

SPORTS

Rebels

That old adage of "hard work and perseverance pays off" held true once again this week as UNLV's Hustlin' Rebel Baseball team received word that they have been invited to the 1978 NCAA baseball playoffs.

In a phone call from selection committee chairman Lou Spry on Monday, the Hustlin' Rebels were informed of the invitation, and were told that they would learn the site of their first-round action on Monday, May 22.

First-round action begins Friday, May 26, and wraps up Monday, May 29. The eight double-elimination tournaments -- with a total of 32 teams -- will be narrowed down to just eight representatives which will compete in the College World Series in Omaha, Neb., June 2-9.

The post-season play will be the first in UNLV's baseball history. The Hustlin' Rebels completed the 1978 regular season with a 43-18 record and an 18th-place ranking by Collegiate Baseball, the Bible of college baseball.

Weather the Hustlin' Rebels would be given a berth was never seriously in doubt. Since April 1 -- the date the Hustlin' Rebels firmly jelled into a team -- they have won 25 of their last 30 games, including one stretch of 10 consecutive wins which ties a school record.

Junior All-America candidate Mike Guerra

won the regular season batting title with a .371 average. He also led the team in home runs (9) and was second in RBIs (44). His .994 fielding percentage at first base leads the squad among regular players.

Vance McHenry, UNLV's second All-America choice at second base, finished the regular season with a healthy .360 average and a team-leading 77 hits. He and Guerra tied for the team lead in bases-on-balls with 36. McHenry was also the pivot man in UNLV's record-breaking double play season.

Other regulars finished the 1978 season: centerfielder Mike Randolph, .347, team-leading 26 steals; designated-hitter Ray Perry, .317, team-leading 45 RBIs; third baseman Bill Max, .308; catcher Gary White, .293; rightfielder Joe Gemma, .268; leftfielder Mike Slavenski, .263 team-leading 243 at-bats, 59 runs-scored, six triples; and shortstop Marco Herrera, .263.

Remaining position players and their averages: outfielder Warren Bernard, .500 (1-2); first baseman Bill Nader, .371 (10-27); outfielder Allen Levine, .365 (19-52); shortstop Dave Kinsel, .353 (24-68); third baseman Val Mayden, .291 (37-127); Sergio Merigo, .207 (6-29); and Jim Herron, .000 (0-10).

All-America candidate Herb Pryor, the 26-year-old lefthander, tops not only the UNLV pitching staff in most departments this season; he is also at the top or near it in many national categories. Pryor currently owns a 14-3 record with a 2.41 ERA. He has pitched

a phenomenal 141 2/3 innings this season, striking out 103 and walking only 36. He has started 16 games, and complete 12.

Behind Pryor comes Academic All-America candidate Dan Fischer with a 10-5 record and 3.25 ERA. He has pitched in 20 games this season, starting 16 and completing six. He has pitched a total of 133 innings and leads the team in strikeouts with 115, versus 51 walks.

Kirk Jones, another starter, has racked up a 7-3 record and 4.12 ERA. He, too, has pitched over 100 innings this season (107) and has struck out 72 and walked 38. Jones also has three of the Hustlin' Rebels 8 saves this season.

The owner of four of the remaining five is UNLV's fourth starter, Mark Jamison. In addition to his four saves, twice as many as the opponents had all season, Jamison has compiled a respectable 6-3 record and even more respectable 3.04 ERA.

Other Hustlin' Rebel pitchers this season with their records and ERA: Jeff Harper, 0-0, 0.00 (2 innings pitched); Richie Davis, 1-2, 2.40 (15); Mark Bloomfield, 3-2, 3.37 (18 2/3); Scott Brazil, 0-0, 3.86 (7); and Mike Munns, 0-0, 7.81 (27 2/3).

UNLV finished the regular season with a hearty .311 team batting average and stingy 3.39 staff ERA. The team fielding percentage stands at .957, one of the best in the country.

In the world of Hustlin' Rebel baseball miscellany, Ray Perry leads the team in game-winning RBIs with seven. Against right-handed pitching this season, the Hustlin' Rebels are 30-13; while against lefthanders the Hustlin' Rebels are 11-5.

UNLV is 10-8 in one-run games this season and has never been shutout this season. The Hustlin' Rebels have also won two of three extra-inning contests, and own an 8-1-6 (.733) record in doubleheaders. They also won two of three extra-inning contests, and own an 8-1-6 (.733) record in doubleheaders. They also swept a tripleheader from the U.S. Air Force Academy the first weekend in April.

The Hustlin' Rebels, which have played 30 games against top-ranked teams this year, won two of three games in a season-ending series against state rival University of Nevada, Reno, last weekend.

They won the Friday opener, 6-2, and the first game of a Saturday twinbill, 4-3, before dropping the final game of the set, and final game of the regular season, 7-5, in a hard-fought contest.

According to NCAA statistical regulations, all statistics accrued as a result of playoff action will be included with regular-season statistics.

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