STAFF REPORTER

The UNLV softball team continued its domination over UC Santa Barbara by taking both ends of Wednesday's doubleheader.

The No. 5 Lady Rebels moved to 17-3 overall, and 4-0 in the Big West with the two wins.

In the opener, it took the Lady Rebels five innings to beat the Lady Gauchos 9-0. The game was called after the fifth due to the eight-run mercy rule. They won the second the game, 2-0, on the right arm of Teresa Branch.

"We've been getting good performances from both pitchers," coach Shan McDonald said. "And the timing is good for this time of the season."

A double in the second inning by third baseman Andi Balandran started the scoring barrage in the first game. With catcher Julie Crandall on first, Balandran smacked the ball into leftfield and scored Crandall.

The big inning was the fourth for the Lady Rebels as 12 batters came to the plate and they pushed eight runs across. Balandran hit her second double of the game, knocking in Crandall once again. With that double, Balandran tied

a school record for doubles in a game.

The big blow of the inning came when center fielder Sara Mallett smashed a two-run homer over the Wilson sign in leftfield. It was her second dinger of the year.

Amie Stewart went the distance for her tenth win of the season (10-1). She struck out five Lady Gauchos, walked two and allowed just one hit. She also helped her own cause in the fourth inning when she doubled in two, giving the Lady Rebels their ninth run.

"They did a good job staying in there," McDonald said. "The second time through the lineup we started hitting the ball hard. It usually takes an at-bat to adjust to a pitcher."

The Lady Rebels let up on the scoring in the second game and instead let Branch take care of business. She went the full seven innings for her sixth win of the season. Branch struck out 11 Lady Gauchos, walked just one batter and gave up only five hits.

The only trouble Branch faced came in the sixth. With Lady Gauchos on first and second and nobody out, they tried to lay down a sacrifice bunt which went to

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—Shan McDonald

Balandran. She fired over to third for the fielder's choice. Branch then struck out the next two batters to halt the rally.

The only runs of the game came in the third, when shortstop Kim Rondina doubled in both UNLV runs. Rondina went 2-3 in game and raised her team lead in RBIs to 22.

"In the second game we didn't do anything spectacular, but defensively we were strong, and the pitching was solid," McDonald said. "We won by two, instead of nine."

Up next for the Lady Rebels is a road trip to Northern California. They will make their first stop at Pacific Saturday, followed by San Jose State on Sunday. During spring break, the Lady Rebels will play at California Tuesday while their next home game will be a doubleheader against Texas A&M March 23.



PHOTO PAUL GUTIERREZ  
Amie Stewart picked up her 10th win with five strike-outs and allowed just one hit against the UCSB Lady Gauchos.

## Lady Rebels Split at UCLA Tournament

BY MICHAEL MELISSA  
STAFF REPORTER

The UNLV softball team split two games at the UCLA Easton/Reebok Invitational in Los Angeles last weekend.

The Lady Rebels beat No. 10 Michigan, 4-0, before falling to No. 15 South Carolina, 2-1. They lost a chance to move up in the rankings when Sunday's game against No. 2 UCLA was rained out.

The Lady Rebels are ranked fifth in the nation and have a 15-3 overall record, 2-0 in the Big West.

"We had a good start by beating Michigan," coach Shan McDonald said. "We started slow with South Carolina, but by the third inning we were hitting the ball hard but at people."

The Lady Rebels pounded out 10 hits against Wolverine pitching, two of those being doubles by first baseman Cyndi Parus, and center fielder Sara Mallett. Parus went 2-3 with an RBI and moved her team-leading batting average to .434 with six doubles. She also became the all-time UNLV RBI leader when she drove in her 113th career run.

Mallett went 1-4 with an RBI and a run scored, which moved her season average to .375 with five doubles and 17 RBIs. Shortstop Kim Rondina continued her explosive offense by going 2-3 with a run scored against the Wolverines. She is second on the team in batting, .431, and she leads the team in hits (25), RBIs (19) and home runs (four).

Pitcher Amie Stewart went another seven innings for her ninth win of the season. Stewart struck out five Wolverines and walked four on her way to a two-hit shutout. She also helped herself offensively by going 2-3 at the plate. In 11 games, Stewart is 9-1 with a 2.56 ERA, 57 strike-outs and two shutouts.

Continuing her rookie of the year-type season, freshman

catcher Julie Crandall went 1-3 with a run scored in a strong performance Friday.

But Saturday was a frustrating day for the Lady Rebels as they dropped a pitcher's duel to South Carolina. They collected one hit while striking out 11 times. The first six batters the Lady Gamecock pitcher faced went down on strikes.

"We didn't do a good job choosing pitches," McDonald said. "We were chasing the chest-high pitch. After that we did a better job selecting pitches instead of chasing them. You also have to credit the South Carolina pitcher. She pitched good."

The Lady Rebels' lone run came when they loaded the bases from walks, and third baseman Andrea Balandran was hit by the pitch to force in the run.

Teresa Branch pitched 4 1/3 innings, giving up two runs on five hits and striking out two Lady Gamecocks. Stewart came in to relieve Branch in the fifth and allowed one hit.

Second baseman, Amy Watkins, collected the only Lady Rebel hit in three at-bats while Rondina scored the lone run.

"The girls had a lot of good things to say after the game, we just need to stay on top of things," McDonald said.



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