



Jon Denton went 19-of-37 for 128 yards and two interceptions in his Rebel debut Saturday.

Rebels blown-out Tennessee style

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sports editor

No one ever said it would be easy.

The Rebel football team opened their inaugural Western Athletic Conference season Saturday in a disappointing fashion, with a 62-3 loss to the No. 2-ranked Tennessee Volunteers in front of 106,212 spectators at Neyland Stadium in Knoxville, Tenn. That crowd was the 12th-largest ever to see a game played on a college campus and the loss was the second worst in school history.

The multi-talented Vols attacked the Rebels from every direction, racking up 473 offensive yards. Tennessee Quarterback Peyton Manning made a statement in his Heisman Trophy run with 298 yards of passing on 18-of-24 attempts with one touchdown and a pick. He was pulled in the third quarter after Tennessee had gained a solid lead.

Manning's performance and the Volunteer's stingy defense spoiled the debut of Rebel Quarterback Jon Denton, who was only the fourth freshman in Rebel history to start a game for UNLV. Denton completed 19-of-37 passes for 128 yards and had two interceptions.

"(Denton) did a fine job," Head Coach Jeff Horton said. "It was his first time starting and he played remarkably well considering the environment and the pres-

sure. He showed great poise. He is going to be a great player for us."

UNLV had trouble getting things going on the ground. While the running back position is the deepest on the team, the Rebels only managed 56 yards rushing.

Tennessee, on the other hand, successfully pounded the ball at the young Rebel defensive line. Eleven different Volunteers carried the ball for a net of 159 yards.

A pair of prolific Volunteer receivers hassled the Rebels secondary all afternoon. All-South Eastern Conference Receiver Joey Kent caught six balls for 151 yards, including a 63-yard touchdown grab, and speedy wideout Marcus Nash gained 103 yards on six catches.

The Rebels biggest gain came from Freshman Len Ware. He was on the receiving end of a 51-yard pass from Denton.

Despite the lopsided score, the Rebels gained some much-needed exposure playing a high-ranked team like Tennessee. The game also gave UNLV's young players a chance to be involved in a big college football game.

"We saw the environment and the setting and atmosphere (of big-time football)," Horton said. "We know the speed level and effort it takes to play the No. 1 or No. 2 team in the country. (Tennessee) is a great team and that will help us down the road."

A new year, a new conference

Emergence into WAC brings opportunities for UNLV

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Out with the old and in with the new.

The new Western Athletic Conference, which includes UNLV in a 16-team format, is the nation's largest Division I-A conference.

On July 1, 1996 the conference's ten current schools officially combined with six newly-elected programs, forming the "New WAC," which begins athletic competition this fall.

It was at the same time that UNLV defected from the Big West Conference, where it had participated for 14 years.

"It is a exciting opportunity to be part of the WAC," Rebel Head Football Coach Jeff Horton said. "On behalf of UNLV, it is a thrill and honor for us to be part of the conference."

UNLV, with Rice, San Jose State University, Southern Methodist University, Texas Christian University, and Tulsa comprise the new members list.

The WAC's 16 schools are geographically located in nine states and blanket five time zones, with 4,000 miles inbetween them. WAC cities have a cumulative population of over 50 million.

"The size of the WAC speaks for itself," said WAC Commissioner Karl Benson.

Many think the new conference will provide greater opportunities for all of its members, including UNLV.

Among the first of UNLV's WAC events is the WAC football championship game, which will take place Dec. 7 at the Sam Boyd Stadium.

Construction is under way at SBS to accommodate 40,000 spectators.

"The expansion is to provide a championship game that will benefit the WAC's exposure," Benson said. "We want to sell the event to all 16 schools, no matter what team is participating."

The championship game will be televised on ABC sandwiched between the South Eastern Conference and Big 12 championship games.

Despite this obvious improvement for UNLV and the WAC, there still is one major problem. The conference is excluded from the NCAA National

Championship format.

"We want to be part of the major college football family," Benson said. "We are excluded from the automatic, but have access to good bowl games."

"The bowl structure left the WAC on the short end of the stick...at the time it was decided we didn't have a lot of ammunition," Benson explained.

While WAC can expect to generate around \$2.2 million from bowl revenue from each of its 16 schools, schools in the SEC contribute about \$15 million each to their conference.

That sparks another problem with the new conference, that of revenue. Some are questioning how the WAC can feed the mouths of 16 universities.

"We knew it was an investment and what we do today will reward us in the year 2000," Benson said.

For now, revenue remains the same. It will be dispersed among every program.

Any troubles the conference brings are still being viewed as improvements for UNLV. Most agree the WAC was the way to go for the Rebels.

"UNLV athletics and academics took a big step forward (moving into the WAC)," Horton said.

Volleyball loses first two matches



Ebony Ruemell goes for a block during an intrasquad scrimmage.

michael melissa
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In its first women's volleyball tournament since 1985, UNLV dropped both matches in the UC Irvine Anteater Invitational at Crawford Hall.

The Rebels opened the season Friday against Cal State Fullerton and lost the match, 15-10, 15-1, 15-9. They followed up with another loss on Satur-

day to tournament hosts, UCI. It took the Anteaters four games to beat the Rebels in the finale, 15-6, 15-11, 8-15, 15-10.

The Rebels were led by outside hitter Erica Enfield in the UCI match with 10 digs and a match-high 16 kills. As for the rest of the Rebels, Meri-de Boyer, Christy Clark and Kendra Wilkinson each had eight digs.

UNLV has not fielded a

women's volleyball team for 11 years, where they went 16-17 overall and 5-11 in conference play. The Rebels hit the hardwood from 1978-1985.

Volleyball will return to the South Gym on Thursday when the Rebels open their home season to do battle with Cal State Fullerton again.

The match starts at 7:30 p.m.

Rebel Football Calendar

Date	Opponent	Time
Aug. 31	Tennessee 62	Rebels 3
Sept. 7	Air Force*	7:00 PM PDT
Sept. 14	Wisconsin	7:00 PM PDT
Sept. 21	at Colorado State*	1:30 PM MDT
Sept. 28	Wyoming*	1:00 PM PDT
Oct. 5	Nevada, Reno	1:00 PM PDT
Oct. 12	at Brigham Young	12:00 PM MDT
Oct. 19	at Hawai'i*	7:00 PM HST
Oct. 26	Fresno State (HC)*	1:00 PM PDT
Nov. 2	at Texas Christian	2:00 PM CST
Nov. 9	OPEN DATE	
Nov. 16	San Diego State*	1:00 PM PST
Nov. 23	at San Jose State*	1:30 PM PST

* WAC game