

Sports MONDAY

Fighting Illini Are No Match for Run and Gun Gauchos

BY MATT HURST
Staff Writer

It took two years, but the win was just as sweet.

The #15 UCSB women's basketball team was pitted against #12 Illinois in the semi-finals of the Preseason Women's National Invitation Tournament, the same Illinois team that knocked it out of the NCAA Tournament two years ago in Illinois' Academy Hall, the same site that the two teams were at Sunday.

The Gauchos (3-0 overall) jumped out to a 15-0 lead and never looked back, taking the game 71-61 and moved on to today's game vs. #5 Georgia, who beat #20 Boston College, 78-70. The winner of tonight's matchup will be crowned champion of the WNIT.

"Before the game [junior forward/center Nicole] Greathouse told us in the locker room that we haven't won a big game

since we beat Florida," junior guard Erin Buescher said. "That was my freshman year. We thought about that and we really wanted to win this one."

In the Gauchos' opening 15-0 run, they were led by senior guard Tawnée Cooper's four points and junior Rachelle Rogers' five in the six-minute, 38-second stretch. But, Santa Barbara let Illinois creep back into the game, getting outscored 25-19 to close out the first half, still carrying a 34-26 lead into the half.

"I think it's very difficult to spot a team that good that kind of a lead and then come back and play catch up," Illinois Head Coach Theresa Grentz said.

But, the Gauchos could not bandage the bleeding that Illinois had caused. The Illini opened up the second half on a 15-9 run that tied the game at 41 and then took their only lead on Tauja Catchings,

older sister of Tennessee All-American Tamika Catchings, back-to-back baskets, 47-46.

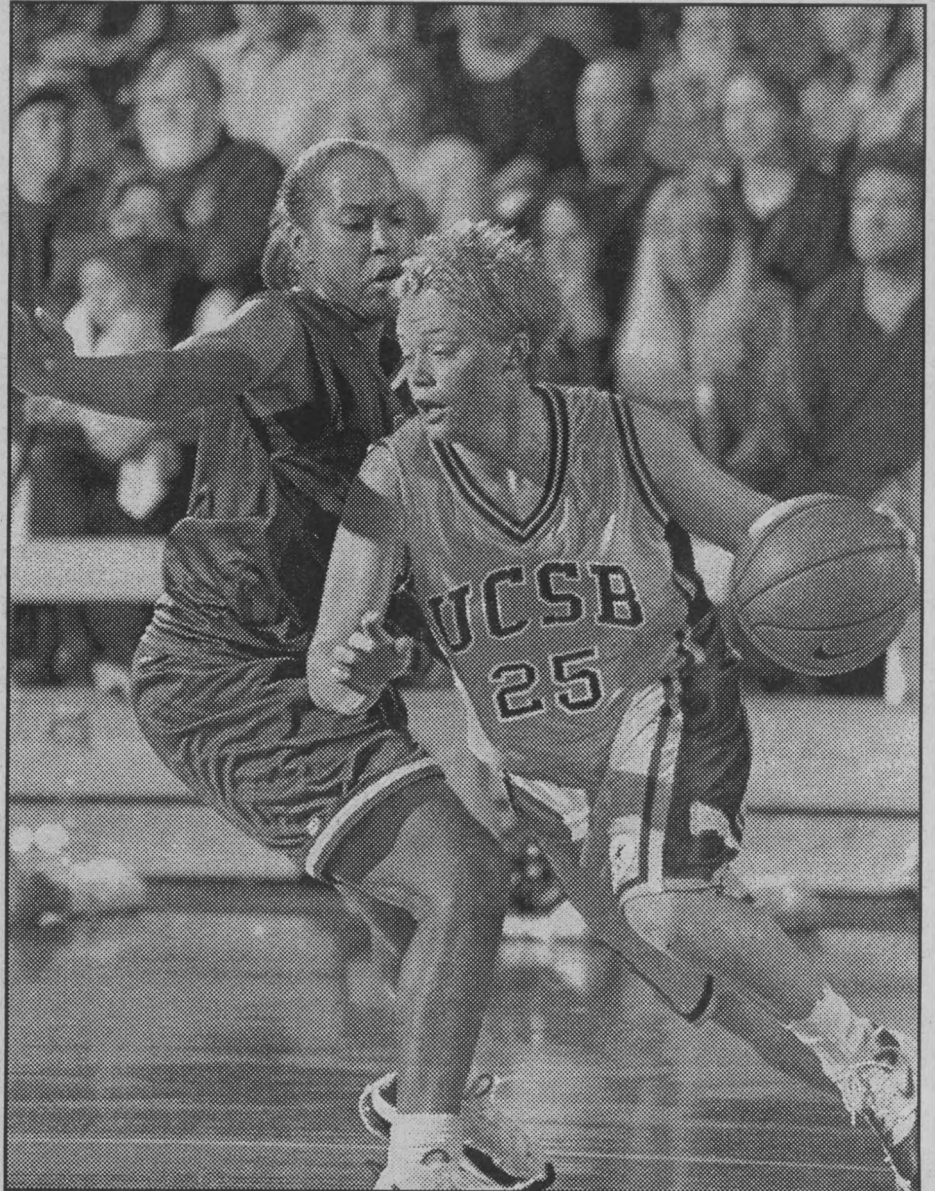
"We realized that if we wanted to win this game, we needed to pick it up," said Buescher, who led all scorers with 21 points to go along with eight rebounds. "We relaxed a little bit, but we picked it back up when we needed to in order to pull out the win."

