

Rebel softball one game away Rebel softball set to complete unfinished business

BY RAY BREWER
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

The 1995 UNLV softball team had a storybook season, making it all the way to the College World Series, where they finished third.

They were one game away from advancing to the national championship, and completing their Cinderella season of excellence.

This high finish, combined with capturing the school's first Big West Conference title, put the UNLV softball program on the map as a Western powerhouse.

Today, they're back and ready for an encore performance of last season. But this time they're looking to put the finishing touches on a national championship.

"Our chances are as good as any other year," coach Shan McDonald said.

One roadblock that stands in the way of the College World Series is that the team lost five seniors to graduation.

"Tough to replace," McDonald said about having to go recruit talent to fill the spots of the departed seniors.

Pitcher Aime Stewart could possibly be the layer missed the most. Her heroics on the hill last year earned her the honors of second team All-American.

Also, her 30-9 record, with a 1.40 ERA will be hard to replace.

"We'll miss Aime as a batter and a pitcher," McDonald said.

Other stars from last season that will be missed is two-time All-American Cyndi Parus and solid third baseman Andrea Balandran.

In an attempt to rebuild or re-load, McDonald has recruited two dominant pitchers, who will make an impact right away.

McDonald believes that her two new freshman pitchers are probably the best to stop out of under 18 softball.

Returning to the squad for her junior season is All-American shortstop Kim Rondina. Last year she batted .436 with 15 homeruns both are school records.

Other returning players include sophomore catcher Julie Crandall, who was named third team All-American, and senior center fielder Sara Mallett, who was named second team All-American.

The leader of the scarlet and gray army is McDonald, who has won more than 300 games in her 10 years at UNLV, and last season was honored with the West Region Coach of the Year award.

Last season they were one game away from the title, this season with a little alteration to the infield and pitching rotation, the UNLV softball team is back, and ready to complete their unfinished business.

The Rebels open their pre-season competition Saturday when they host the Puerto Rican national squad at the Rebel Diamond.

Hustlin' Rebels to face UCLA

Rebels will be tested in road match-up

BY MARCUS HOSKIN
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

The Hustlin' Rebels, who have lost their season opener the past two years, are hoping the old saying, "The third time is a charm" comes true this year.

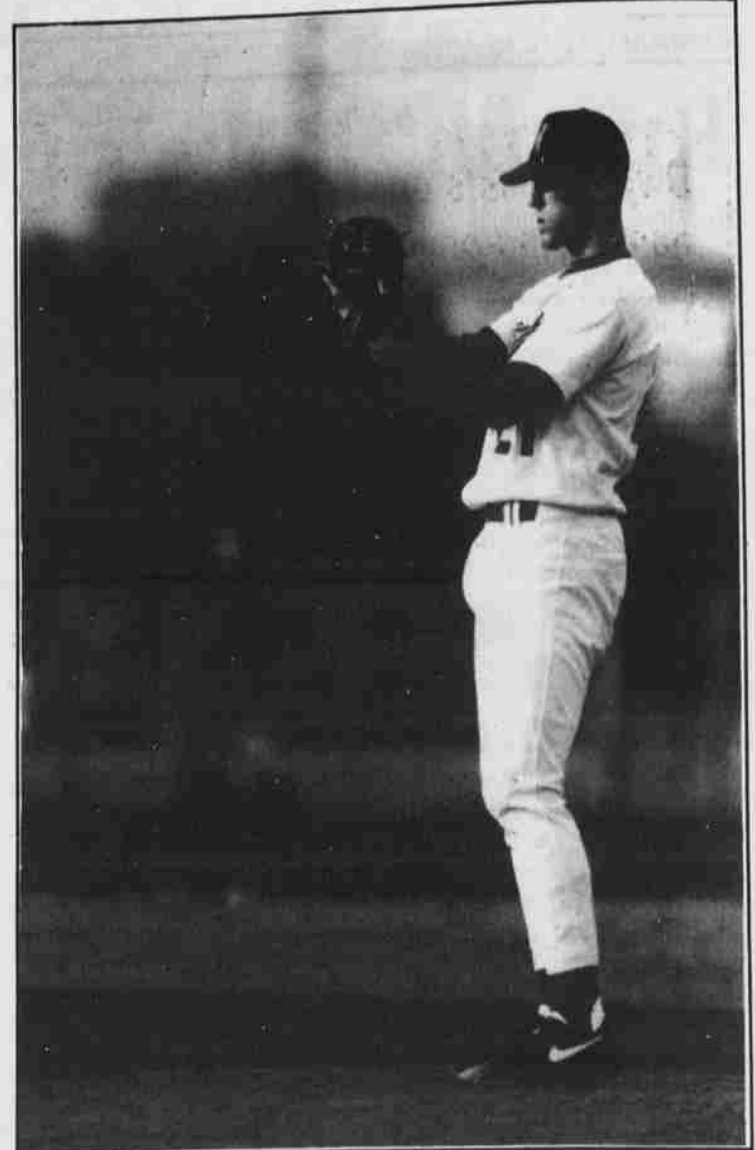
The team is looking for a charmed victory when it faces 10th-ranked UCLA in Los Angeles for a three-game series beginning tomorrow.

"It's a tough opener," head coach Fred Dallimore said. "We think it will be a good test, and we'll get a good evaluation to see what we've got to work on and see how much we've got to do."

UNLV's pitching staff will be a little short-handed to start the season. The Rebels will be without the services of 1995 First Team All-Big West pitcher Nate Yeskie, who will be sidelined for the early stages of the season with shoulder tendinitis.

"I'd rather Nate sacrifice a couple of quality starts at the beginning of the season to make sure he's totally healthy," Dallimore said. "Plus it gives us an opportunity to see some of the new kids and give them a couple of innings to pitch in case we have any problems in the staff down the road."

Right-hander Tom LaRosa will get the start for the Rebels tomorrow, while left-hander Mike Bauder gets the nod on Saturday, and right-hander Tista Perry takes the mound in the finale on Sunday. Slam-



Nate Yeskie, the usual starter for the Rebels, will not be in action this week due to tendonitis in the shoulder.

ming the door in the bullpen are righties Chad Berry, Bill Scheffels and Rob Luce, along with lefty Fred Koehne.

Dallimore said he plans to start Stacy Kleiner behind the plate, Brian Anthony at first base, Sean Campbell at second, Paul Tanner at shortstop, and 1995 Freshman All-American Ryan Hankins at third base.

In the outfield, Teddy Wilkes

will play in right field, Scott Vincent in left field, and Chris Adolph in center field. Kevin Eberwein will be the designated hitter.

You'll get the chance to hear the ping of the aluminum bats at Wilson Stadium when the Rebels return home for a 32-game homestand beginning with a three-game set against Utah on Feb. 9.

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