

Sports MONDAY

The Latest Line...

An occasional look at the sports world!

For the first time in five games, the St. Louis Cardinals' Mark McGwire did not hit a ball out of the park. At this rate he'll only have 123 home runs by the end of the year, and who are we to doubt that Big Mac can do it.

Michael Jordan scored his 29,000th career point Friday night, and, no, they didn't all come in one game vs. the Warriors.

Speaking of the woeful Warriors, when told of all the talent that has passed through the Golden State organization in the last five years, Head Coach P.J. Carlesimo strangled himself. Forward Joe Smith should be the latest all-star caliber player to be let go, leaving the Warriors with unproven talent and more ping pong balls than Forrest Gump would know what to do with.

The Los Angeles Dodgers got their first win of the season yesterday, prompting all players with less than two years left on their contracts to ask for contract renegotiations.

How's this for irony?: The National Champion Kentucky Wildcats, one of the last schools to integrate its basketball team, were coached by an African-American, Tubby Smith.

Best wishes to UCSB Athletic Director Gary Cunningham, who is recovering well from a mild heart attack suffered Friday afternoon. Everyone is pulling for you.

—Scott Hennessee and Steve Wendt

Gauchos Win Two of Three in Nevada

By STEVE WENDT
Staff Writer

Two out of three ain't bad.

The UCSB baseball team took two of three games from the University of Nevada last weekend in snowy Reno. The Gauchos and Wolf Pack scratched and clawed their way through three tight games with Santa Barbara knocking off Nevada Friday and Saturday before losing in a sloppily executed game Sunday afternoon.

UCSB held on for a 7-6 win Friday after staking itself to a 6-0 lead. The Gauchos got their first four runs in the fourth inning behind an onslaught of power hitting from Bryan LaCour and Justin Lehr. LaCour hammered a three-run blast, his fourth home run of the season, and Lehr's solo shot in the fourth marked the fifth time the rifle-armed catcher from West Covina has gone deep this year.

Santa Barbara (10-18-2 overall, 5-10 in the Big West) added to its lead in the fifth when junior Brad Wright doubled to drive home two runs.

Nevada (16-14, 4-5)



ALAN JACOBY / DAILY NEXUS

EASY PLAY: Second baseman Chad Peshke makes a play on a ground ball in a recent game. The freshman doubled and scored two runs in Sunday's loss to the Wolf Pack.

chipped at the UCSB lead until it finally tied the ball game at 6-6 in the seventh. But Wright, who had three hits and three RBIs, once again came through in the clutch for the Gauchos. He nailed a solo shot off starter James Brink (6-2) in the eighth to give UCSB a 7-6 lead it would not relinquish.

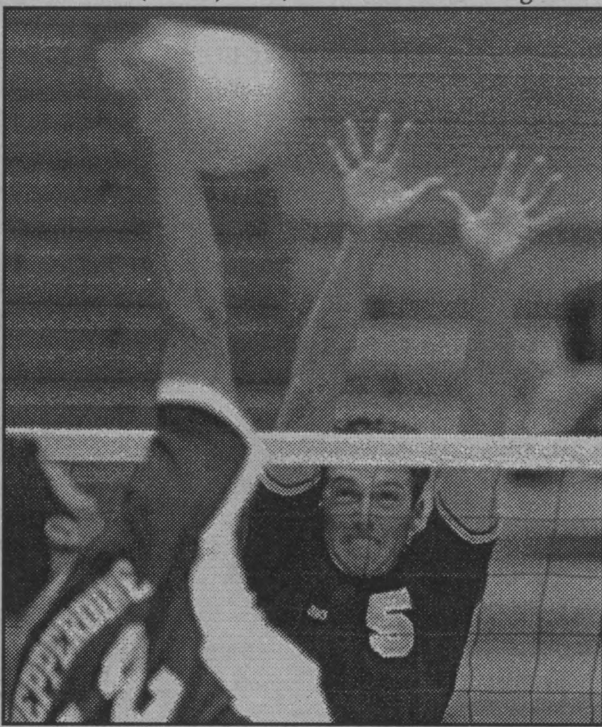
Freshman Bing Cain (2-3) picked up the win for Santa Barbara with some help from junior Daniel Martinez. The righty reliever pitched the final three innings to pick up his first save in a Gaucho uniform. UCSB Head Coach Bob Brontsema expressed pleasure with his team's ability to win the opener of the series. "We beat their ace," he

said. "[Brink has] real good stuff. This is a tough place to play."

Saturday's 10-7 victory proved to be a nail-biter for the Gauchos, that is, if they could bite their nails with their teeth chattering.

UCSB put together a two-out rally during a snow-

See BASE, p.3A



ALAN JACOBY / DAILY NEXUS

RENFREE'S GOT RISE: Senior setter Adam Renfree goes up for a block against Pepperdine on Saturday.

