

Commentary

Excitement in the air has been grounded

Do you remember Coach Jeff Horton's tag for the Rebels?

"Excitement is in the air" is what he said at the beginning of last season and the start of this season.

But the only excitement I've seen in the air was last week when the skydivers came crashing down into the Sam Boyd Stadium toting the game ball for the Arkansas State game.

The Rebels have reversed their air attack to ground warfare and their main weapons this season are DeJohn Branch, Tony Burton and Shannon Wilson. Although Branch has been out for the past two games and looks to be out at least two more, Burton and Wilson have done more than just pick up the slack, they have stuck it in a wheelbarrow and pushed it across the field.

Through the first two games of the season, the Rebels have outgained their opponents 539 to 501 and 288 of those yards are from Wilson. Most of those yards came from Wilson's big game against Arkansas State where he rushed for 200 yards on 35 carries.

"We wore them down," Wilson said, somewhat exhausted from the effort after the game. "We just pounded and pounded and in the end we broke through."

The drive in the fourth quarter was what really brought out the fact that the Rebels are more of a running team rather than a passing team, as they were known as last season. In the 13-play drive, which started on the Rebel 17, Wilson was handed the ball 12 times and capped it off by running in from 11 yards out for the touchdown.

Even the quarterback is getting into the rushing fad that has hit Rebels. Jared Brown rushed for 53 yards and also put two touchdowns on the board against the Indians.

Is it the inexperience of the Rebels that has forced the running game to step up?

Fingers seem to be pointing in that direction. The Rebels have four sophomores in the wide receiver corps who have been given the tough task of filling the shoes of both Henry Bailey and Rebel Yell

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Rebels travel to Eastern Michigan

BY JEREMY E. MARTIN
STAFF WRITER

The Rebels, coming off a big conference win against Arkansas State University, will start a series of three non-conference games. The first will be played at Eastern Michigan University Saturday at 3 p.m. at Rynearson Stadium.

The game will be UNLV's second ever trip to Michigan and will be a homecoming for Rebel running back Shannon Wilson.

Wilson, out of St. Martin-DePorres High School in Detroit, gained 200 yards on 35 carries and scored two touchdowns against the Indians.

He attended EMU two years ago but did not play football.

"All my fans will be in the stands cheering for me," Wilson said after Saturday's game.

The Rebels are tied for first in the Big West with the UNR Wolf Pack with 1-0 conference record. But UNLV will not face another conference foe until their Oct. 7 game against the Northern Illinois Huskies.

"The schedule could not have worked out any better for us," Coach Jeff Horton said. "It will give some of our young players a chance to mature before the five conference games down the line."

The Rebels, who faced a one-back set against Rice and ASU, will go up against a more complicated offense against EMU.

"We will be challenged in the secondary," Horton said. "They will use a bunch of different formations and motions to try to confuse us. We have to be sound and disciplined."

Horton thinks that the team is gaining confidence every week.

