

Horton's Staff Proving Its Worth

W.G. Ramirez

After four wretched seasons under Jim Strong, it seems that UNLV football is finally headed in the right direction under the guidance of Head Coach Jeff Horton.

Although Strong's 1992 team posted its first winning season since 1986, UNLV hasn't exactly had a quality program in nearly a decade. Then-Head Coach Harvey Hyde was guiding a team that was engineered on offense by Philadelphia Eagles quarterback Randall Cunningham.

In 1984, UNLV ran its record to 11-2, 7-0 in conference play, and brought home the California Bowl trophy. Because of the use of ineligible players, UNLV was

later forced to forfeit their games and their record was adjusted to 0-13. This still doesn't take away the fact that Hyde had his squad stitched into a family-knit program.

After Hyde, Wayne Nunnley took over for four seasons, and granted he was labeled as a 'great guy,' he just wasn't head coach material and couldn't get the job done. He did post a winning season his first year at the helm, but after that, Nunnley couldn't produce with names such as: Ickey Woods, George Thomas and Keenan McCardell. All three players were drafted into the NFL.

Strong's regime found its way down a rocky path, one that ended amidst plenty of dissen-

sion with his players, not to mention a bit of controversy to go along with it.

Now-a-days though, things are certainly different when it comes to UNLV football, especially if you factor in the possibility of a Las Vegas Bowl berth. The Rebels are at the midway point of their 1994 campaign and can be found atop the Big West standings.

After opening the season 1-2 against non-conference foes, the "Throwin' Rebels" have reeled off two straight road victories against defending conference champion Utah State and New Mexico State, a team that most thought would be contending for the conference title this year.

Horton brought eight Reno

assistants with him, joining just one coach that remains from Strong's staff - O'Neill Gilbert. He isn't one to take all the credit, and he is a strong believer that "assistants are a reflection of the head coach." So far, UNLV football has had bright spots in several areas, and all of them can be attributed to each individual position coach.

The past two games have seen the defense really step up their game, and virtually put both victories in UNLV's pocket. With just :33 seconds remaining against New Mexico State, it was a fourth-down defensive stand by UNLV Defensive Coordinator Stan Eggen's "Big D," that won the game for the Rebels. Defensive Back Coach Randy Stewart works hands-on with cornerback Marvin Robinson, the player that made the fourth-down stop for the Rebs against NMSU. A well-seasoned linebacker crew is conducted by Eggen and Greg Lees. In a tough loss to Idaho, receiver Randy Gatewood broke two NCAA records for receptions and yards in one-game. Gatewood is the star pupil of Receivers Coach Brian White. UNLV is fortunate to have the services of

two quality quarterbacks in Jason Davis and Jared Brown, and it is Offensive Coordinator and Quarterbacks Coach Steve Hagen that makes sure of this at all times. Tom Nordquist has taken reserve quarterback David White and molded him into a tight end, a move that Coach Horton thinks will enhance the nation's fifth-ranked passing game. Working very close to the running backs is Coach Joe Saunders. Horton's offensive attack is based on a strong passing game but if something goes wrong, it'll be the backfield that will need to pick up the slack. Saunders has the services of Omar Love and Henry Bailey.

Assistant Head Coach Mark Weber and Defensive Line Coach O'Neill Gilbert have taken it upon themselves to enforce the Breakfast Club, a disciplinary coterie for any players that may slip in their study habits. If any player misses a study hall, or slacks off in his school work, an automatic invitation to Rebel Park at 6:00 a.m. for one week is given in return. Gilbert and Weber put the players through drills for one straight hour, then put their noses in the books for another hour.

"Those are the guys that day in and day out install the game plan," says Horton. "I think we have the best staff in the country and I dare someone to say different."

Although Head Coach proceeds Horton's name in most instances, there is more to him than just that. When you ask any of the players about Horton, they'll praise him in many aspects, rather than just as a coach.

The UNLV coaching staff have put such a strong emphasis on education for their players, and according to Horton, he wants his "student-athletes to be the best people they can be and to contribute to the community." When Horton did arrive on the scene, he assured Las Vegas that excitement would return to UNLV football.

"I promised when I came here that we'd be exciting. I didn't say how many games we'd win, but I think we've done those things. People need to get out on Saturday night and see the product that we have on the field and really get behind the players."

UNLV continues its drive towards the Conference title this Saturday night at Sam Boyd Stadium against Louisiana Tech.

AFTER TWO BIG ROAD VICTORIES FOR UNLV, BIG CROWD ANTICIPATED FOR HOMECOMING

W.G. Ramirez

As Louisiana Tech rolls into town to face the UNLV Rebels this Saturday night, so does the midpoint of the season. And where exactly are the Rebs in the Big West standings?

After two solid defensive performances against Utah State and New Mexico State, UNLV is standing toe-to-toe with in-state rival Nevada for first place in the conference. Both squads are 2-0 with San Jose State on their heels with a 1-0 record. Pre-season favorite Southwestern Louisiana is 2-1 and will get a visit from cellar-dweller Arkansas State. Nevada hosts Pacific, while SJSU travels Pac-10 powerhouse Washington.