The UCSB women's water polo team won a pair of games last weekend, defeating San Diego State on Friday 8-7, and beating LBSU Saturday, 13-2. **See story Tuesday.**

The UCSB women's track and field team took second place at the Big West Challenge Cup Saturday. The men's track and field team finished third. **See story Tuesday.**

Volleyball Tames Lions, Shut-Out By Pepperdine

By SHANE CULBERTSON
Staff Writer

What a difference a day makes.

The UCSB men's volleyball team played brilliantly in a win against Loyola Marymount University on Friday before self-destructing against Pepperdine University in a losing effort Saturday.

Gaucha senior middle blocker Jeremy Darner explained that there isn't much of a mystery behind the outcome of this weekend's matches.

"We played really well against LMU and they played poorly," Darner said. "Conversely, Pepperdine played really well against us and we just couldn't put it together in that match."

Santa Barbara had one of its best hitting performances of the season against Loyola, posting a .508 hitting percentage. The Gauchos also outblocked the Lions 12 to two, en route to a three-set (15-9, 15-6, 15-7) victory.

"We did a really good job of spreading the ball around in the Loyola match," Darner said. "They really didn't put up much of a block and we took advantage of that."

"That was a huge win for us. We put ourselves in a pretty good position to make the playoffs by beating them."

Alika Williams led the Gauchos with a whopping .778 hitting percentage in the match, recording 15 kills. Sophomore Kevin Collins also turned in a stellar performance by tallying 18 kills while hitting at a .395 clip.

If beating LMU was "huge" for UCSB, a win over #2 Pepperdine would have been of titanic proportions. Unfortu-

See SPLIT, p.3A

Women's Basketball Gets Love

By BEN ALKALY
Staff Writer

The UCSB women's basketball team's recent NCAA Tournament run and season-long success has inspired an ever-growing legion of fans in the Santa Barbara community, as well as an interesting fashion trend.

Local residents proved their loyalty to the Gauchos on March 17, when over 50 boosters turned out at the Santa Barbara Municipal Airport to welcome home the squad from NCAA tourney play in Champaign, Ill. According to sophomore point guard Stacy Clinesmith, the reception helped ease the pain of a narrow 69-64 loss to the University of Illinois the previous night.

"That was awesome," the native of Spokane, Wash., said. "It shows how much Santa Barbara is getting into women's basketball and how everybody is so supportive of the Gauchos."

But for most fans, the players' collective approach to the game is as appealing as its 27-6 overall record — which tied the school record for most wins in a season.

"I like their all-for-one and one-for-all attitude," said Carpinteria resident and UCSB season-ticket holder Bob Magruder. "If one person does great, everyone truly shares in her glory and congratulates her. If someone is in a slump, they are all there with encouragement."

"On the other hand, each one is able to give up a little of themselves when necessary to help the team be better," he said.

Boosters such as Goleta resident Amy Kuntz have decided to give something back to the team that provides them with so much excitement in the Thunderdome. In February, Kuntz coordinated a birthday celebration for Head Coach Mark French, and is currently in the process of organizing a scrapbook of press clippings for each player.

"They're top-quality women who work hard at being

See FANS, p.2A

Sporting Events Calendar

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Golf @ San Jose State at Pasatiempo Golf Course	Softball vs. Loyola Marymount 2 p.m. Women's tennis @ Cal State Fullerton 2 p.m. Golf @ San Jose State at Pasatiempo Golf Course	Women's tennis @ Long Beach State 2 p.m.	Baseball vs. UOP 2 p.m. Men's volleyball @ BYU 7 p.m.	Men's volleyball @ BYU 7 p.m. Baseball vs. UOP 2 p.m. Softball vs. New Mexico State 1 p.m. Women's tennis vs. UC Irvine 1:30 p.m.	Softball vs. Cal State Northridge noon Baseball vs. UOP 1 p.m. Women's water polo @ MPSF Tournament through Monday	Men's tennis @ San Diego State 1:30 p.m. Golf @ Stanford through Monday

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XTRIA SPORTS

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Santa Barbara's All Sports Station



PHOTO COURTESY OF UCSB BOOK STORE / DAILY NEXUS

HANGIN' OUT: The UCSB women's basketball team attracted a legion of young fans this season. Seven-year-old Alec Eldridge shows a group of Gauchos how to take it to the rim.

ΣΦΕ

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FANS

Continued from p.1A

good players and good students, but balance [that] with their own unique senses of humor," Kuntz said. "And they're so friendly, sharing it with everybody, allowing their fans to be part of the fun — feels like family."

While adults certainly have fun watching the Gauchos play, perhaps the team's biggest fans are its pint-sized ones. UCSB players frequently spend hours after home games signing autographs, posing for pictures and giving advice to aspiring hoopsters. In addition, all team members participate in French's Gaucho Outreach program, which involves speeches and

clinics at local schools.

"The Gaucho Outreach program has been instrumental in reaching the community," UCSB alumni and Montecito resident Julie Raffety said. "First kids meet the Gauchos, then they insist their parents take them to games, and they're hooked. ... What a great message to send to our school community."

Ten-year-old Kate Ainsley, a student at Laguna Blanca Elementary School in Santa Barbara, has learned a great deal about basketball and sportsmanship from the Big West Conference Champions.