However, Illinois' lead was short-lived. Buescher hit a free throw, Rogers converted a three-point play and UCSB was back in the driver's seat.

Santa Barbara, who was miserable from the line throughout the game (13-22), hit its free ones when needed: down the stretch, nailing eight of 10 to help put the Illini away. But, with the Gauchos' offense in sync, the free throws weren't exactly needed.

"Our offense was good because of our defense,"

See HOOPS, p.3A



JASON SCHOCK / DAILY NEXUS

DROPPING DIMES: Senior guard Stacy Clinesmith dished out five assists in the Gauchos' victory over Illinois. UCSB takes on Georgia tonight in the WNIT championship game.

Stanford Tree Remains Upright Despite Santa Barbara's (Mis)Fires

BY MARVIN GAPULTOS
Staff Writer

They chopped and chopped, but the great Stanford tree just wouldn't fall.

The UCSB men's basketball team opened its season against the #9 Stanford Cardinal in front of a sellout crowd of 6,031 rabid fans at the Thunderdome Saturday evening. Unfortunately for the Gauchos, neither their offense nor their fans were enough to take the Cardinal down, as they lost 62-49 in a less-than-pretty offensive performance by both squads.

"We've played uglier," Stanford Head Coach Mike Montgomery said. "We sure didn't shoot the ball very well. If you look at the first-half stats, we're two for 16 from [behind the three point line], and shooting 20 percent, and yet we're up. So from our perspective, its like we can't shoot it a whole lot worse."

On the game, both UCSB (0-1 overall) and Stanford (3-0) shot poorly from the floor, with the Cardinal only at 26.3 percent. Despite the shooting troubles, Santa Barbara jumped to an early lead behind the cheers of its crazed

