

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ S ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ P ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ O ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ T ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ S ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Hustlin' Rebels

With a thousand pardons to the crowned clown of comedy, Jackie Gleason, what better way to herald the opening of the 1979 UNLV Hustlin' Rebel baseball season than with those four famous words.

Fresh from a best ever 44-20 mark and a final 23rd-place ranking by Collegiate Baseball in 1978, the Hustlin' Rebels have opened spring practice and are in the process of readying themselves for the longest season in the school's history, 71 regular season games, not including the possibility of the playoffs and the College World Series, June 1-8, in Omaha, Neb.

The Hustlin' Rebels appear improved in virtually every phase of their game this year, despite the heartfelt loss of such talented, stand-out performers as All-District Seven Herb Pryor Vance McHenry, Mike Slavenski, Mike Randolph and Mike Guerra. In many respects, it is a new crop of individuals which UNLV skipper Fred Dallimore, currently in his sixth season, will have to work into the Hustlin' Rebels' very valuable "team concept."

Only 11 of the 27 rostered players for the 1979 schedule are returnees, and only two played on an everyday basis. Rightfielder Joe Gemma (5-10, 163, SR) and catcher designated hitter Ray Perry (5-9, 184, JR) must shoulder the responsibility of team leadership, along with a few others, this season and help direct the Hustlin' Rebels to their second straight post-season playoff berth. Gemma batted .287 last season, while Perry hit .322 and drove in a team-high 47 runs-batted-in.

Sophomore Bill Max (6-2, 195, .309) appears to have a tight lock on third base duties to start the season, while junior Gary White (6-0, 186, .297) will be battling Perry for starting catching assignments. Bill Nader (6-1, 184, SO), with a .345 average in limited action last season, will be out to snatch up the first base position left vacant when Guerra opted for the professional ranks. Not counting a newcomer, the fight at shortstop should be a dogfight once again this season. Both Marco Herrera (6-, 170, SO) and Dave Kinsel (5-11 1/2, 165, SO) return -- Herrera hit .273 last season, while Kinsel batted .356 before breaking his leg 17 games into the season.

Two starting pitchers and two relievers will return to the mound for Dallimore in 1979. A pair of seniors, Dan Fischer and Kirk Jones, will headline the starting corps this coming season, just as they did during '78. Fischer (6-3, 174), the hard-throwing Academic All-America (second team) recorded a 10-6 mark last season, with a 3.76 earned-run average. Jones (6-1, 180), was 8-3, including two wins over perennial powerhouse Arizona State, and finished with a 4.28 ERA. Sophomore Mark Bloomfield (6-0 1/2, 157, 3-2, 3.37 ERA), who bolted out to three quick relief wins in the first four games of the year last season, will bolster the bullpen as will fellow sophomore Richie Davis (6-1, 206), who was 1-2 with a 4.91 ERA. Fischer and Jones are both righthanders, while Bloomfield and Davis are lefties.

Topping the list of pitching recruits in 1979 is junior college All-America Tom Sauer (6-2, 190, JR). The righthander from St. Louis Community College at Meramec posted an astonishing 13-0 record with a 1.30 ERA. Also coming from Meramec to help with Hustlin' Rebel pitching is lefthander Stan Hawkins (6-1, 175, JR), who compiled a 5-1 mark and 2.64 ERA in 11 games. Junior Don Sutherland (6-2, 157), a righthander, notched an 8-1 record and 1.21 ERA for Barstow Community College last season. Ken Elsee (6-0, 182, SO) was 4-1 with a 2.49 ERA as a righthander for Long Beach City College last year. Sophomore Jeff Wolff (6-1, 161), after redshirting last season, is ready to pick up where he left off as a freshman righthander for California Lutheran College with a 3-1 mark and 2.12 ERA. Steve Meatovich (6-4, 185) is the

only freshman addition to what should prove to be a very tough UNLV pitching staff.

Two newcomers, freshmen Frank De Santis and David Saul, will battle both Perry and White for catching duties. De Santis (5-11, 187) is a definite long-ball threat, who can also play the outfield, while Saul (5-10, 185) possesses the ability to spray the ball to all fields. Both are capable receivers.

Going head-to-head-to-head with Herrera and Kinsel for the starting shortstop role is Meramec transfer Bobby Kerr. Kerr (5-8, 140, JR), however, is versatile enough to play any infield position. Barstow has also provided the Hustlin' Rebels with two talented infielders to go along with pitcher Sutherland: first baseman Ed Crow and second baseman Stan Chapter. Crow (6-0, 175, JR) is one of only two legitimate left-handed hitters on the roster this season, and he proved his ability by batting .363 last season. Chapter (5-8, 164, JR) hit .317 at Barstow in '78 and will be fighting Mr. San Jacinto Junior College transfer, Shawn Buckley (5-10, 158, SO) for the starting nod at second base. Buckley, a Las Vegas native, hit .289 for Mt. San Jacinto last season.

