

## Commentary

## Change is the Only Constant

It was Aug. 27, 1990. After serving two years in the U.S. Army Infantry, I was finally ready to begin my carefree college years.

The scenario was almost perfect.

The sun was shining, birds were singing and the

Runnin' Rebels were the National Champions of college basketball.

My perfect world quickly became damaged goods, however, as I turned on the radio to the news that Stevie Ray Vaughan had been killed in a plane crash that morning.

While the skip in my step vanished for the remainder of the day, I still felt good about the changes occurring in my life and around campus.

UNLV had hired Jim Strong to be the savior of the football program. He brought the experience of a national title with him from his years as offensive coordinator of Notre Dame. "This guy's got to be good," I thought.

Dennis Finfrock had just taken over as Director of Athletics from Brad Rothermel, who had resigned after a 10-year stint. Rothermel had been extremely popular during his tenure, but it was hoped Finfrock could provide the necessary discipline to avoid any further NCAA violations.

UNLV was appealing an NCAA ruling that barred the basketball team from defending its title.

With this scenario in order, it's difficult to grasp the variety of changes that occurred soon after.

UNLV was given a different penalty from the NCAA. In return for the chance to defend its crown, the basketball team received penalties that would affect it in later years.

With this unheard-of precedent handed down, things were looking good for Jerry Tarkanian's squad. A team that was good enough to win the NCAA title game by 30 points seemed a lock to repeat with four potential All-Americans returning to the starting lineup. "Back-to-back" was the catch phrase of the year around the Las Vegas community.

We all know what happened then.

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## A Rebel's View



SEAN DEFRANK



PHOTO BY STEVE HOBBS

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Sports Editor Sean DeFrank congratulates sophomore softball player Kim Rondina (l. photo) and senior football player Randy Gatewood (r. photo) on their selections as Rebel Yell Female and Male Athletes of the Year for the 1994-95 school year.

## Rebels Receive 'Yell' Awards

BY SEAN DEFRANK  
SPORTS EDITOR

Over the course of the soon-to-be-completed school year, UNLV athletics featured many great efforts from its athletes and coaches.

But only three individuals stood out from the other Rebels to receive The Rebel Yell 1994-95 awards for their outstanding performances.

With a Big West crown and a Las Vegas Bowl victory last fall, the UNLV football team featured two of the award winners. Randy Gatewood received the award for Male Athlete of the Year, while first-year coach Jeff Horton was a unanimous pick for the Yell's inaugural Coach of the Year award.

## Past Winners

## Men

1994: Chris Riley — Golf  
1993: Isaiah "J.R." Rider — Basketball  
1992: Tory Miran — Baseball

## Women

1994: Marianne Vallin — Tennis  
1993: Kim Smith — Softball  
1992: Lori Harrigan — Softball

Kim Rondina of the fifth-ranked UNLV softball team received the award for Female Athlete of the Year.

Gatewood, a senior wide receiver, finished second nationally in receiving with an 8.0 catch-per-game average, and was fourth in yardage with a 109.4 yards-per-game average.

His season totals were 94 catches for 1,307 yards with seven touchdowns. The 94 grabs established a new school record, breaking Michael Morton's 1980 record of 79. The yardage is second behind Jim Sandusky's 1981 record of 1,346.

However, it was on Sept. 17 that Gatewood, 22, established himself on the collegiate gridiron scene. Playing against Idaho in Sam Boyd Stadium that night, Gatewood set NCAA records for catches (23) and reception yardage (363) in a game. The record-breaking performance earned him *Sports Illustrated* Offensive Player of the Week for its Sept. 26 issue.

Gatewood, who recently signed a free-agent contract with the

NFL's Miami Dolphins, was also named UNLV's MVP by his teammates, and All-Big West Conference First Team.

Rondina, a sophomore shortstop, is the leading offensive threat on a 40-11 Lady Rebel squad. She is currently batting .444 (tied for 14th nationally, first in the Big West) with nine home runs and 42 RBIs.

With four regular-season games remaining, Rondina, 19, has already established a new school single-season record with the nine homers, breaking her record of six from last season. The 15 career dingers puts her tops on that list also.

She is currently two RBIs short of tying Cyndi Parus' 1993 record of 44, while her batting average is on pace to destroy Vera Bahr's

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## Magic Number Cut to One Game

BY KEVIN C. LEWIS  
STAFF REPORTER

The UNLV baseball team, after winning two of three games against UC Santa Barbara, 14-2, 10-20, 10-8, moved into a third-place tie with Nevada-Reno in the Big West Conference.

The two wins moved UNLV's magic number for qualifying for the inaugural Big West Baseball Tournament in Long Beach, Calif., on May 12-14, to one. The top four teams qualify for the tournament.

The Rebels supported pitching ace Nate Yeskie (11-2) with solid defense, and sprayed Earl E. Wilson Stadium with 19 hits in their 14-2 win Friday.

"We hit the hell out of the ball," coach Fred Dallimore said. "We played good defense, but we really hit it tonight. That's a good pitcher we faced

tonight—their best in fact. But our adrenalin was pumping."

The Gauchos jumped out to an early 2-0 lead before Yeskie settled down into a groove that led to 10 strikeouts in eight innings pitched.

"I started out a little shaky and my pitches were too fat," Yeskie said. "They were taking advantage of me so I started cutting loose. But our team really played great defense."

The Rebels never looked back after the second inning. Scott Vincent singled to left field to score Ted Wilkes to take a 3-2 lead. The hit continued Vincent's 15-game hitting streak.

Ryan Hankins and Brian An-

thony started the long-ball assault on Gauchos' pitcher Steve Lane (5-2) in the bottom of the third by hitting back-to-back homers over the right-field fence. It was their 10th and 11th home runs of the year, respectively.

In Saturday's game, the Rebels continued to hit the ball, gathering 17 hits. Problem was the Gauchos hit it even harder, tagging 25 hits to secure the 20-10 win.

Rebels' pitcher Denny DeMartini (7-6) left the game in the seventh inning trailing only 8-6, and turned the ball over to reliever Erik Oliver. Oliver was rocked by the unruly Gauchos' batters for nine earned runs in the eighth inning.

"We worked hard all game to stay within reach and then that happened," Dallimore said. "There's not much you say about that kind of game. Give them credit though for hitting the ball hard."

In the series finale the Rebels trailed 8-6 after six innings and called on Joel Garber (3-0) to relieve Tom LaRosa. Garber surrendered only one hit and no runs in a dramatic 10-8 win.

The Gauchos were very obliging in the loss by committing five errors and allowing two unearned runs. The Rebels scored three runs in the eighth inning to steal the come-from-behind victory. Crosby paced the Rebels' offense with three hits and two RBIs, while Ryan Plughoff added two hits.

"Hey, if they're going to give us one—we'll take it," Dallimore said. "Their fielding hurt them, but we got good timely hitting from our guys—especially Crosby's big hit."

The Rebels return to conference play with three games at Long Beach State this weekend.

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