

Commentary

Welcome to the Comeback Club

George Foreman did it. Bo Jackson did it. Steve Howe did it—not once, but seven times.

The comeback—one of the elements in sports that give athletics its mystique.

Within a span of seven days two of history's most acclaimed athletes begin their quest—a quest to reclaim what was once theirs.

Michael Jordan's and Mike Tyson's tales are as diverse as any two athletes' stories could be. The only thing both had in common was the ability to dominate their respective sports.

Did I say dominate? I meant they each owned their opponents, defeating them in a way that was, at times, both laughable and unbelievable.

Now Jordan and Tyson share another similarity—the comeback. The Comeback Club possesses many members. The degrees of its members' success and failure is as varied as the athletes themselves.

For every Foreman, whose rebirth culminated with his reclaiming of a heavyweight boxing crown (making him the oldest man to achieve this), there is a Darryl Strawberry, whose immense talent was not enough to curtail his taste for cocaine.

Where Jordan and Tyson will reside in the Comeback Club is unknown. While most people expect both gladiators to make smooth transitions into their reclamation of successes past—the Chicago Bulls' odds to win this year's NBA Championship went from 20-1 to 2-1 after Jordan's announced return while possible title route for Tyson have already been speculated on—no one can say for certain that they will.



SEAN DEFRANK

A Rebel's View

Tyson's road back is a longer, rougher one than Jordan's. While Jordan voluntarily stepped down from his mantle, Iron Mike was yanked from his—first by Buster Douglas, then by Desiree Washington and an Indiana court of law.

While Jordan's comeback success lies strictly within the confines of the basketball court, Tyson's prosperity has nothing to do with his return to the ring. His triumphs should only be based on one thing—his ability to get his life back on track. Any achievements in the ring are secondary to his successes as a human being. Unfortunately, the majority of Americans are only interested in Tyson's boxing prowess.

A bit of irony intertwines the two comebacks. Jordan's NBA rebirth began Sunday in Indiana, the very state which possesses the prison where Tyson will be released at 6 a.m. Saturday.

How both men will fare remains to be seen. Jordan's 7-28 shooting performance Sunday showed that even His Airness can't simply show up after over a year's layoff and not show signs of rust. However, his obvious leadership over his 43 minutes played, as well as his team-leading six assists, showed that Jordan's abilities won't stay dormant for long.

We'll wait and see on Tyson. Hopefully he'll take the necessary time to get his life together before fighting. So while the barometer measuring their achievements differs, one thing is similar—the comeback.

Welcome to the Club, guys.

—Sean DeFrank is a sports writer at The Rebel Yell.

Lady Rebs

continued from 14 floor. UNLV hurt its chances by not scoring a field goal during this critical five-minute stretch.

"I was disappointed that we went four trips and got nothing," Bolla said. "We can't afford to have four trips and get nothing, not even a free-throw. We get back in a good defensive mode, but we can't capitalize on it and score."

Pacific's Connie Blaisure hit two free-throws with less than two minutes remaining to make it 58-55. LeAnn Kezner cut the deficit to one by scoring in the paint with just 41 seconds left. Gwynn Hobbs then stole the ball from Paloma Moriana with nine seconds before calling timeout and setting up the ill-fated play.

The Lady Rebs finished with only two players (Hobbs, 12 points, and Tracy Titus, 17 points) in double figures while Pacific placed four (Blaisure 13, Moriana 10, Sue Will 12 and Kate McAllister 10).

"I've said all along that our success is better when we have at least three or four players in double figures, not one or two," Bolla said. "This is the kind of scoring game that Pacific wanted, in the 50's or 60's. We needed

to get into the upper 70's or 80's to win. Again, give Pacific some credit for their success."

Hobbs finished her career by being named to the Big West first team while Titus earned a second team honor. The loss also closed out the comeback of senior guard Celeste Robinson from injury, who finished with seven points against Pacific.

"I'm not surprised the game went down to the wire," Pacific coach Melissa DeMarcti said. "All of our games with Vegas have been tough."

UNLV lost eight of its first nine games before rallying to finish fifth in the conference. This is Bolla's first losing season at UNLV, 11-15.

Don't Monkey Around



Read Sports Each Thursday in The Rebel Yell

Wang Earns All-American Status

UNLV swimmer Xiaohong Wang finished seventh in the 100-yard butterfly at the women's NCAA championships last weekend in Austin, Texas. By finishing in the top eight, Wang, a senior from Beijing, China, received All-American recognition.

She tied her season-best with a time of 55.29 seconds. Jenny Thompson of Stan-



Xiaohong Wang

ford won the event with a time of 52.77.

Wang, a transfer from Utah, set a meet record at the Big West Conference Championships four weeks ago in the 100-fly, again with a time of 55.29.

In Austin, Wang failed to qualify for the final of the 200-yard butterfly by finishing 17th with a time of 2:02.31. The top 16

finishers advance to the final meet.

