

BLACK STUDENT-ATHLETES PLAY PROMINENT ROLE AT UNLV

Special to the Las Vegas Sentinel-Voice
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Throughout the history of athletics at UNLV, Black student-athletes have made tremendous contributions to all of the varsity sports on campus. They have achieved great success both on the field of competition and in the community. In observance of Black History Month, this will be an informative look at several of the outstanding Black student-athletes who have brought national recognition to the university.

Athletics began at UNLV on December 5, 1958 when the former Southern Branch of the University of Nevada played the College of Southern Utah in men's basketball. It is doubtful that many people felt that basketball would ever succeed at UNLV with that year's 5-13 team.

Basketball, however, became perhaps the most popular forum in which countless Black athletes would earn national acclaim at UNLV. From Silas Stepp, UNLV's first All-American, and Elbert Miller, who played from 1966-68 and still holds the school's all-time career scoring average (29.3 points per game) as well as several other marks, to modern household names such as Larry Johnson, Stacey Augmon and Greg Anthony, who were responsible for UNLV's 1990 National Championship and now grace the National Basketball Association, Black athletes have built a tremendous legacy on the hardwood.

That great basketball tradition is in no way limited to the men.

Women's basketball made its debut at UNLV in 1974 and through the efforts of former Lady Rebel greats such as Debra Waddy, who played from 1975-77 and still holds several school records; Geannie and Pauline Jordan, the only set of twins to ever don a Lady Rebel uniform and who led UNLV to three post-season appearances; and current Lady Rebel Teresa Jackson, an All-American candidate who is also one of the top scholar-athletes to ever play at UNLV, Black athletes have helped establish a national power in women's basketball as well.

Black athletes have had major impacts on other sports at UNLV.

From the gridiron, which produced legends such as Mike Thomas, the 1975 National Football League Rookie of the Year; Randall Cunningham, currently one of the most prolific players in the NFL; and Ickey Woods, who led the Cincinnati Bengals to the 1988 Super Bowl; to track and field, where former Sprintin' Lady Rebel greats Trevia Williams, Billie Butler and Shunta Rose led a group of six UNLV tracksters to the 1992 Summer Olympic trials, Black athletes have excelled in collegiate competition.

Other Black athletes such as Carmieele Nix, one of the top sprinters in the history of UNLV swimming; Robert Vinson, who is among career victory leaders in Rebel tennis; Daniel Barber, an All-American in soccer; and Christine Parris, one of the top hitters in Lady Rebel softball history; have brought prominence to UNLV's Olympic sports.

A glance at the 1992-93 athletic teams at UNLV reveals several Black athletes are among the stars of their respective teams.

J.R. Rider and Teresa Jackson, the 1992-93 Las Vegas Sentinel-Voice UNLV African-American Athletes of the Year, have brought immense publicity to UNLV's nationally-ranked basketball programs.

Henry Bailey, who set UNLV's single-season all-purpose yardage record last season, is considered to be among the top football players in the West.

Fred Chew is currently one of the top players on UNLV's nationally-ranked golf team.

Crystal Irving, a returning All-American, is one of the top collegiate track and field athletes in the country and will compete internationally this summer.

Rodney Mazion and Demond Thompkins, who double as Rebel football players in the fall, are considered to be potential draft picks in next year's Major League Baseball draft.

In summary, Black student-athletes have made tremendous contributions to athletics at UNLV and will continue to do so in the future.

IN OBSERVANCE OF BLACK HISTORY MONTH



Photo: 1990-91 UNLV Media Guide

In 1990, Larry Johnson, Greg Anthony and Stacey Augmon helped lead the Runnin' Rebels to the NCAA Championship over Duke, 103-73. The three standouts led the 1990-91 squad to a second straight Final Four appearance and a possible back-to-back National Championship, the first since 1973 when UCLA captured its seventh straight title. UNLV fell short in the National Semi-Finals to Duke 79-77. All three currently play in the NBA - Johnson with the Charlotte Hornets; Anthony, out of Las Vegas' Rancho High School, plays for the New York Knicks; and, Augmon adds a defensive delight to the Atlanta Hawks' lineup.

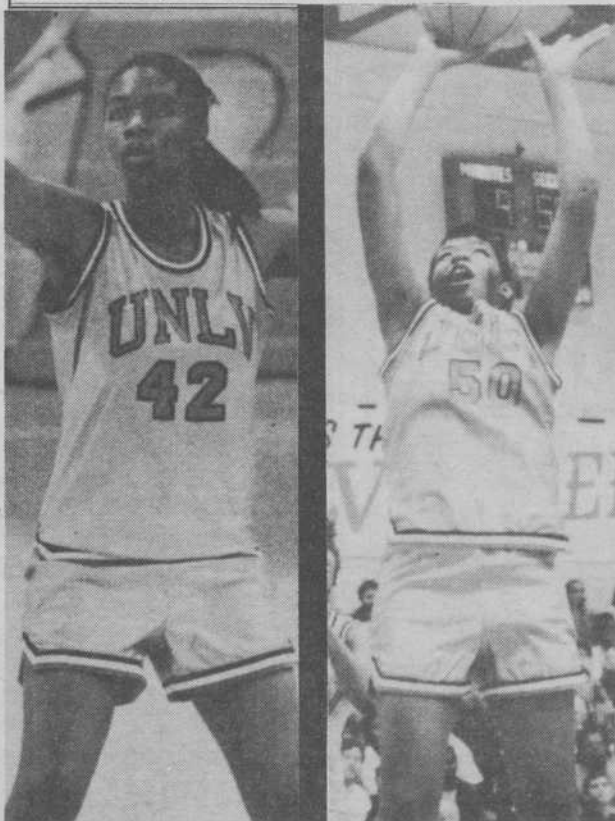
←While leading the UNLV Rebels to a California Bowl victory 30-13 over Toledo in 1984, QB Randall Cunningham became only the third NCAA quarterback behind Doug Flutie and John Elway to pass for more than 2500 yards in three consecutive seasons.

Photo: UNLV Sports Information File Photo



Geannie and Pauline Jordan led UNLV to three post-season appearances while becoming the first set of twins to ever don a Lady Rebels uniform.

Photo: UNLV Sports Information File Photo



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