

Commentary



Nate Yeskie

Far Beyond his Years

Composure. It's the one element that separates Nate Yeskie apart from all but a handful of collegiate pitchers.

Currently in his second season on the UNLV baseball team, Yeskie enters Friday's game against UC Santa Barbara with a record of 10-2.

While he features an impressive array of four pitches (fastball, curve, slider and change-up), Yeskie is a winner for two reasons—his work ethic and his composure on the mound.

"He's one of the best, at this particular stage in his career, that I've had," Dallimore said. "I've had guys throw harder, and all those other things. But as far as being able to pitch, he's maturing more all the time."

Dallimore has dealt with a lot of talented pitchers in his 22 seasons as Rebel head coach, including current major leaguers Todd Stottlemyre and Donovan Osborne. But, according to Dallimore, Yeskie's only rival on the mound is UNLV career-victory (35) and ERA (2.54) leader Herb Pryor.

"Nate is as close to him as I've ever had," Dallimore said. "If there's one thing Nate has over Herb Pryor, it's the discipline and the dedication to work hard."

"He works exceptionally hard. He doesn't short-change himself at all. He gives himself every opportunity to be successful."

Part of Yeskie's success is his willingness to pitch inside. While Yeskie is anything but wild, with 122 strikeouts and only 18 walks in 116 innings pitched, you can count on at least one batter getting beamed every game (16 hit batters in 14 starts).

"There's a couple guys, at certain times, who might think that I'm

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Lady Rebels Show Some Muscle

Softball: UNLV extends its winning streak to nine

BY MICHAEL MELISSA
STAFF REPORTER

Somebody turned the power on for the UNLV softball team.

In their last five games, the Lady Rebels have put 25 runs across the plate and have allowed five. Three of the games were shutouts by pitcher Amie Stewart.

"All you need is one more than they do," coach Shan McDonald said. "It is always good to score runs, but the main thing is to end up on top."

Prior to the first game of Wednesday's doubleheader against New Mexico State, Stewart was named Big West Conference Player of the Week. She was 4-1 for the week with two saves and a 0.98 ERA. In seven appearances, Stewart threw 35 1/3 innings and allowed just five earned runs.

The Lady Rebels are ranked fifth in the nation and are atop the Big West standings with a record of 22-5, 38-11 overall.

Wednesday's first game was polished off in the fifth when the Roadrunners could not score to break the Lady Rebels' eight-run lead. The game ended with the eight-run mercy rule in effect.

It started innocently enough with both teams going quietly in the first and second innings. The Lady Rebels came alive in the third when both Ronnie Salcido and Kim Rondina reached base on a pair of singles. Sara Mallett then came up and stroked a single to center, scoring Salcido and moving Rondina to third.

The offensive surge continued in the fourth with Julie Crandall



PHOTO BY STEVE HOBBS
Pitcher Teresa Branch winds up in the second game of Wednesday's doubleheader sweep against NMSU.

and Stewart reached base on singles. After Andrea Balandran's sacrifice, Alyson Henderson knocked a base hit to score Crandall.

Two more runs scored when Amy Watkins punched a single to center, who then scored with Rondina after Mallett doubled, bringing in the sixth run of the inning. Cyndi Parus knocked in the final run of the inning with another single.

Stewart turned in a strong game, going five innings with four strikeouts, no walks and two hits allowed. She won her 22nd of the season.

Once again Rondina shined with the bat, going 2-3 with two runs scored. With the two singles she had in the first game, Rondina broke the single-season record for total bases with 124.

Mallett also had a good game. She went 2-2 with a double, a

run scored and three RBIs.

The Lady Rebels decided to add some dramatics in the second half of the afternoon set. With the game sent into extra innings, locked at two apiece, it took a game-winning home run to give the Lady Rebels their ninth straight win.

Rondina ended the game by leading off the bottom of the ninth with a home run to left, which made up for the five errors she committed during the game.

The Roadrunners struck first, in the third, when they capitalized on the first of six Lady Rebel errors in the game.

