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Badgers Plan to Give Rebels A New Look Gold Medal Winner Tillman, Return of Cordova, Sept. 24

The largest crowd in Silver Bowl history is expected for Saturday's UNLV-Wisconsin game and Rebel coach Wayne Nunnely says he could care less that about two-thirds of the fans will be Badgers rooters.

"It'll be good to see all those seats filled," Nunnely said of the anticipated SRO crowd of 32,000.

"There's sure going to be a lot of red in the stands. I'd rather they be UNLV fans than Wisconsin ones, but it's going to look like they're from UNLV if nothing else."

Rebel colors are scarlet and gray, Badger colors cardinal and white. Wisconsin has purchased 20,000 tickets and is turning the affair into a West Coast reunion and giant four-day bash.

Nunnely, of course, would like nothing better than to spoil the party come

Saturday night. The Badgers eked out a 26-23 come-from-behind victory in Madison last fall and UNLV has been panting for revenge ever since. The Rebel coaching staff already has viewed films of Wisconsin's 35-20 victory over Northern Illinois Saturday and Nunnely says the 1986 team very much resembles last year's Badgers.

"There weren't any surprises," he said. "The offense is basically the same. They run a lot of I-sweeps and have big people up front who knock you off the football. They have the same 5-2 (five down linemen) defense and same basic coverages. Really, it's the same type team we saw last year.

"They're just as good or better than last year and have mostly the same people. They had problems

with Hawaii (losing 20-17 in Honolulu), but Hawaii threw so much it wore down their pass rush in the third and fourth quarters. They got a little winded by that last quarter. Hawaii passed 50-odd times and that takes a toll on those big linemen trying to rush the quarterback."

Nunnely also said the long trip from the mainland to the Islands and Hawaii's laidback lifestyle might have affected the Badgers, now 1-1 on the season.

"It's a long flight and you have the time changes," he said. "I've been there three times and I've tried going on Thursday to get acclimated, I've gone early on Friday and I've also gone late on Friday. There's no way around it. Once you get there the atmosphere is just so pleasant and beautiful, you feel like you're on vacation."

Las Vegas is also a tourist destination and Nunnely naturally hopes the excitement of the city rubs off on the Badgers a little bit. Wisconsin will arrive Friday afternoon and headquarter at Tropicana Hotel.

"If I was a coach coming in here, I'd stay as far away from the Strip as possible," Nunnely said. "Some place like the Nevada Palace out on Boulder Highway. When I was with Fullerton and we came here, that's where we stayed. There's still gambling, but the kids can't take off and walk anywhere, so you have more control. The trip here isn't as long or hard as the one to Hawaii and you don't go through as many time changes, but there are still distractions."

Nunnely believes the Rebels, 1-1 after last weekend's 51-14 thumping of Division II Portland State,

Olympic gold medalist Henry Tillman, the return of brawler Tommy Cordova and will have to contain Wisconsin's running game if they hope to win.

"They have good physical size offensively," he said. "They're like Washington State (a 34-14 victor over UNLV in the Rebel's Sept. 6 season opener) and go after you with the run. If we can contain their run, the question becomes how well can they throw.

"They don't create a lot of problems for our offense with their defensive schemes. Our offense matches up pretty well physically with their defense. We just have to execute like we did last year and keep our offense balanced. I think we're a better team than we were a year ago."

world-ranked Irleis "Cubanito" Perez of Las Vegas highlight a unique triple main event offering on the monthly ESPN card Wednesday, Sept. 24, at the Showboat Hotel, Casino, Country Club and Bowling Center.

Tillman, who's a world-rated cruiserweight, meets Oscar Holman in a heavyweight bout; Cordova, who's fighting in Las Vegas for the first time this year, faces highly regarded prospect Andy Minsker in a junior lightweight fight; and Perez, who's most recent outing was a close and controversial 15-round split decision loss to International Federation lightweight champion Jimmy Paul, takes on Ford Jennings in a junior welterweight clash. All fights are 10 rounds.

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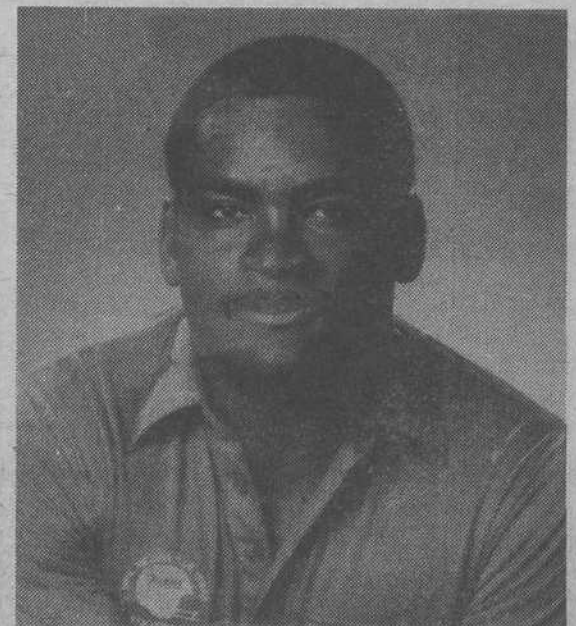
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