

Setting it up for UNLV volleyball

Meri-de Boyer only Rebel with Division I experience

By Michael Melissa
Staff Sports Writer

With 12 kids in her family, Meri-de Boyer found there was no reason to be a leader.

However, being the lone Rebel with Division I-A experience on the brand-new volleyball squad, Boyer has been accepted as the team captain and is doing well in that role.

"(Becoming captain) has been a fairly easy adjustment," Boyer said. "It was different at UCSB because I always had to follow everybody else's rules. Now I get to make up the rules and there's times where I don't know how to make the other players do what I want."

She currently leads the squad in assists and digs, and ranks in the top five on the team with kills.

"Her experience is the biggest asset she brings to this team," said Head Coach Deitre Collins, who recruited Boyer last year. "Having played one year at the Division-I(A) level has really helped this squad. Coming from a volleyball family has also made her more competitive on the court, which helps us out."

Boyer is the youngest child among seven brothers and four sisters and knows what it takes to be successful in this sport. Three of her sisters were All-Americans in college, Amy played at UCLA and San Diego, Ann played for UCLA



Photo: Gregg Benson
Team Captain Meri-de Boyer

and Cheri played for the University of Hawai'i. Both Amy and Ann went on to play in the four-man pro beach circuit and Ann also played on the U.S. National Team.

To say that Meri-de was always around volleyball would be an understatement.

"I grew up with it and started when I was five years old and have always been competitive," Boyer explained. "My sisters were my biggest influences in volleyball. I traveled to games with them and learned a lot things from them."

Collins, while forming her team last year, was notified by University of Hawai'i Coach Dave Shoji about Boyer, who was rumored to be leaving UC Santa Barbara. At that time Boyer was playing in only a handful of games.

"(Shoji) said that I was really good and he couldn't understand why Coach (Kathy) Gregory treated me the way she did," Boyer said.

In 1995 she appeared in 19

matches, playing in 25 games. As a freshman last season, Boyer ranked second on team in assists with 108 and had 13 kills in 34 attempts. The Gauchos advanced to the NCAA Tournament, finishing up the year with a 26-9 record and a No. 12 ranking by *Volleyball Magazine*.

But the problems between Boyer and Gregory didn't stem from a lack of playing time nor work ethic. They went much deeper.

"I didn't get along with the coach there and she wasn't training me the way I wanted to be trained," Boyer said. "There was a lot of opportunity there but the things she was telling me, like that I didn't have a future in volleyball. Then, when I decided to transfer to UNLV last spring, (Gregory) called me to say that I was doing better."

"I just got tired of the mind games," Boyer continued. "She never gave me any confidence. Deitre and Ruben (Herrera, assistant coach) have been great and

that's what I like about this program."

Although Boyer is enjoying her first season at UNLV, she finds it hard adjusting to a team that is 4-14 and virtually new to each other. Last season she was playing in the NCAA tournament and has always been on winning teams.

For Poway (Calif.) high school, Boyer helped the Titans capture the California Interscholastic Federation-San Diego section Division I championship as a junior. She lettered in volleyball and swimming three straight years.

"It's tough," Boyer explained. "Usually you have some seniors to follow and learn from. It's different with a new team, though. Everybody doesn't know each other and we've had problems with the team unity and team bonding. Maybe once we do some activities as a team then we'll get the team chemistry going."

There is more to it than just getting the chemistry going, though, and Boyer is acutely aware of that, which is where she believes

her assets to this team fall in. Since she has the experience many of her teammates lack and she knows what it takes to win matches, Boyer tries to reflect that to everyone else on the squad.

"I can lead the team mentally because many of the players don't really know what it takes yet," Boyer said. "As far as my weaknesses, I have to improve with a younger team and that is hard to do. I also have to push myself more and work harder."

Boyer is looking to continue where her sisters left off by playing pro beach volleyball. Unfortunately, in Las Vegas, beach volleyball is not a big sport and, as Meri-de said, unless they start putting courts out at Lake Mead, it will be hard to work on that style of game.

However, right now, it looks like Boyer is hoping to just help the young Rebels to keep focused on the match at hand and play hard, something she learned from her sisters.

Lady Rebels hope to rebound

Staff Report

There wasn't too much excitement coming from the South Gym last year during women's basketball season.

The Lady Rebels had a horrible year, winning only four games. Outside distractions centering around former Head Coach Jim Bolla made the games look like a side show.

With a roster of seven or fewer players for a majority of the season, the Rebels finished last in the Big West Conference.

What a difference a year can make.

Now under the guidance of new Head Coach LaDonna McClain, the Lady Rebels are set to rise from the the women's basketball cellar and excite fans with their high tempo style of play in the process.

Coach McClain had a chance to discuss the 1996-97 campaign with *The Rebel Yell*.