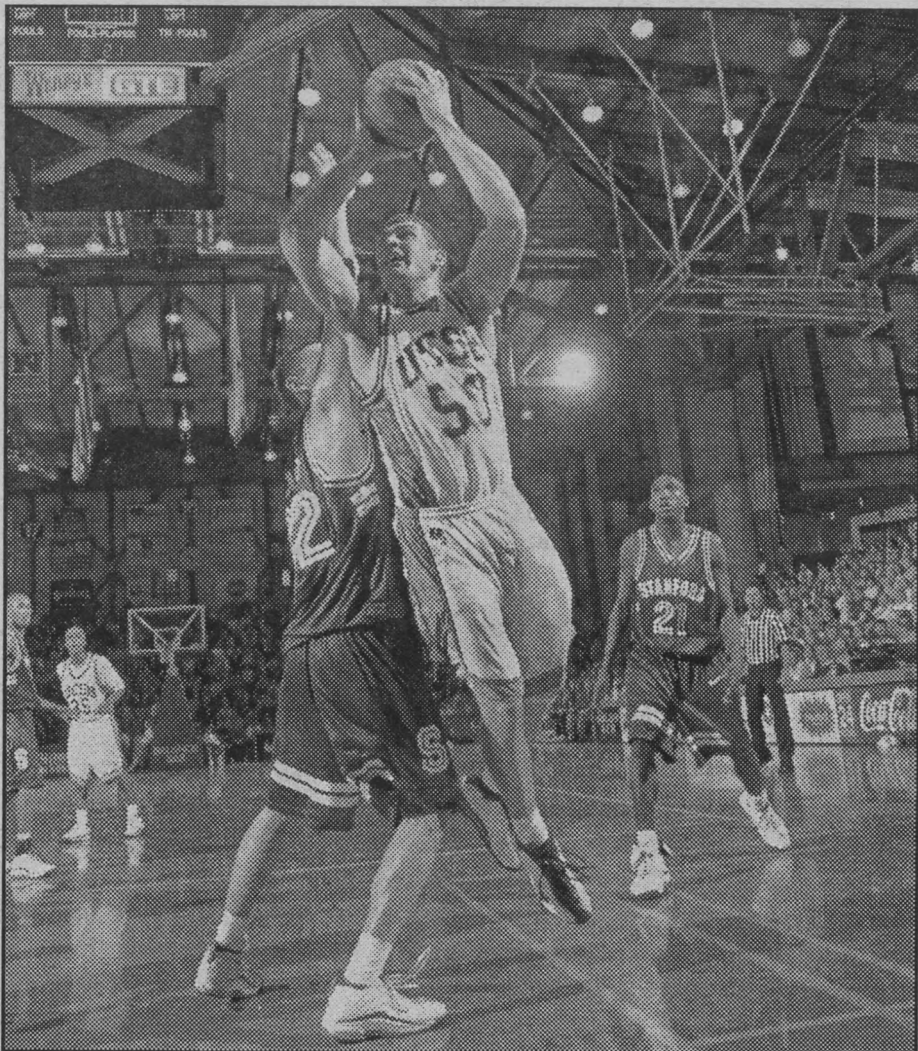
Thunderdome faithful.

"I was fearful of this game," Montgomery said in reference to the Gauchos' notorious fans. "One is the atmosphere that existed in Santa Barbara, the buildup. I knew they were going to play really hard, and they did. They really played hard. Boy, they just came out and were very confident. They thought they could make plays and got up, and they were very well prepared."

Ahead 13-12 in the first half, the Gauchos connected on their only three-pointer of the half after junior forward Juliano Jordani dished a pass to senior guard Derrick Allen, who spotted up behind the arc and nailed the shot for a 16-12 lead. A free throw from junior forward Adama Ndiaye made it 17-12, and then a put-back off of an Allen-missed layup by freshman forward Mark Hull gave the Gauchos their biggest lead of the game at 19-12. However, UCSB went into an offensive drought, scoring just two more points in the first half to trail Stanford 25-21 at the intermission.

"The difference in this game was the last eight minutes of the first half," UCSB Head Coach Bob Williams said. "That

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JASON SCHOCK / DAILY NEXUS

AIR JORDANI: Junior forward Juliano Jordani pulled down a team-high eight rebounds while scoring eight points in a 62-49 loss against the #9 Stanford Cardinal on Saturday.