"They all have good attitudes about losing and they're all really nice," she said. "Just watching Stacy [Clinesmith], I learned the

crossover dribble and under-hand layup."

Ainsley is also one of many her age to take a fashion cue from Santa Barbara freshman guard and Big West Player of the Year Erin Buescher. All across the South Coast, young girls have tried to replicate Buescher's unique, braided-pigtail hairdo, which she dons for good luck during games.

"I've attempted to do the 'Erin Buescher,' but can't get my hair to go in that direction," said Ainsley, a member of the "Lil' Gauchos" club. "Some of the players on my team do it though."

Freshman center Tandee Taylor welcomes the attention from young fans.

See HOOPS, p.3A

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HOOPS

Continued from p.2A

"A lot of times basketball programs aren't in touch with the community," she said. "It's great that little kids follow us around and aren't afraid to talk to us. I [enjoy] it when parents come up to me and say, 'My daughter loves the team.'"

While year-round Santa Barbara residents have de-

veloped a deep appreciation of UCSB women's basketball, the team's reception on campus has been rather lukewarm. The squad averaged 1,436 fans per game during its 1997-98 home schedule — tops in the Big West — yet saw very few fellow students among the Thunderdome crowds.

"I think a lot of people don't feel it's as entertaining as men's basketball," unde-

lared freshman Scott Thielen said. "They don't dunk, and aren't as fast and strong."

While the gauchos won't be dunking any time soon, chances are they will continue to be successful. Santa Barbara returns every player from this year's 27th-ranked team, as well as University of Washington transfer Rachelle Rodgers and two All-State recruits.

SPLIT

Continued from p.1A

nately, the wheels came off of the Santa Barbara hitting machine somewhere between Los Angeles and Malibu as the Gauchos went down in straight sets (15-7, 15-6, 15-10) to the mighty Waves.

UCSB Head Coach Ken Preston was appalled by his team's performance against Pepperdine, deeming it as one of the poorest outings his team has ever experienced.

"It was the worst hitting match I've ever seen by a Gaucho team," Preston said. "Only one of our players hit for a positive percentage. We blocked alright but we couldn't sideout."

Santa Barbara hit for a paltry .069 percentage against Pepperdine watching its record slide to 9-10 overall, 7-9 in the Mountain Pacific Sports Federation. None of the Gauchos were able to reach double digits in kills in the match as Darner and senior Mitch McCoy led the team with nine put-aways apiece.

With three regular-season matches remaining, the Gauchos find themselves clinging to the final playoff spot in their division. They control their own destiny at this point and can earn a trip to the MPSF playoffs by winning their remaining three matches, but two of them will be against a powerful BYU squad on the road.

BASE

Continued from p.1A

storm in the ninth to snatch a victory from the Wolf Pack.

UCSB took a 6-5 lead in the eighth but Nevada rallied with two runs of its own to recapture the advantage.

Santa Barbara was down to its last out in the ninth with nobody on base. Shortstop Justin Gemoll drew a two-out walk, followed by a single by Wright.

For the second time in as

many days, LaCour provided fireworks of the three-run variety. Amid snow flurries, the junior launched a three-run bomb to take the lead 9-7. Dave Molidor tacked on an RBI single in the ninth and Craig Shara picked up the win in relief of starter Troy Kinto.

LaCour went 2-for-5 with four RBIs while Molidor went 4-for-5 with four RBIs. Molidor and Lehr also homered for UCSB.

There would be no come-from-behind story Sunday,

however.

Gaucha starter David Uris struggled and recorded just one out in the first inning before giving way to Lehr on the mound.

Despite giving up seven runs in the first three innings, Santa Barbara actually managed to take a 9-7 lead in the top of the fifth, but Nevada regained the lead in the bottom of the inning and never looked back.

LaCour homered for the third time in as many games during the 13-11 loss.

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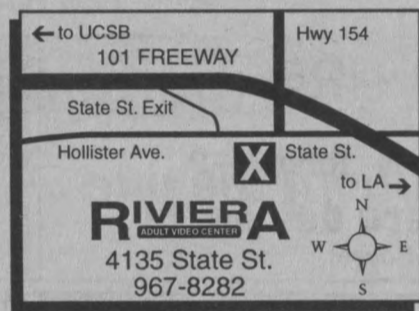
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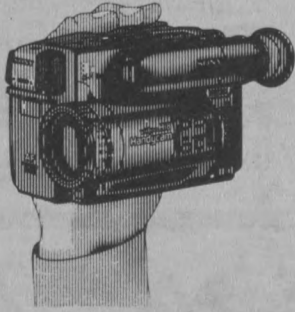
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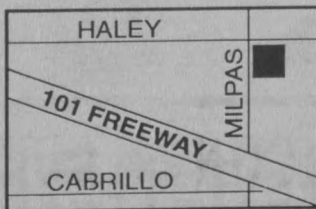
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RUSH BEGINS TUESDAY, APRIL 7TH

and continues through Thursday, April 9th

Please contact IFC President Mark Gorecki for additional info or questions at 968-5165