

# Milestone achieved by retiring head coach

An era in Rebel athletics came to an end Saturday night in the South Gym when Lady Rebels Coach Jim Bolla ended a 12-game losing streak with his 300th career victory in his final game as head coach.

The milestone win, an inspired 80-73 victory over San Jose State, came on the heels of the worst season in school history.

When Bolla announced his resignation on Feb. 8, he told the press in the Si Redd Room at the Thomas & Mack Center that the decision was his own. However, the opinion of the sports staff here at *The Rebel Yell* is that he was pressured into that decision by members of the athletic department, including athletic director Charles Cavagnaro.

With a new men's basketball coach, a new football coach and a new conference (Western Athletic), it is obvious UNLV is trying to cut ties with its controversial past, and Bolla's resignation makes perfect sense.

Bolla accomplished so much at UNLV that no coach will conceivably match his success.

He has led the Lady Rebels to 11 20-plus win seasons with nine post season appearances and seven trips to the NCAA Tournament. His most successful season was the 1989-90 campaign, which saw UNLV climb to No. 2 in the national rankings.

Bolla's ability to coach has declined in the past two seasons. Last season UNLV compiled a 11-15 record in 1994-95 and 4-21 this season.

Bolla continues to be a master of the game, but his ability to effectively communicate with his players has been the team's downfall.

The communication breakdown this season was not entirely Bolla's fault. The season started with a rash of injuries, and the team never fully recovered.

Then there were players Bolla did not see eye-to-eye with:

- Reserve center Nakia Jones joined the team late and was immediately suspended by Bolla for lack of work effort.

- Senior guard Desiree Weimann just walked out in the middle of her final season and

never came back.

Bolla openly criticized some of his younger players to the press and the self-fulfilling prophecy reared its ugly head on the court.

The players never recovered from all the turmoil. The result was the program's worst season in school history.

Despite the record and controversy, there was some good that came out of the season.

Senior forward LeAnn Kazmer and junior guard Loriesa Randle were true leaders on the court. These women learned how to fight through adversity.

Due to a squad that was reduced to as little as seven players for much of the season, some of the younger players developed their potential much further than they would



Jim Bolla

have under normal circumstances.

Take freshman guard Karen Webster, for example. At the beginning of the season she was more timid than a mouse and about as quiet as one. But with the sudden departure of Weimann, Webster was suddenly required to play

up to 40 minutes a game.

In the season finale against the Spartans, she exploded with 15 points and was timid no more. She drove to the hoop with the confidence of a player who the team has had to count on down the stretch. With the extra playing time she has a chance to compete against Elana Adams for the starting position next season.

"We have been trying to get (Webster) to be more assertive all season," Bolla said.

Vast improvements were

also seen in the play of the other young players. Freshman center Amy Wunderlich established herself as a force inside. Forwards Angie Dye and Marija Sladojevic and center Liz Wolfe gained some much-needed experience in the trenches.

Whoever the new coach is next season, he or she will inherit a roster of players who have been through a lot and have the on-the-court experience to back it up.

"Because we only had seven, some of our players got two years of playing time in one season," Bolla said. "You learn from winning as well as losing. It puts something in their minds about not wanting to go through this situation again."

When the final buzzer sounded and the Bolla era ended, the 14-year coach did not feel as emotional as he expected.

"It wasn't as hard as I thought it would be," Bolla said. "The fact that I did not get too emotional reaffirmed that my (resignation) decision was the right one."

—Jeremy Martin is a Staff Sports Writer at The Rebel Yell

### Crunch Time

JEREMY MARTIN

## Swingin' Rebels struggle in Hawaii

Chris Riley shoots his worst round of golf

BY RAY BREWER  
SPORTS STAFF WRITER

After an impressive fall season, the second ranked Rebel golf team entered the spring season with high expectations.

The confident Swingin' Rebels traveled to Hawaii for two tournaments to start the season, and did something they seldom do: shot a bad round of golf.

It happened the first day of the Taylor Made Big Island Classic in Hilo, Hawaii on Feb 23. After burying themselves in a hole, the Rebels finished in a season-low eighth place.

"We didn't do a good job at getting the ball up and down the course," said Dwaine Knight, the Swingin' Rebels' head coach.

As a team, they only had two par rounds. Three-time All-American Chris Riley shot his worst round of golf in his four-year tenure with the Rebels.

Despite the bad finish, they did show some life by climbing up the leader board on the final day, Feb

25, shooting their best round of golf in the Classic.

"The key is not to get too far behind, even though it is nice to come back," Knight said.

With this as motivation, they voyaged across the islands to Honolulu to participate in the 20th Annual John A. Burns Intercollegiate Golf Classic at the par-72, 6,552-yard Kaneohe Klipper Golf Course last weekend.

With Ted Oh leading the way, UNLV golfed a three-day total of 898, which was good enough for fifth place, ten strokes back of champion Auburn.

Oh, a freshmen, finished the tournament with a one under par 71, and in seventh place, a three-day total of 221.

Oh finished eight shots behind medalist Tiger Woods of Stanford, who shot three under par on the final day to win the tournament by four strokes.

Riley was tied for 10th place on the leader board with a 223 three-day total. Mike Ruiz shot a 226 (24th place), Chad Campbell shot a 229 (34th) and Bill Lunde shot a 235 (70th).

The Rebels will return to the greens Friday in Houston, Texas at the Golf Digest Invitational.

## Tournament

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from the floor and were 10-for-19 from the foul line (52.6 percent).

Early on it looked as if the Rebels were playing with a mission, a purpose. They started by holding the Aggies to just two points for the first

3:09, and without a field goal for the first 4:56 of the game.

The Rebels concluded their run in the BWC with a 202-48 record, and three times went undefeated in conference play (18-0). In eight of nine years (1982-91) they finished first in the conference tournament and have been in the tournament every year except the probation year (1991-92).

## Bickering

from pg. 9

the football. Sounds like he can't break the habit, maybe there's a support group for that sort of thing...

Speaking of losing, did you happen to catch the final game for Lady Rebel's head coach Jim Bolla? Finals were abound in this game, it was the Lady Rebels final Big West

match, the home game for the seniors, the final game of the season, the final game Bolla could get 300, and Bolla's final game. Now we all know he was this close to getting the big three under the belt. Which he got, finally...

Hey Runnin' Rebels, don't hang your heads after losing to Utah State, 82-69, in front of 9,281 at Logan, Utah, a place where you all once dominated but now have seemed to falter. It's no big deal that you

have beaten the Aggies 27 times to only three defeats. And don't worry about being out-rebounded by 17 (42-25), being hacked and no fouls called by the three-blind mice officiating crew. Just look at it being only the Big West, it wasn't like it was a WAC conference game to get into the tournament...

—Michael Melissa is the Sports Editor at The Rebel Yell

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