

Commentary

The baseball-rich BWC

Fullerton, Long Beach and UNLV ... oh my.

Pacific, Santa Barbara and UNR ... oh my.

All of the above teams are currently ranked in *Baseball Weekly/USA Today* polls

or have at least received

votes to be ranked,

and all six schools are playing in the Big West Conference.

At the start of March, five of the six teams had won 10 or more games already, while the final team had only played nine games this season. Cal State Fullerton leads the pack with a 12-1 record, followed by UNLV (12-5), UCSB (11-5), Pacific (10-3), Long Beach State (10-5) and UNR (6-3).

The Hustlin' Rebs have worked their way into the top 25 and have opened the eyes of some observers.

Now you could say that their ranking is tainted by the fact that they have a 32-game home stand, and many of the teams coming to visit UNLV are just fodder for UNLV hitting and pitching. The only problem with that is, the Rebels have been beating these "fodder teams" by eight or more runs this season.

When Portland State University came to town, back in February, the Rebs scored 66 runs and 60 runs in three games. They beat PSU 6-4, 19-2 and 19-7 while dropping one, 22-18. In all, the Rebels have scored in double figures eight times this year, and the schedule is not even half way through yet. The Rebels have also beaten teams by eight or more points five times.

Now most of the teams UNLV played were "fodder teams," but the Rebels also beat the University of New Mexico (14-10 last season in conference) in a three-game series (12-10, 7-6, 13-5) and Brigham Young University, which the Rebs beat 9-4 (22-8 in conference).

The Rebels still have the toughest part of their schedule ahead of them, though, when they face Arizona State, Cal State Fullerton, Long Beach State and UNR in the upcoming weeks. These will be the games that will either prove the Rebels are as strong as they are appearing right now, or these games will weed out the Rebs and place them back in mediocrity (a place they have known well).

—Michael Melissa is the Sports Editor at The Rebel Yell

Off the Bench

MICHAEL MELISSA

UNLV will take the ugly wins

Hustlin' Rebels win their fifth straight with help from the wind

BY MICHAEL MELISSA
SPORTS EDITOR

It may not have been a pretty win, but UNLV head coach, Fred Dallimore, will take it.

"A win's a win and we'll take it," Dallimore said after the Rebels beat Southern Illinois for the second straight day, 15-10. "I don't know if there is such thing as an ugly win, but when you are on a roll and you're doing good you don't want anything bad to happen."

And nothing too bad has happened to the Rebels this season. Ranked 25th in the nation, the Rebels are 18-6 on the year and have won 17 of their 21 games, including wins over future Western Athletic Conference opponents Fresno State, New Mexico and Brigham Young University.

In front of 396 Rebel fans Sunday at Earl E. Wilson Stadium, the Hustlin' Rebels won a slugfest, 15-10, a game which saw eight balls go for home runs, and the Rebels score at least one run in the first five innings.

The Southern Illinois Salukis started the scoring in their half of the first inning. Lead-off hitter Joe Schley knocked a base hit to left field, but was thrown out by Rebel catcher Stacy Kleiner, when he tried to steal second. With two out, designated hitter Mike Russell hit a deep shot to right field,



With the help of Brian Anthony's bat, the Rebels defeated Southern Utah and Southern Illinois in their weekend battle. UNLV has won nine of its 11 games, including five straight.

carried out of the park by the wind for the first home run of the day.

The Rebels tied the game up in their half of the first inning on shortstop Paul Tanner's second home run of the season.

The lead went back to the Salukis on the strength of a two-run homer by second baseman Jay Mansavage, but was quickly equaled by Rebel center fielder Scott Vincent, who hit a two-run wind-blown homer to straight-away center, scoring right fielder Ted Wilkes, who had walked.

In the bottom of the third, the Hustlin' Rebels opened up the game more, with a blast that did not need the wind to leave the park. First baseman Brian Anthony took the offering from Saluki pitcher Brad

Blumenstock way over the right field wall for his fifth dinger of the year, bringing in with him center fielder Chris Adolph, who had walked.

"It's just like Cashman (Roger Barnson Field), it plays different when the wind blows," Dallimore said. Rising pitches and a hard ground also contributed to the barrage of scoring by both clubs, Dallimore explained.

The Rebels connected for four runs in the third, four more in the fourth and two in the fifth to go up, 13-4.

The game did not get ugly until the seventh inning when the Rebels started to lose some of the intensity they had earlier in the game. With the help of a Tanner error at short and a couple of mental mistakes, a 13-5 Rebel lead turned into a

13-10 lead by the end of the inning.

With two on for the Salukis in the seventh, right fielder Tim Wilson hit a home run to left-center field. Schley followed that up a few batters later with a two-run triple to rightfield.

"What I was disappointed in was our defense, we just broke down defensive-wise in the seventh and eighth inning," Dallimore said. "Maybe we just coasted a little bit and thought we had the game under control. But you don't have the game under control until those 27 outs are in the book."

Kleiner put the game away for good in the bottom of the seventh, with a home run over

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Rebel softball continues to roll

BY RAY BREWER
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

The key to winning in softball is good pitching and defense.

This holds especially true for the seventh-ranked UNLV softball team (17-6), who went 5-1 this weekend in three doubleheader Big West Conference games.

In the only game they lost, 6-3 to Utah State, the Rebels committed three errors, and pitcher Tanya Edwards scattered 12 hits and walked four.

"We are a ranked team because we have good defense and pitching, plus good bats," head coach Shan McDonald said. "When one is not on, the other will cover for it," she concluded.

They defeated New Mexico State University twice on Thursday, and took three of four from Utah State on Friday and Saturday.

Lead-off hitter Sara Mallett got things rolling in the first game against NMSU when she ripped a single to left in the bottom of the first.



PHOTO BY HYUN-HO HAN

Rebel shortstop, Kim Rondina, didn't have enough time to make a play on a Utah state runner at third on Saturday.

Mallett used her speed to create the first run of the game, as she tagged up and advanced to third on a deep sacrifice fly to center from Julie Crandall. Her hustle led to an Aggie throwing error and the Rebel first run.

"We moved Sara from the four spot to the one spot, (in the batting order) and she is doing a great job for us," Mc-

Donald said.

Mallett was back on the base paths in the third when she drew a walk. She proceeded to harass the Aggie defense by stealing second, and later scored on a Amy Alves double to right.

Crandall duplicated Alves' efforts and had an RBI double of her own, scoring Alves from second.

That was all the offensive pitcher Teresa Branch needed as she pitched a complete-game shut-out, while striking out two, and earning the win in the Rebels 4-0 victory.

The second game of two against NMSU saw the Rebels pound out eight runs on 13 hits, beating the Aggies 8-5.

Edwards was on the hill, throwing three strikeouts and yielding 11 hits.

Mallett continued her offensive heroics in the sixth inning, hitting a triple and scoring one of the Rebels' three runs.

Alves had a beauty of a second game as well, going 4-for-4 with one double and three singles, three RBIs and two runs scored.

They were back on the attack Saturday, extending their winning streak to three, while defeating Utah State 5-1 in the first of four games this weekend.

Branch earned her second win in two days, striking out two and giving up one earned run.

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