Sporting Events Calendar

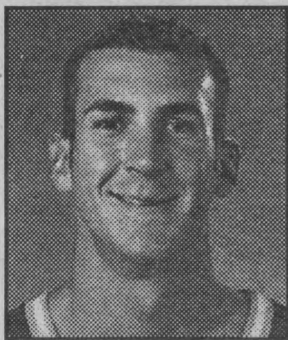
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Women's basketball vs. Georgia (Preseason WNIT Final) 6 p.m.	No events scheduled	Men's basketball @ San Jose State, 7:30 p.m.	No events scheduled	Men's water polo @ Irvine through Sunday (MPSF Tournament). Women's volleyball vs. Oral Roberts @ LBSU, noon.	Women's volleyball vs. Colgate @ LBSU, 10 a.m. Women's volleyball vs. USC @ LBSU, 5 p.m.	Men's basketball @ San Francisco, 3:30 p.m.

UCSB

Continued from p. 1A

last eight minutes, we did not play. Outside of that, I'm very proud of how we played."

In the second half of play, the Cardinal continued where it had left off, going on a 5-0 run in the opening minutes after halftime. The Gauchos stayed within striking distance for most of the second half, as they went on a run of their own - scoring eight unanswered points to trail Stanford 30-29. The shooting woes continued for both teams, though, as



Mark Hull

Santa Barbara finished the game making only two of 15 from behind the arc and Stanford making only four of 25 threes. Shooting was not the only thing that hampered the Gauchos' chances of defeating the ninth-ranked team in the nation, however, as Allen fouled out of the game after just 19 minutes of play.

"It was more of an emotional game than we've ever played," said Allen, who finished with seven points to go along with five boards, two steals and an assist. "So we were more physical than we are usually. I was too aggressive on the court, trying to set an example and I did too much."

Freshman guard B.J. Ward stepped in and impressed in place of the fouled-out Allen. With Santa Barbara down 39-34, the 6'1" Ward drove in from the wing and elevated for a dunk over the Cardinal's Julius Barnes.

Ward's jam rimmed out after Barnes fouled him, bringing the Thunderdome to its feet. Ward's two free throws brought UCSB to within three, but that would be the closest the Gauchos would get as Stanford continued to build on its lead.

Hull led the way for UCSB, scoring 13 points and pulling down seven boards. Jordani had a team-high in rebounds with eight to match his eight points. Ward finished with six points, all of which came from the charity stripe. Stanford's junior forward Jarron Collins led all scorers with 21 points, and added 12 boards as well.

"I think it was a great experience playing against Stanford," Hull said. "I learned a lot of lessons and the team learned a lot of lessons. We played pretty tough. I think overall, it was a great opening experience."

All Heart

STEVE WENDT

This thing had all the makings of a bloodbath.

The UCSB men's basketball team started the season by losing to a traveling squad from Australia. This is one of those international-style Washington General-types that usually brings their own body bags to be zipped up sometime around eight minutes after tip-off.

That was followed by a Lithuanian group of stiff that play a Euro-trash (see softer than soupy TCBY) brand of hoops and think launching treys from mid-court and trying not to sweat much are actually key ingredients to winning. Unfortunately, at times the Santa Barbara posts made the former Soviet Softies look like bruising Red Army shock troops. The Gauchos won that contest, but nobody was sold on the team, especially with Stanford (which had beaten Duke that very same evening) looming in the not-too-distant future.

Meanwhile, allegations of fraud were levied at two members of the team for reaching out and touching people to the tune of over \$3,000. They should've called 1-800-Collect. From the outside looking in, things appeared to be coming apart at the seams.

Luckily for Gaucho fans, appearances can be deceiving and the outside-looking-in view is one that doesn't give you the whole story. The onlookers seemed to be jumping off the bandwagon like it was a burning garbage truck heading off a cliff. The fellas on the inside, however, just hung a few extra pine tree air fresheners off the rearview and didn't forget what made them a special team last season ... heart.

On Saturday, the men's basketball team fought for nearly every second of a loss vs. a top 10 opponent. While the UCSB post players were giving away

inches physically, they refused to give an inch metaphorically. Adama Ndiaye, Juliano Jordani and Mike Vukovich did get manhandled at times, but for the first time in his career at UCSB, Ndiaye asserted himself in the paint against bigger players rather than fading away from the basket.