Q- As the new coach, what do you hope to bring to the team?

A- "To put a team on the floor that the school and community can be proud of. Also to put a team out there that is fun to watch."

Q- How do you plan to get the team morale up after only winning four games this past season?

A- "That is always difficult for new and old coaches. But there are a lot of positives for UNLV and the women's basketball program. I've seen a significant turnaround in the team's attitude and morale. I'm very pleased."

Q- Who will be some of the players to lead the team?


A- "A mix of the old and the new will learn together. Right now there's 13 to 14 kids out there. We have significant depth, especially in the post."

Q- What can the fans expect to see from the team?

A- "(We) hope to see a team that works hard, runs the ball up and down the floor and plays hard defense."

Q- What are the goals of the team?

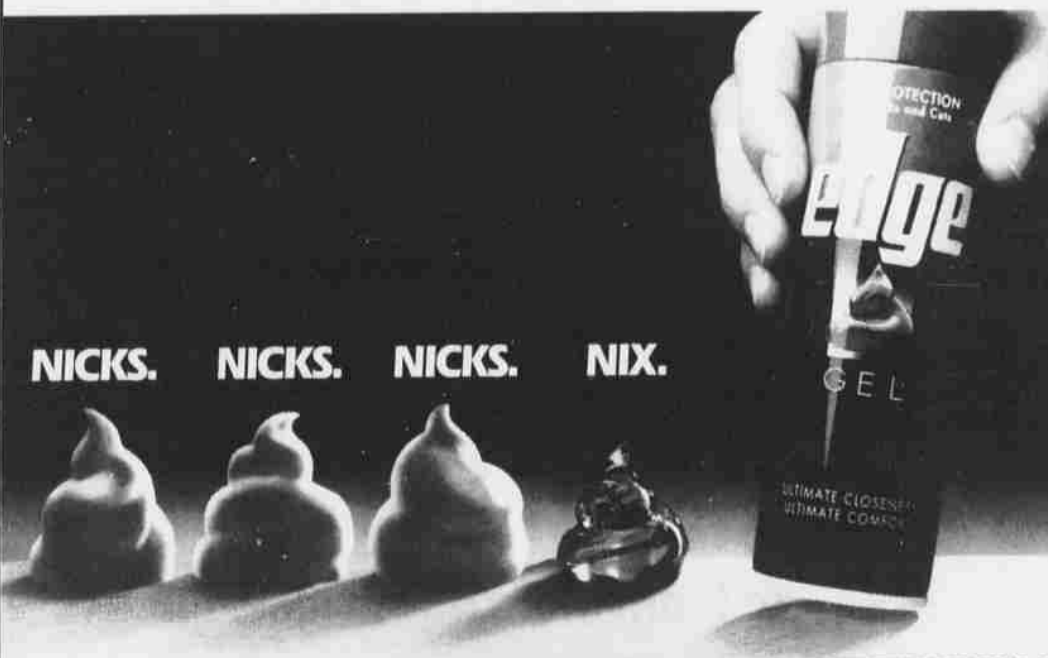
A- "To go out every night we play and get better. The main focus is to be prepared to compete in the WAC."



EDGE SALUTES MEN'S INTRAMURAL EXCELLENCE

Men's Flag Football Team Standings

| TEAM | W | L | TEAM | W | L |
|---------------------|---|---|-----------------------|---|---|
| Kappa Sigma | 2 | 0 | Mike | 2 | 0 |
| Sigma Alpha Epsilon | 2 | 0 | East Coast Connection | 2 | 0 |
| Alpha Epsilon Pi | 1 | 1 | Bubba Gumps | 1 | 1 |
| Pi Kappa Alpha | 1 | 1 | Primordial Soup | 1 | 1 |
| Alpha Tau Omega | 0 | 2 | Wildcats | 0 | 2 |
| Phi Delta Theta | 0 | 2 | Hawaiians | 0 | 2 |
| Lambda Chi | 2 | 0 | Prime Time | 2 | 0 |
| Sigma Chi | 1 | 0 | We Like to Score! | 1 | 1 |
| Beta Theta Pi | 1 | 1 | Blazers | 1 | 1 |
| Delta Sigma Phi | 0 | 1 | DEX | 0 | 1 |
| Tau Kappa Epsilon | 0 | 2 | Sigma Alpha Mu | 0 | 1 |
| Ole Bones | 2 | 0 | Hawaii Pono | 2 | 0 |
| Stop Jockin | 1 | 0 | Soda Cans | 1 | 1 |
| Mustangs | 1 | 0 | Bete Ete | 1 | 1 |
| Straight Lowded | 0 | 2 | Land Sharks | 0 | 1 |
| Get Some | 0 | 2 | Crunch Time | 0 | 1 |



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