

Commentary

NFL Forecast

BY JEREMY E. MARTIN
STAFF WRITER

Sunday marks the start of the 76th NFL season. With two new expansion teams and a host of other teams rejuvenated by free agency, this season might be one of the most exciting in recent years.

Dynasties like San Francisco and Dallas, although still ever-powerful, have lost key players and some of the permanent fixtures in the basements of the divisions have rebuilt to competitive status.

Savvy capologists have made the process of putting together a team under the salary cap into a true art form. In this day and age upper management is more important than a good coaching staff in building a successful team.

Critics of free agency say that it ruins the tradition of the teams because players come and go every year.

I disagree. Most teams that have star players they can't do without, have them tied up for years and the new system makes the league more competitive. With the recent labor problems in baseball, basketball and hockey, football has a chance to pull even further ahead of the other sports as America's favorite.

Here are some of my thoughts, comments and predictions on the upcoming season.

- The Cowboys and the 49ers will meet in the NFC Championship Game for the fourth straight year. Dallas will win and go on to Phoenix for their third Super Bowl in four years.

- The AFC will finally win a Super Bowl.

- Dan Marino will rewrite the record books this season. But unless he wins the big game, he will still get no respect.

- The Carolina Panthers and the Jacksonville Jaguars will be competitive thanks to free agency. One of these teams will win five or more games.

- Miami Coach Don Shula will be named Coach of the Year. He is an excellent motivator and even changed the name for the area inside the 20 yard line from the "red zone" to the "green zone" so it will remind his players of money.

- Dallas will win the Deion Sanders derby and Emmitt Smith will have his usual outstanding season.

- Arizona coach Buddy Ryan will offend people.

- Led by Trent Dilfer and Errict Rhett, Tampa Bay will lose less than 10 games for the first time in 12 years. They will lose 9 but will look good for the 96-97 sea-

son.

- Cincinnati will be the worst team in football.

- The AFC East will be the toughest division in football and will send two wildcard teams to the playoffs. The Patriots will squeak by Miami to win the division.

- The NFC Central will also send two wildcards to the playoffs.

- My beloved Kansas City Chiefs will prove everyone wrong and make the playoffs for the sixth consecutive season. Derrick Thomas will re-establish himself as the best linebacker in football. Chiefs starting quarterback Steve Bono has had an excellent pre season and the Chiefs are deep at receiver for the first time in years.

- The Seahawks will not be able to overcome off-season problems. A drunken driving incident paralyzed defensive end Mark Frier. Rookie Coach Dennis Erickson, from the controversial University of Miami program, was also involved in an alcohol related incident. The 'Hawks top receiver, Brian Blades, is being charged with manslaughter in connection with the shooting death of his cousin. They will finish fifth in the AFC West.

- The city of Los Angeles is already working on getting an existing team to make the jump to the West Coast. If that doesn't happen, L.A. will have one or two expansion teams within the next four years.

- I keep forgetting to say Oakland and St. Louis when talking about the Raiders and Rams.

- Fans will show support in droves for the two expansion teams. Attendance will be among the highest in the league for Carolina and Jacksonville.

- Former Rebels Randy Gatewood, Henry Bailey and Keith Washington were all cut by NFL teams in the last two weeks. Coach Horton thinks they will be picked back up on practice squads. We are pulling for you guys!

- Speaking of former Rebels, Randall Cunningham has a new coach and a new offensive scheme. If the old saying "change is good" rings true then maybe Randall will live up to his potential with a run at the Super Bowl.

Whatever happens, it looks to be an exciting season. No matter who wins the Super Bowl, it will probably be a better game than the last few.

—Jeremy E. Martin is a Sports Writer for The Rebel Yell.

New faces ready to step up for UNLV Football

Rebels have many new players to fill old shoes

BY JEREMY E. MARTIN
STAFF WRITER

With only a few starters returning, the 1995 Rebel football team will sport a new look with a host of new faces that will get their chance to see action on the field.