Wang established a season-best in the 200-fly (2:02.14) at the BWC Championships.

Wang earned a silver medal in the 200-fly at the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona, Spain. She placed fourth in the 100-fly.

She won three gold medals at the 1991 University Games and four gold medals at the 1990 Asian Games.

—Sean DeFrank

Golf

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and consecutive fifth-place finishes in Hawaii.

Chris Riley was the top Rebel finisher, shooting a 70-74-71-215, coming in third behind Okla-

homa's Grant Masson (73-72-66-211) and Georgia Tech's Stewart Clink (73-70-71-214).

It is Riley's ninth consecutive top 20 finish.

Mike Vance tied for eighth with his 218 while Chad Campbell, one stroke back at 219, was in a five-way tie for 12th.

Mike Ruiz's 220 put him in a tie for 17th place. Bill Lunde tied for 25th with a 224 and Gilberto Morales tied for 51st with a 239.

The Swingin' Rebels are off until the Ping Invitational in Cary N.C., April 8-9.

—Paul Gutierrez

Down

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39 lead.

"Everything they threw up went in," UNLV interim coach Cle Edwards said. "For whatever reason, we couldn't come up with the loose ball. They would come up with the loose ball and turn it into a bucket."

Manuel attributed the Aggies' run to a lack of defense.

"We just broke down defensively," Manuel said. "We didn't get back like we know we should. And that really made a lot of easy buckets for them."

"It happened. It shouldn't have happened; but it happened."

NMSU, 23-8 after the win, shot 56 percent from the field, including 68 percent in the second half, while the Rebels shot a paltry 35 percent.

"We had our backs to the wall coming out at halftime being down," McCarthy said. "And that's when we usually play our best."

UNLV's long-range shooting failed them in the loss. The Rebels shot a season-low 19 percent from beyond the 3-point line, hitting only eight of their season-high 42 attempts. UNLV hit 13 percent, 3-23, of its treys in the second half.

Clayton Johnson (1 of 9), Manuel (5-17) and Damian Smith (2-12) were the main culprits for the team's 3-point shooting woes.

"We had to take the shots when we were open," Manuel said. "We just aren't going to pass up our shot."

While the Rebels' inability to hit from the outside hurt them considerably, their lack of depth also contributed to their downfall as the Aggies' bench outscored UNLV's, 30-8.

NMSU had six players score in double figures. Guard Troy Brew-

"It's going to be in the back of my mind the rest of my life. I'm always going to think about this. They beat us seven times. Why couldn't we get one good win before we leave?"

—outgoing senior Patrick Savoy, who never beat New Mexico State.

er paced the Aggies with 18 points and 10 assists. Forward Thomas Wyatt scored 17 and forward Clyde Jordan added 16.

The 20-point loss tied the worst margin of defeat for the Rebels in the Thomas & Mack Center, equalling 1994's 59-39 loss to Virginia, and was the team's seventh consecutive loss at the hands of the Aggies.

"We've been very fortunate because many of the games in this series have been very close," McCarthy said. "Look at what the Vegas kids have had to go through this year with four different coaches. They played hard with a lot of heart."

Patrick Savoy said the Rebels' inability to beat the Aggies would be hard to shake from his memory.

"It's going to be in the back of my mind the rest of my life," Savoy said. "I'm always going to think about this. They beat us seven times. Why couldn't we get one good win before we leave?"

Savoy was limited to 10 points

in 18 minutes before ending his collegiate career by fouling out with 2:34 left. Savoy played only four minutes in the first half after picking up two quick fouls.

"It was hurting when I walked off," Savoy said. "I'd like to say thanks to the crowd because they were there for us through thick and thin."

Manuel led the Rebels in his final game with 22 points and eight rebounds. Smith added 20 points, while Johnson chipped in with 12. Lee finished with a career-high six blocks.

In the first round, the Rebels put together two good halves of basketball, defeating San Jose State, 77-66.

UNLV shot 47 percent from the floor—46 percent in the first half, 48 percent in the second.

Smith led the Rebels by scoring 23 points, hitting 8-of-13 shots (5-7 3-pointers), and playing the entire 40 minutes.

"The shots were available and open, so I would take them," Smith said. "It's hard to miss when you're wide open."

Manuel added 19 points, while Savoy chipped in with 15 points and 10 rebounds.

The Rebels took a 35-32 lead into halftime, and outscored the Spartans in the second half, 42-34.

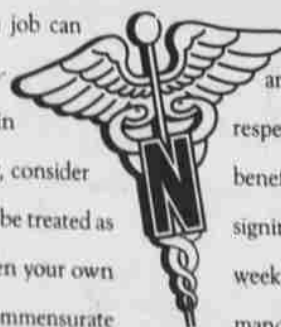
A 20-6 UNLV run midway through the second half put the game out of reach.

Mike Brotherton led SJSU (4-23) with 20 points. Tito Addison added a season-high 18.

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