

UNLV faces long odds at BYU

Sarkisian hopes to pad Heisman stats vs. Rebels' struggling D

By Jeremy Martin
Sports Editor

When the Rebel football team travels to Provo, Utah Saturday to take on the No. 19-ranked Brigham Young University Cougars, several things will be at stake:

- UNLV, (0-6, 0-3 Western Athletic Conference), will try to break a school record-tying eight-game losing streak that extends from last season.

- The Rebels will also try to snap a school record 10-game road losing streak.

- A win would be UNLV's first WAC victory and a big momentum builder going into the stretch run of the season.

There is one Cougar the Rebel defense will have to control if there is any hope of achieving these goals—Heisman Trophy candidate and senior quarterback Steve Sarkisian.

"(BYU) is quarterback university," Rebel Head Coach Jeff Horton said. "(Sarkisian) is one of the top two or three in the country. (The BYU passing game) is so good that we can't just rush four men, we have to try to get some (extra) pressure by blitzing. (BYU)

likes to throw deep. We want to put pressure (on Sarkisian) and get the offense out of rhythm."

Sarkisian has been on a tear, leading his team to a 5-1, 2-0 record. In six games he has racked up 2,018 yards on 136 of 196 passing and 14 touchdowns with only six interceptions. The senior is third in the nation in passing efficiency at 173.72 and fourth in total offense with 324.5 yards per game. Sarkisian's 5,455 career passing yards rank him eighth on BYU's career passing list.

This could spell disaster for the Rebel defense, which is ranked dead last in the nation in passing defense, giving up an average of 261.7 YPG. Last week against arch-rivals UNR, a 54-17 Rebel loss, UNLV gave up 309 yards through the air and 566 total yards.

"We need to go back to perseverance and attitude," Horton said. "We need to play with courage and keep showing intensity throughout practices. We can still do good things in our last six games."

BYU will be the second ranked opponent the Rebels have faced all year. UNLV faced off against No. 2-ranked Tennessee in the season opener, a 62-3 loss. Wyoming was ranked 26th when they came to Sam Boyd and are now ranked 24th.

Saturday's game will mark the eighth time in history that the Rebels have faced a ranked opponent. Their only win against a

member of the nation's elite 25 came in 1981 when they beat BYU in a 45-41 shocker at Cougar Stadium.

Horton is hoping for some of the same on Saturday.

"(BYU) is one of the best teams in the country," Horton said. "They are a superior opponent. We have played better against the teams that no one gave us a chance against."

The Rebels will have to pull off another shocker to get anywhere close to BYU. The Cougars are loaded from top to bottom:

- The Cougars sport two NFL-caliber tight ends in seniors Chad Lewis and Itula Mili. The tandem has combined for 668 yards receiving this season with four touchdowns.

- Wide receiver Kapio McGuire is one of the top pass catchers in the country with 474 yards on the season and five touchdowns.

- Special teams expert James Dye is third in the nation in punt returns with a 22.3 average and two touchdowns.

- Middle linebacker Shay Muirbrook is a Butkus Award candidate and has four sacks, 51 tackles and an interception.

The Rebels will try to keep BYU out of the end zone with an aggressive defense and try to reach the end zone with the help of a running game, which has been non-existent to this point in the season.

"Running the ball better will be our (top priority)," Horton said.

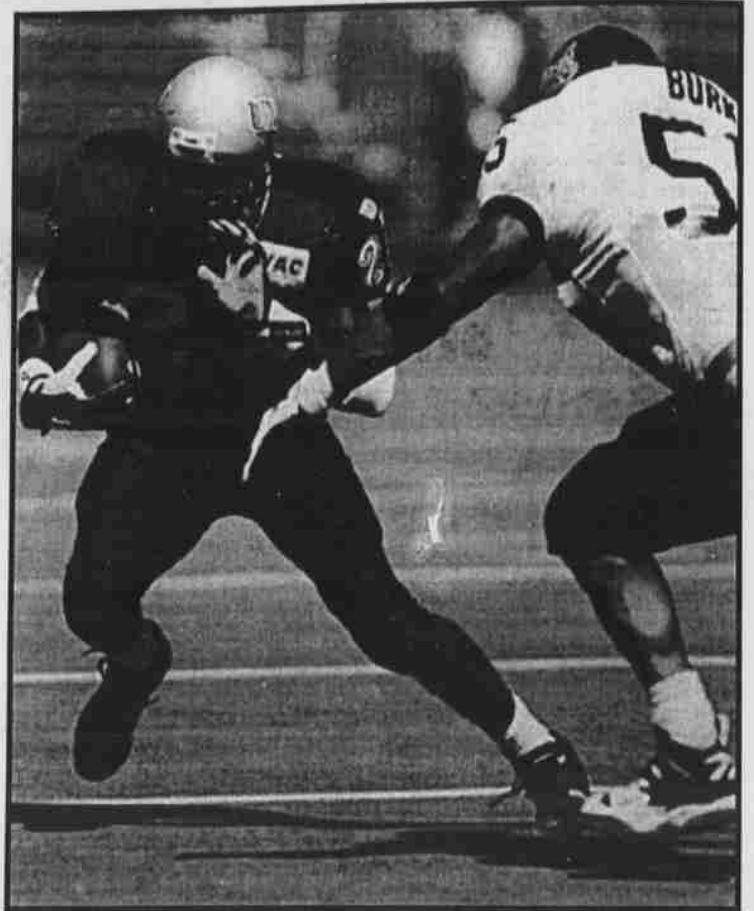


PHOTO: Courtesy of UNLV Sports Information

Tony Burton(27) will try to spark UNLV's running attack on Saturday at BYU.