"Coming off of last week's

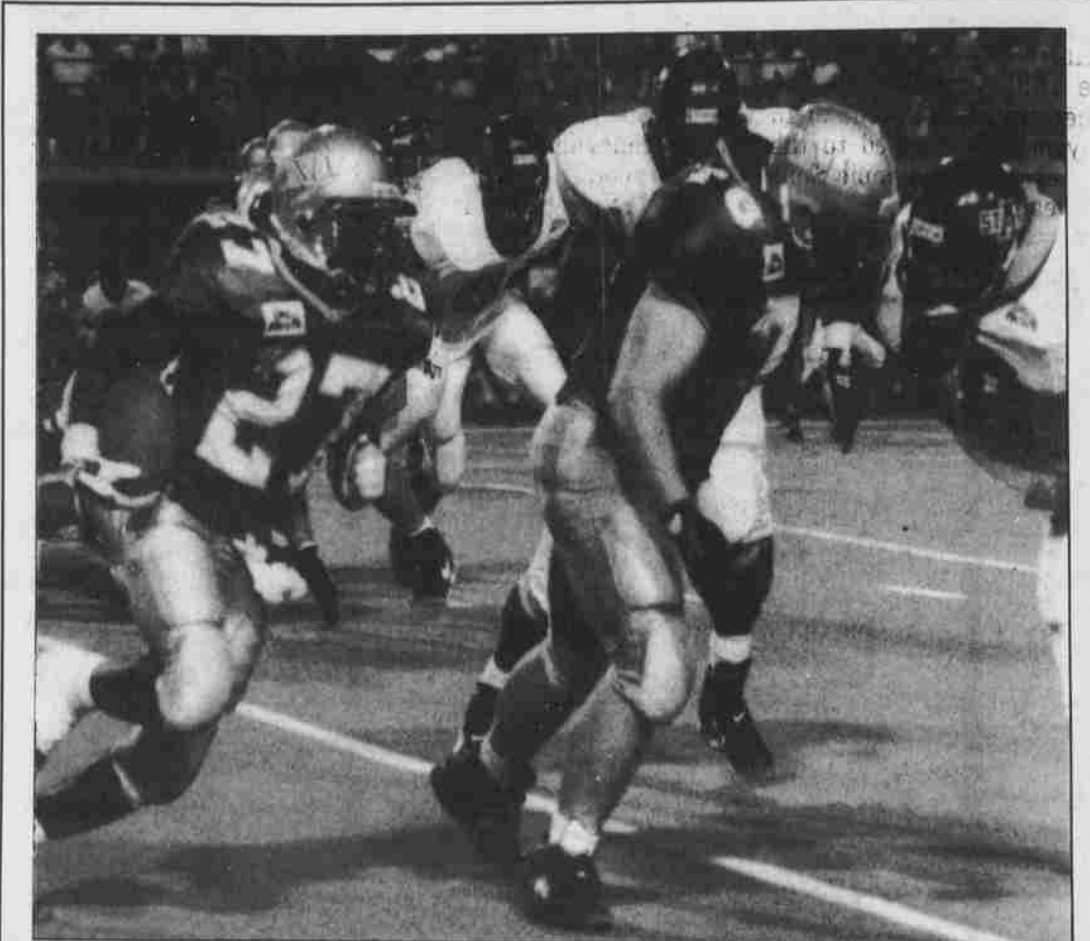


PHOTO BY HYUN-HO HAN
Tailback Tony Burton gained 88 yards against the Indians at the Saturday home opener, and hopes to repeat his performance in Eastern Michigan.

win they have a better attitude. They want to keep the momentum going," Horton said.

Although the Rebels had success running the ball against ASU, that might not be the case Saturday.

"We will go into the game 50-50 (running and passing), and through the course of the game we will change according to our success," Horton said. "Last week we threw the ball better but when we have a big guy like that (Wilson) smashing bodies around, we have to keep feeding him."

The EMU Eagles have one of the nation's youngest head coaches in Rick Rasnick who was hired at the beginning of this year. Rasnick uses an offense that uses four receivers and a lot of motion.

"They use play action passes and traps to try to get the defense spread out," Horton said.

The Rebels, 5-1 against the Eagle's Mid-American Conference, have not defeated a non-conference opponent on the road since 1991 when UNLV beat New Mexico.

Wilson was named Big West

Conference player of the week for his heroic efforts against the Indians and is ranked 20th in the nation running the ball.

The Rebels also boast the nation's fifth best passing defense allowing only 73.9 air yards per game.

Starting running back DeJohn Branch, who was expected to be back for the EMU game, will not be playing. "He suffered a sprained knee in two-a-day practice and will not be available until the Sept. 23 game against Iowa State, at the earliest," head trainer Kyle Wilson said.

UNLV teammates playing together once again

BY RAY BREWER
STAFF WRITER

UNLV Soccer players Bryce Buckwalter and Bart Gallia are fulfilling a childhood dream.

They're playing soccer together for UNLV.

"When we were younger, all the guys used to always talk about playing college soccer together, especially for UNLV," Buckwalter said.

The two have been participating in sports together since they were 10, playing on the travel teams in Las Vegas. They played on the same squad for over 10 years.

While playing in city leagues these two friends led their team to four Nevada State Championships. When playing in the under-16 age bracket, their team, F.C. United, won the West Regionals which earned them a trip to nationals.

It was during these travel tournaments that Buckwalter and Gallia formed a strong friendship. Their



PHOTO BY MICHAEL LACY
Bart Gallia (r.) is joined by childhood soccer teammate Bryce Buckwalter on the Kickin' Rebs.

common interest — soccer.

Despite an almost identical youth career, Buckwalter and Gallia traveled different routes getting to the Rebel

soccer team.

Because of zoning differences, Gallia went to Western High School while Buckwalter went to soccer powerhouse

Chaparral High School. Both athletes were successful in high school, with

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