In the meantime, things are moving along quite smoothly over at Rebel Park, and according to Head Coach Jeff Horton, the ball is now in UNLV's hands. Hopefully though, they'll be no fumbles.

"We've really put ourselves into a position where really, I feel we control our own destiny," says Horton. "The chance to come home for homecoming, off two big wins. Hopefully we'll have a lot of people out there to watch us play. That'll get the kids more excited. I think that's one of the reasons we played well on the road, because both stadiums, in Las Cruces (New Mexico) and in Logan, Utah were packed. The crowd was wild and that really makes you play a lot better and we need that here at our own stadium."

UNLV opened the season at home and delighted 10,756 fans to a 17-3 victory over Eastern Michigan. The Rebels went on the road and suffered a 35-23 loss to Central Michigan and returned home for a matchup with Division 1-AA Idaho. Only

8,820 were on hand to witness receiver Randy Gatewood break the NCAA record for pass receptions and yardage in one game. That brought the season attendance total to 19,576, an average of just 9,788 fans or 30% of what the Sam Boyd Stadium can actually hold. Horton is hoping that the local support will increase after each victory. His ultimate goal is for a sellout crowd on November 19, when Nevada comes to town for what could be a matchup for the Big West title.

"It better be sold out long before then, I would think" states Horton. "If they get 22,000 in Logan and 23,000 in Las Cruces, there's no reason we can't get 30,000 here in Las Vegas."

REBEL NOTES: Gatewood is still leading the nation in receiving with 50 receptions and 746 yards. He is also leading the Big West and seventh in the nation in all-purpose yardage with 814 yards; Kicker Nick Garritano leads the conference and is tied for 11th in the nation

in field goals with nine; As a team, UNLV leads the conference and is fifth in the country in passing offense, averaging 314.0 yards per game; Engineering a great deal of UNLV's passing game is quarterback Jason Davis, the Big West's top

(See *Rebels*, Page 22)




THIS WEEK'S BEST BETS

NFL - Week #6



<p>D. Wayne Mauldin Race/Sports Book Supervisor Stardust Hotel and Casino S.F. 49 ERS -4' INDIANAPOLIS +5' L.A. RAIDERS +3 KANSAS CITY +1' DENVER +3'</p>	<p>Season Totals</p> <table style="margin: auto;"> <tr> <td>MAULDIN</td> <td>12-12-01 -- .500</td> </tr> <tr> <td>RAMIREZ</td> <td>14-11-00 -- .560</td> </tr> </table> <p>Last Week's Picks</p> <p>MAULDIN (3-2): Dallas -11, Arizona +2', Atlanta -1', S.F. 49ers -9, Cincinnati +8'</p> <p>RAMIREZ (2-3): Seattle -2', Green Bay +3, L.A. Rams +1', N.Y. Giants -2, Miami -8'</p>	MAULDIN	12-12-01 -- .500	RAMIREZ	14-11-00 -- .560	<p>W.G. Ramirez Sports Editor Las Vegas Sentinel-Voice ATLANTA -7' S.F. 49 ERS -4' INDIANAPOLIS +5' SEATTLE -3' WASHINGTON +13</p>
MAULDIN	12-12-01 -- .500					
RAMIREZ	14-11-00 -- .560					

NFL Week #6 - Sunday October 9, 1994
(Home Team in CAPS • Totals in parenthesis)
Line courtesy (at press time) of
The Stardust Race and Sports Book

ATLANTA -7' (41)	Tampa Bay
BUFFALO -2' (44)	Miami
CHICAGO -3' (37)	New Orleans
San Francisco -4' (44)	DETROIT
GREEN BAY -8' (35)	L.A. Rams
N.Y. JETS -5' (36')	Indianapolis
DALLAS -12' (37')	Arizona
NEW ENGLAND -3 (48)	L.A. Raiders
SAN DIEGO -1' (43)	Kansas City
SEATTLE -3' (44)	Denver
PHILADELPHIA -13 (42)	Washington
Monday October 10, 1994	
N.Y. GIANTS -2' (40)	Minnesota
(BYE Week: Denver, Kansas City, L.A. Raiders, San Diego)	

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THIS WEEK'S STARTING LINEUP

<p>Thursday October 6</p> <p>College - Kansas St. at Kansas - 5:45 p.m. (6:00 p.m. kickoff)</p> <p>Friday October 7</p> <p>IHL - San Diego @ L.V. Thunder - 6:45 p.m.</p> <p>Saturday October 8</p> <p>College - Texas @ Oklahoma - 11:30 a.m. (12:00 p.m. kickoff)</p> <p>IHL - L.V. Thunder @ Phoenix - 5:45 p.m.</p>	<p>★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★</p> <p>Sunday October 9</p> <p>NFL - S.F. 49ers @ Detroit - 10:00 a.m.</p> <p>NFL - Arizona @ Dallas - 1:00 p.m.</p> <p>NFL - Washington @ Philadelphia - 4:45 p.m. (5:00 p.m. kickoff)</p> <p>Monday October 10</p> <p>NFL - Minnesota @ New York Giants - 5:45 p.m. (6:00 p.m. kickoff)</p>
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