"We want to move up and down the field and be more aggressive on defense."

UNLV's running game has been so ineffective, in fact, that they are ranked 102 in the nation on the ground; this, coming from a group with three seniors (DeJohn Branch, Omar Love and Tony Burton) who were supposed to be one

of the strongest units on the team. The Rebels are averaging a mere 2.6 YPC and have only netted 465 yards in six games.

The game will be televised on KUPN 21 (cable channel 2) at 11 a.m. Saturday or can be heard live on KVEG-840 AM beginning at 10:30 a.m.

Big golf win may be National Championship preview

By Jeremy Martin
Sports Editor
and
Ray Brewer
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When the No. 3-ranked Rebel golf team tees up at the Conway Farms Golf Club in Lake Forest, Ill. in late May with the national championship on the line, they will have the confidence of knowing that they own the course.

UNLV's golf team, behind a strong performance by sophomore Ted Oh, came from behind on Tuesday to win the prestigious Ping/Golfweek Preview Invitational at the very same course where the National Championship will be played.

"(We played) the best field in college golf," Head Coach Dwaine

Knight said. "(The Invitational) was a benchmark tournament to see what our chances are in the National Championship hunt. The win was big for us. It gives us confidence.

"(Conway Farms) is the same course that the National Championship will be played on. We got a good look at the course and played against a great field. It will give us a shot to be ranked No. 1 in the next rankings."

The Rebels found themselves behind Oklahoma State University after each of the first two rounds. After the first day, they were two shots back in third place, and after the second day, they were one shot back in second place.

"(Coming from behind) has been one of our trademarks,"



PHOTO: Courtesy of SI

Morales finished ninth at the Ping/Golfweek Preview Invitational

Knight said. "The last round is the Rebel round, the last holes are our holes. We are trying to establish those traditions with this team."

UNLV, a 304-289-289 for a to-

tal 891 on the par-71 course, finished five strokes ahead of Oklahoma State.

Oh shot a 218 for the tournament which placed him second overall on the leader board behind Keith Nolan of East Tennessee State who shot a 213.

Senior Gilberto Morales contributed to the victory, finishing in a tie for ninth place with a three-day 224, while senior Mike Ruiz carded a three-day 227, good enough for 18th place.

Other Rebel final results include Bill Lunde with a 230 and Mike Vance with a 238.

Fifteen of the nation's top golf programs participated in the tournament, which is equivalent to basketball's pre-season National Invitational Tournament.

The Rebels did beat more than the field of other golfers. They also overcame very cold and windy weather conditions.

According to Knight, the high temperature on the first two days was 52 degrees and the wind chill was in the 30's.

"Those are tough conditions to be thrown into," Knight said. "I'm glad we battled the conditions and hung in there for the win."

The team will take the greens again on Oct. 21-22 at the Jerry Pate Invitational at Shoal Creek Alabama.

"Most of the top 12 teams in the country will be at the (JPI)," Knight said. "It will be a terrific test. It will give us more work in preparation for our National Championship hunt."

Rebel of the Week



#9 Meri-de Boyer
setter/outside hitter

Accomplishments:

Boyer led UNLV's volleyball team to a four-game victory over the Air Force Academy on Saturday, netting her fourth triple-double of the season. She had 12 kills, 31 assists and 15 digs.

Rebels take two-match Winning streak to Bay Area

By Michael Melissa
Staff Sports Writer

It will be a first of sorts for the Rebels when they face Fresno State Thursday.

For the first time this season UNLV's volleyball team will be heading into a match with a winning streak. Albeit just a two-match streak, it is still a milestone for the revamped program.

The Rebels (4-8 overall, 2-0 in conference play) took down the Air Force Academy on Saturday, 9-15, 15-6, 15-9 and 15-1 for their sec-

ond straight victory. They have won three of their last four and have won their first two Western Athletic Conference battles.

The Bulldogs are 2-2 in WAC play this season (13-4 overall) and could prove to be a test for the Rebels who have not defeated a team with a record exceeding .500.

Fresno State is coming off its first two WAC wins of the season against Wyoming and Colorado State. Last season the Bulldogs finished fifth in the conference with a 6-8 record, but overall were 23-12. The Rebels will then head up to

San Jose St. on Friday. The Spartans are 4-11 on the year and are looking for their first WAC win of the season (0-4).

Probable starters for the Rebels this weekend include Meri-de Boyer, Christy Clark, Christel Eves and Amy Ellenwood. Boyer leads the Rebels in both digs (124) and assists (252). Clark is second on the Rebels in kills (98), assists (169) and digs (119).

The Rebels will be back home on Oct. 18 to face top-ranked Hawaii, followed by San Diego State on Oct. 19.