Vukovich is looking like a man down low instead of the boy we saw two years ago. Jerry Pimm's blunder of playing the kid as a rookie was rectified by Bob Williams' decision to redshirt Vuke last year and it looks like that will pay off. Jordani fought and fought and fought and grabbed eight defensive boards. He was an animal and didn't concede one rebound to players he gave four inches.

It would be kind to say the Gaucho guards didn't shoot well. The only touch the shooters had was that they were a touch too amped to have any. While that spelled doom for any chance UCSB had in pulling off the mother of all upsets since the days of the Vegas Amoeba-D, it's understandable. First game jitters tend to knock off the rim-radar ... it's that simple.

The Gauchos proved to be extremely resilient in the face of those early let-downs, and they are, more importantly, fearless. Freshman B.J. Ward had the most electrifying 0-5 night in memory and he wasn't even supposed to play this year. If a freshman is willing to take Stanford to the rack and shove it down their throat like Ward did, expect UCSB to shove it to the likes of Long Beach State and Cal Poly. And if the Gauchos play with the same fire they had in front of 6,000 crazies in the Thunderdome Saturday night for the rest of the campaign, the bloodbaths will most likely be drawn and enjoyed by UCSB.

Steve Wendt is a former Daily Nexus sports editor.

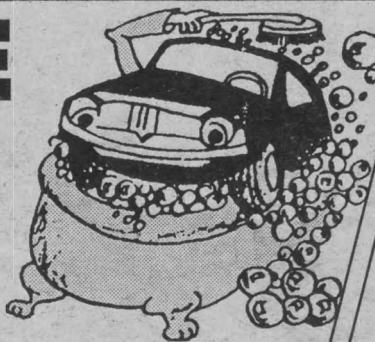
Listen Up Gauchos!

The UCSB women's basketball team will play for the Preseason WNIT championship tonight at 6. Catch the game on 1250 KEYT or online at broadcast.com.

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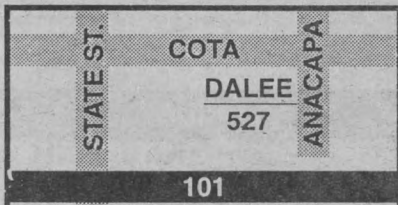


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HOOPS

Continued from p.1A

said senior point guard Stacy Clinesmith, who had six points, five assists and six boards in a game-high 37 minutes. "Our pressure defense enabled us to run. That's why our offense was effective."