Four transfers will be fighting for the other two starting outfield positions, left open by the graduation of both Slavenski and Randolph. Two of them, Doug Smith and Dan Murphy, come from Meramec, which has proven to be a gold-mine find for Dallimore this year. Smith (6-0, 164, JR), a switch-hitter, hit at a .409 clip for the Warriors last season while his schoolmate, Murphy (6-0, 178, JR), the Hustlin' Rebels' other lefthander, fashioned a .386 average. Strangely enough, UNLV's other two outfielders come by way of Runnin' Rebel basketball. Bill Cunningham (6-4, 200, SO) has not played baseball for several years, but he was chosen all-conference both his junior and senior years of high school; a guard on the basketball court, Cunningham is a transfer from the University of Indiana where he played under the legendary Bobby Knight. Steve Burgess (6-4, 190, SR) has always had a hankering to play baseball, and in this his final collegiate season, opted to join the Hustlin' Rebels. He, too, has not played baseball since his high school days.

"It doesn't take a baseball genius to see that we have the makings of a great team this season," says Dallimore, with the same pride as that of a first-time father. "Up and down the roster we have not only talented personnel, but also ones which are dedicated to the program and can be best summed up as real class people.

"They are not afraid to put in the extra time and effort necessary to become a championship team. Take one look at our schedule, and you can see what we are demanding of our men."

Which brings us to our schedule for 1979. Patton had easier going against the Germans at Normandy.

There is no Arizona State nor a Southern California on the slate of 71 games this season, but the Hustlin' Rebels still will face one of their toughest challenges ever by season's end.

The season will open with an Alumni game this coming Saturday, Jan. 20, at 1 p.m. at Hustlin' Rebel Field, and then UNLV will play seven practice games before the 71 counters begin. The schedule for the practice games find the Hustlin' Rebels facing Barstow in three seven-inning contests starting at 10 a.m. on Sunday, Jan. 21. Then it will be Whittier College in town Jan. 26-28 for a 1:30 p.m. single, nine-inning game on Sunday. Saturday's action will start at 11 a.m., while the Sunday finale will be at 1:30 p.m.

Regular season play for the Hustlin' Rebels will begin Friday, Feb. 2, with a 2 p.m. single, nine-inning game against California State University at Los Angeles. The three-game series will wrap up with an 11 a.m. doubleheader on Saturday, Feb. 3. From then on, it will be non-stop baseball for the Hustlin' Rebels.

Over one-third of the season, or a total of 27 games, will find the Hustlin' Rebels on the road. March 8-11, the Hustlin' Rebels will be in

southern California to take on California State University at Fullerton, Long Beach State University and Pepperdine University. UNLV will take to the road Mar. 21-24 in order to participate in the Fresno State University Invitational Baseball Tournament, a seven-game affair for the Hustlin' Rebels against the likes of Oregon State, Washington State, University of Wyoming, Pepperdine and host Fresno State.

The next roadtrip for UNLV will be Apr. 27-May 1 when the Hustlin' Rebels face University of New Mexico, University of Utah and Brigham Young University, all in one swing. The Hustlin' Rebels wrap up the regular season with nine games on the road, four against the University of Nevada, Reno and five against always-strong University of Hawaii. It is all being talked of in a hush-hush manner right now, but should both teams rack up respectable records, then the five-game series against the Rainbow Warriors at Honolulu may be the determining factor as to which of the two West Coast independents make it to the NCAA playoffs.

But before the Hustlin' Rebels can concern themselves with such a distant future, they must first concern themselves with the 44 home games which confront them. Among some of the powers coming to "the biggest playground in the world" include Brigham Young, University of California Irvine, Oklahoma State, Wichita State, Gonzaga, Kearney State College, University of Northern Colorado, U.S. Air Force Academy, Fresno State, California State University at Northridge, LA Verne College and Lamar University. Gonzaga, the baseball scourge of the Pacific Northwest defeated the Hustlin' Rebels twice last season, and finished second in the District 7 Rocky Mountain playoffs, losing only to Arizona State twice.

"We're going to have to be at our sharpest throughout the entire season," adds Dallimore, who is being assisted again this season by Jack Pryor and Dave Feinberg. The Hustlin' Rebels newest assistant is Rick Down, a nine-year veteran of professional baseball, including coaching in the Seattle Mariners organization.

"I know it is an awful lot to ask, but we're telling our guys right now that we must set a goal to win at least 50 of our regular season games. Of course, the ultimate goal is to make the playoffs and into the College World Series, but we feel by winning 50 games we will have proven ourselves worthy of an independent berth.

"The year 1978 was a great one for UNLV baseball, but we can't live on it forever. This is a new year, with a new schedule and new talent to combat it. We said last year that "we believe" but we must not have believed enough because we didn't make it to Omaha. So, we're saying "we believe" again in 1979, and with a little bit of luck, good fan support and the Lord's good graces we'll be able to say that 1979 was the greatest baseball year in UNLV history."



A storage battery does not store electricity, but chemicals which can create electricity.

**SUPPORT
THE BLACK COMMUNITY
NEWSPAPER**

**SUBSCRIBE TO
THE LAS VEGAS VOICE**

One Year \$12.50