Head Coach Jeff Horton has been impressed by the intensity and eagerness of some of the younger players and has had some pleasant surprises in spring and fall camps.

Redshirt freshman Kevin Crook is being groomed as the quarterback of the future as UNLV heads for the Western Athletic Conference next year.

"Crook has all of the tools to be a great quarterback," Horton said. "He has size and a great arm."

Crook might have some competition from true freshman Jon Denton, who opened the eyes of coaches in last Saturday's scrimmage at Rebel Park. Denton showed poise by throwing a 60-yard touchdown one play after being sacked.

"Denton is a confident quarterback," Horton said. "He is cocky and walks with a swagger. He is a Jim McMahon type of quarterback."

Redshirt freshman right tackle and honors student Mike Reily has won the starting job in camp.

"Mike is a tough kid with good values and a great football sense," Horton said.

Another redshirt freshman, left guard Jerald Pierucci, will get to start. He has put on weight over the off season and Horton believes he will be a big contributor on the line for the next four years.

Two sophomores who should be catching some balls this year are Todd Floyd and Kwame Coleman.

Floyd, a long time friend of Horton and transfer from Reno, is the kind of receiver who will come down with the ball in traffic.

"Todd is a great competitor," Horton said. "He has the kind of body that gets knocked around a lot but he always seems to come up with the ball."

Coleman, the only receiver returning who saw action last year, should become a major contributor. He will be filling the shoes of departed senior, Henry Bailey.

Junior running back Tony Burton will start Saturday against Rice. Burton is a transfer from Palomar JC in San

1995 REBEL STARTERS

		OFFENSE		YEAR
POS.	NO.	NAME		
FLEX	21	Kwame Coleman		So.
LT	78	Mike Reily		Fr.
LG	73	Justin Trammell		Fr.
C	63	Jose Gonzalez		Sr.
RG	72	Robbie Morrison		Sr.
RT	75	Dennis Whitmore		Jr.
TE	10	David White		Sr.
WR	81	Cedric Handy		Fr.
WR	80	Jason Toohey		So.
TB	20	DeJohn Branch		Jr.
		DEFENSE		
BANDIT	37	Lamont Hicks		So.
END	98	Dominic Andrews		So.
NOSE	90	Paul Carrillo		Sr.
TACKLE	54	Charles Fisher		So.
REBEL	44	Rossie Johnson		Sr.
SLB	50	P.J. Tyler		Sr.
WLB	28	Daniel Martin		So.
LC	25	Mike White		Jr.
SS	1	Daniel Stewart		Jr.
FS	32	Jabbar Thomas		Sr.
RC	23	Jermaine Webster		Jr.
		SPECIAL TEAMS		
PUNT	11	Todd Floyd		So.
KOR	89	Mike Bell		So.
PR	80	Jason Toohey		So.
PK	15	Dallas Orchard		Fr.
HOLD	10	David White		Sr.
LS	74	Darin Lovat		Jr.

Marcos, Calif. Burton ran for over 1,000 yards in each of his two seasons at Palomar.

"Tony was one of the top junior college runners in the country," Horton said. "I like his speed and quickness but he has to prove he's durable."

Sophomores Mike Bell and Jason Toohey will split time at receiver. Toohey does not have great speed but Horton was impressed by his ability to catch the ball. "He has the best hands I have ever seen," Horton said.

On the defensive side of the ball, only three starters remain. A host of players who lack experience will have to step up to keep the offense in games.

Senior linebacker P.J. Tyler has impressed the coaching staff in camp. He saw action

last season on special teams and will get the start this season.

Senior free safety Jabbar Thomas, a former running back transplanted to the secondary after the seventh game of the season, is on Horton's list for success.

"He has an aggressive attitude and is the best hitter on the team," Horton said.

A recent transfer from Pasadena City College, junior Daniel Stewart will get the start at strong safety.

Sophomore Charles Fisher will start at defensive tackle. Fisher came to camp in good shape and Horton likes his attitude and toughness.

These new players will get plenty of time to endure growing pains which will help ease the move into the WAC.

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