

SPORTS

RIDER RECEIVES ACCOLADES ALL-AROUND

REBELS GET PAST A&M IN OT; NOW PREPARE FOR GEORGETOWN



BIG WEST & ESPN PIZZA HUT PLAYER OF THE WEEK
J.R. RIDER

By W.G. Ramirez

Just hours after ESPN basketball analyst Dick Vitale named him "Pizza Hut Player of the Week," during halftime of the Indiana-Purdue game, J.R. Rider proved his worth to UNLV, exploding for 26 second-half points, helping the Rebels to a 98-96 overtime victory against the feisty Aggies of Texas A&M.

"I thought this was a real character game," UNLV Head Coach Rollie Massimino said. "I thought it was really a team effort. (Texas A&M) is an extremely well coached team. Tony Barone is one of the best young coaches around."

Rider, who in the past week has also been named, by the Sentinel-Voice as UNLV's Male African-American Athlete of the Year, and Big West Conference Player of the Week, finished the game with 38 points, raising his average to 34.5 points per game in his past four outings.

Trailing by as much as 15 points in the second half, UNLV used furious runs of 14-3 and 21-10 to erase A&M's lead. Rider canned a three-pointer with 3:48 left to play, putting UNLV up 73-71. It was only the second time during the game that UNLV held the lead.

Aggie guard David Edwards put A&M back on top by sinking two free throws, after forward Damon Johnson tied the score at 73-73. The Aggies continued to roll inside three minutes, going up by as much as six with 1:39 left. That is when Rider went to work.

The 6-5 forward sandwiched two three-pointers around an Aggie free throw by Johnson to pull UNLV within one. UNLV guard Dedan Thomas sent Edwards, who ended up with 26 points in a losing cause, to the free throw line, which resulted in a 83-81 lead for Texas A&M.

The Rebels put the ball into play with :16 seconds remaining, and passed the ball around the key in hopes of an opening anywhere. After successive traveling calls on both teams, Thomas drove from the top of the key, with 6.1 seconds remaining and found Ken Gibson underneath with 4.5 seconds left as he was fouled by Aggie guard Tony McGinnis. Sharp-shooting Gibson became the hero as he tied the game at 83-83, by canning both free throws.

"What I was thinking, is if I had missed, we lost the game," Gibson said.

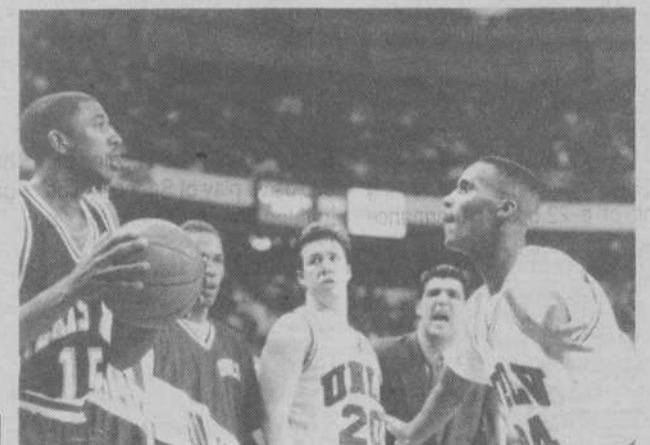
A desperation air ball at the buzzer was tipped-in but ruled no good after the referees conferred at mid-court.

"I thought it was (good), but I don't know," Coach Barone said.



PULLING TOGETHER-The Rebels continuously pulled together Tuesday night to stage their comeback over Texas A&M. Trailing by as much as 15 points in the second half, UNLV used furious runs of 14-3 and 21-10 to erase A&M's lead.

Photo By Savoy-LVS-Voice



SUPPORTING CAST - Dexter Boney contributed in many ways against Texas A&M. He had 18 points, 6 rebounds and had 3 steals.

Photo By Savoy-LVS-Voice

"My complaint was that he didn't make the call right away. That's bull—when you have to consult with nine guys to make the call. If he thought it wasn't good, call it right away."

UNLV guard Dexter Boney keyed the Rebels overtime attack, pouring in eight points, a three-pointer - a two pointer - and 3 free throws, in the final 1:36 of overtime as the Rebels escaped with the W.

Boney finished the game with 18 points, while Thomas dished out 14 assists. Guard Reggie Manuel added 16 to the cause.

Amongst the 11,386 in attendance, were Minnesota Timberwolves scouts Stan Novak and Dick McGuire and Georgetown scout Daryl Shambourger.

Head Coach John Thompson will bring his talented 18th-ranked Hoya squad, (11-2), into town for a nationally televised game on CBS. It will mark a reunion for Coach Mass and Thompson, who have always met for conference games in the Big East when Massimino was at Villanova. Last season the two coaches met twice, both coming away with a victory.

Although the Hoyas lost three starters after last season, they
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