After another Rondina miscue led to another Roadrunner run in the top of fifth, the Lady Rebels fought back to tie the game up. With two down in the inning, Watkins came up with a base hit

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Pittsburgh Steels Rebel in NFL Draft

BY KEVIN C. LEWIS
STAFF REPORTER

Last weekend's NFL Draft included the UNLV football team's senior wide receiver and kick returner Henry Bailey, who was selected by the Pittsburgh Steelers in the seventh round.

Bailey, the Rebels' all-time leader in receptions, reception yardage and all-purpose yardage, was projected by scouts to be selected as early as the third round.

Bailey, who impressed scouts at the NFL Combines with a 4.46-second 40-yard dash and his four touchdowns in the Dec. 15 Las Vegas Bowl, will have the opportunity to step right in and add a spark to the Steelers' special-teams units and receiving corps.

Meanwhile, good news also arrived for UNLV wide receiver Randy Gatewood and defensive end Keith Washington, who both signed free-agent contracts this week with the Miami Dolphins and Minnesota Vikings, respectively.

"I'm so thrilled," Gatewood said. "It hit me by surprise because I never really talked with the Dolphins, and neither did my agent."

"I'm happy to know that they didn't draft receivers. So that gives me a lot of confidence to know that they really want me. I mean, they love to throw the ball down there."

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Lady Rebel Assaults the Record Books

BY MICHAEL MELISSA
STAFF REPORTER

Kim Rondina looked tired after the UNLV softball team's April 19th doubleheader with Long Beach State.

No wonder. She finished the deuce by going 5-for-8, including two doubles, a triple, four runs scored and two RBIs.

Just another humdrum day at the Rebel Diamond.

The sophomore shortstop has been on a Big West tear of late. Against Cal State-Fullerton April 16th, she went 5-6, and belted her seventh home run of the season. With the dinger, Rondina set a new single-season home run mark. The record she beat was her own, and she did that last season.

Maybe that explains why she looked tired.

Rondina, 19, is in her second year on the fifth-ranked UNLV softball team, and has emerged as the offensive leader of a squad that does not lack power. In her two seasons, she has made her presence felt on most of the Lady Rebel offensive-record books, including records this year for home runs (9) and doubles (18) in a season.

"She is very talented," coach Shan McDonald said. "Her defense is very sound. And on offense she is one of our clutch

hitters."

McDonald recruited Rondina in the spring of 1993 from Horizon High School in Scottsdale, Ariz. She lured the talented shortstop to UNLV AFTER RONDINA went through major knee surgery.

In high school, she lettered for four years in both softball and basketball, and for three seasons in volleyball. However, her sports career was in jeopardy when she hurt her knee in a basketball game her senior year.

"I went up for a layup and a girl came in to block it," Rondina said. "She hit me into the wall, and I tore my (anterior cruciate ligament). I was in rehab for six months."

She explained that through an aggressive therapy program, she worked hard to get back into shape. Her main concern was to stay in good condition so that she could throw with velocity and run with speed. It went so well, her therapist gave the okay to go back to softball a few months earlier than expected.

"It wasn't as hard as I thought," Rondina said about coming back. The knee injury did not deter



PHOTO BY STEVE HOBBS
Kim Rondina helps keeps the UNLV softball team ahead of the rest of the Big West.

McDonald from pursuing her future star.

"She worked harder than any athlete I have ever seen to get back to 100 percent," McDonald said. "I think she is now there. To come back from something like that shows that she has always

been strong."

UNLV was not the only school trying to lure Rondina for her athletic ability. Being a three-sport star made her a hot commodity for collegiate recruiters.

"I got other offers with smaller schools to play other sports," Rondina said. "But I went to UNLV instead. I liked the programs and the location. I also like the team and the coaches."

Although her main reason for choosing Las Vegas was softball, she also said getting a good education was another reason for her decision.

You could say Rondina is a convert of sorts. She started playing softball only after being told she could not play with the boys.

"I played baseball with my brother in our backyard, and in little league," Rondina said. "I tried out for the baseball team in eighth grade, but the coaches wouldn't allow me to play. So I started playing softball."

"My brother was my inspiration. He taught me how to play baseball. And when I switched to softball my brother helped me out and supported me."

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