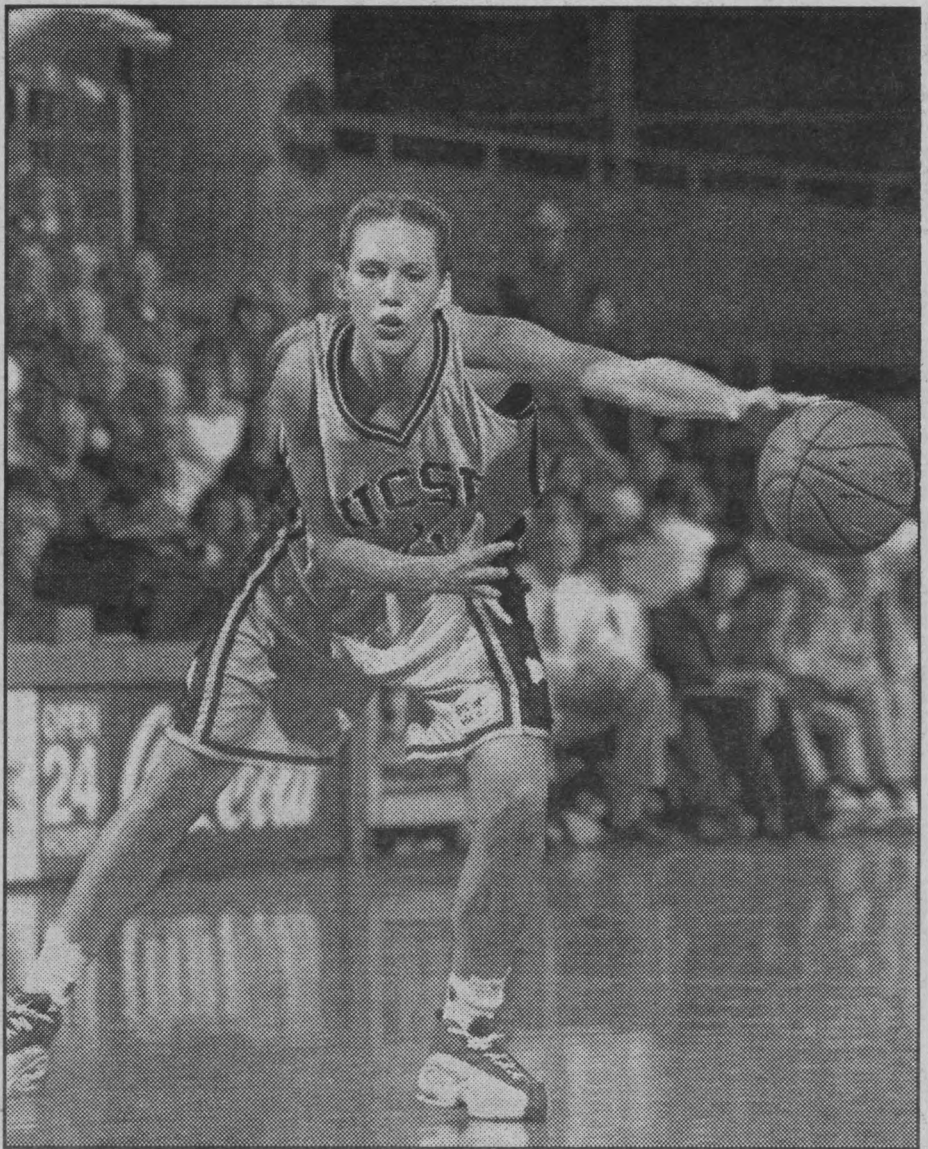
"Coming into the game we knew we had a very talented, but not fundamental team," UCSB Head Coach Mark French said. "In order to be a good team — and we want to be a good team — we can't rely on talent alone. This win progresses

us toward that goal of being a good team as well as a talented team."

UCSB also dominated the glass, winning the boards game 57-45. Senior forward Kristi Rohr pulled down 10 boards and also dumped in 16 points, while Cooper grabbed nine boards of her own and finished with seven points.

Susan Blausner and Allison Curtain led the Fighting Illini with 16 points each while Catchings added 15 points and 11 rebounds.

Tonight's game can be heard on 1250 KEYT or online at broadcast.com at 6.



JASON SCHOCK / DAILY NEXUS

WHO'S NEXT?: Junior forward Erin Buescher led the Gauchos to the finals of the Preseason WNIT as she burned Illinois on Sunday afternoon for 21 points and eight rebounds.

Tune in to 1250 KEYT at 6 o'clock tonight to listen to the women's final in the Preseason WNIT. Or catch the game online at broadcast.com.

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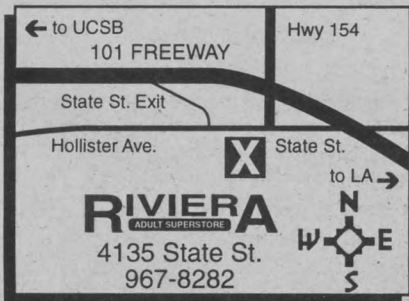
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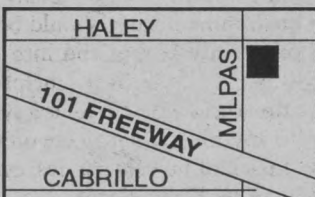
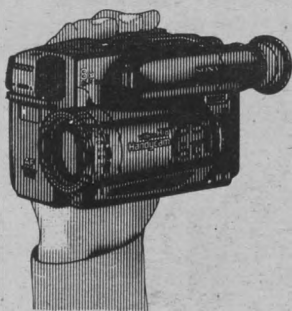


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