Gauchos Finish Season With Losses in NCAA Tourney

By Matt Heitner
Staff Writer

Try as it might, the UCSB baseball team couldn’t put an end to its NCAA tournament jinx this weekend in South Bend, Indiana. Playing in their first NCAA tournament since 1986, the Gauchos faced the Hoosier state unkind, going 1-2 en route to early elimination in round one of the NCAA Tournament. After dropping the first game the Florida International 17-4 on Friday, UCSB rebounded to top Wisconsin-Milwaukee 13-12 in a game played over two days because of rain delays.

But the Gauchos saw their season come to a close Sunday after an 11-10, 10-inning loss to host Notre Dame. “After the Notre Dame game we were disappoint-ed,” senior designated hitter Mike Kolbach said. “But overall we had a good season. In the first game Friday, the Golden Panthers jumped all over Santa Barbara junior starter James Garcia, who was tagged for three runs in the top of the first inning. However, the Gauchos clawed their way back, scoring four runs in the second and a run in the third to make the score 3-2 in favor of the Gauchos. After retiring 10 out of 11 Golden Panther batters, Garcia ran into trouble in the fifth inning. Garcia gave up a leadoff double, before getting a fly out for the first out of the inning. The game went downhill from there, as the next batter reached on a fielding error from senior shortstop Jeff Biondo. A balk, three singles and another balk followed the error; FIU quickly scored a 2-1 lead. Garcia was then knocked out of the game on a three-run blast from FIU shortstop Mickey Torroella. But UCSB’s relievers fared no better than Garcia, as sophomore Jim Bullard, junior Matt Moran, senior Russell Wirth, and freshman Justin Arengino combined to give up the Golden Panthers’ final eight runs.

Jed Stringham

“FIU just kept going,” Stringham said. “They just played all nine innings. They overwhelmed us in an inning or two there, but they were not any better than we were. Things just got out of control and we couldn’t stop the bleeding.”

With its back against the wall, Santa Barbara was forced to respond the next day against UW-M. The Gauchos came out like a team unwilling to let their season slip away, exploding for eight runs in the first inning and a half to go up 8-0. But UW-M quickly sliced the UCSB lead in half, scoring four runs in the second inning off of UCSB senior starter Rylee Ogle. UCSB came right back with four runs of its own in the third to take a 12-4 lead. Before Milwaukee answered with four runs in the bottom of the fourth to make the score 12-7 in favor of the Gauchos. Junior reliever Jeremy Sugarman entered the game in the fifth inning and surrendered a single before the game was sus-pended due to rain.

The game resumed the following day, with Sugarman retiring UW-M on a double play and a strikeout. The Panthers then pulled within one run at 12-11 with fou run in the bottom of the sixth, before tying the game at 12 all in the eighth. The Gauchos finally took the lead for good in the top of the ninth. With two two outs, senior Russell Wirth laced a shot down the right field line for his 14th dinger of the year, giving UCSB a 13-12 lead.

“It was a 1-0 or 2-1 count against their subma­rine pitcher,” Stringham said of his round-tripper. “It was the second time I’d seen him. The wind was blowing out in right (field) so I knew he would want to pitch me in. But he threw a pitch outside and I went with it.”

Senior closer Jamie Gonzalez made the lead stand in the bottom of the inning, striking out two batters to give UCSB its second-tournament win since 1986.

Santa Barbara had little time to enjoy the vic­tory. The Gauchos were forced to play the weekend elimination game in one day due to the rain, the second game coming against the Fighting Irish. Notre Dame jumped out 2-0 due to the rain.

See BASEBALL, p.3A

There is No Comparison: Kobe Will Never Approach M.J.'s Immortality

By Eliav Appelbaum

Kobe Bryant will never be as good as Michael Jordan.

Never in a million years. Never ever ever ever will Kobe approach Jordan on the pedestal of basketball immortality. Kobe is great in his own right, but pun­dits popping up claiming the latest “Laker sensation” is the greatest ever are way out of proportion.

Jordan is an institution, a volume in the Encyclopedia Britannica, a “Black Jesus,” according to rival and buddy Charles Barkley. Jordan is everything to the NBA; he defined a game and mold­ed it into a boundless sport that genera­tions of players could build within. And he changes it while his myth continues to prosper.

Laker Hall of Famer Jerry West might have the distinction of having his silly silhouette grate the left corner of every NBA jersey and every icon blaring on your television screen, but Jordan’s tongue-wagging, jump-jiving, picture-perfect summersault of a levitating man forever in his grasp.

Jordan has owned for years. Kobe does not approach Jordan in categories including Finals MVP, All-Star Game MVP, scoring titles, All-Defensive teams, NBA championships. Jordan has raked the leaves from the venerable oak tree and the beauty of immortality is forever in his grasp.

Jordan won the 1982 NCAA Championship with North Carolina, and he hurled the game-winning 18-foot jump shot to give Tar Heel Head Coach Dean Smith his first title. Jordan was a skinny freshman. At around the same age, Kobe was tossing air balls against Utah, as the Lakers were swept out of the playoffs in consecutive years.

Jordan was nurturing his greatness, while Kobe was getting used and abused by Old Man Karl Malone. I’ve had enough of this discussion. This is an open-and-shut case.

A better question to ask about Kobe is whether he is even the best guard in the NBA? The league is abundant in big-guard talent. Twenner, such as Xavier McDaniel and Jeff Malone, have died out. The fleet-footed tall men, including Tracy McGrady and Paul Pierce, among others, are making a name for themselves.

The only difference? These players don’t have Shaquille O’Neal clogging the middle. McGrady has Bo Outlaw, and Pierce has Vitaly Potapenko. These guys couldn’t guard molasses.

Pierce is my personal favorite. He’s the player who is most comfortable on the court with his own skills and with integrating them in a blue-collar Boston Celtics club. Kobe’s got the flash of L.A. Pierce is bringing the Celtics back to respectability with no help.

If people keep bringing this Kobe-Jordan debate up, all they have to do is watch one game with Jordan.

How can you describe M.J.? Larry Bird phrased it best: “God disguised as Michael Jordan.”
Today's Birthday (May 27). You're ready for a change now. You've outgrown your old status quo. Retreats, if necessary, to make a dream come true. Don't despair if it is still a ways off. You should fully maximize your options, get yourself headed up the right mountain, and commit to the huge.

To get the advantage, check the day's rating: 10 is the easiest, 1 the most challenging.

Aries (March 21-April 19) - Today is a 6 - Now you're getting into the tough part. No more easily presentable or easy to deal with. It's very hard and will push you on, and you've got to decide how to handle it. Now, you can work to make the product. This takes more patience and energy. It's up to you to work through the challenge. (See next)

Taurus (April 20-May 20) - Today is a 6 - Your sweetheart or your child is running into problems. Be on the look out for some opportunities that you did not seek. You're one of few who can help. Not only do you understand, but you also have a hammer.

Gemini (May 21-June 21) - Today is a 7 - Even off on the Stranger Time to chill out for a while. The coming phase is going to be very challenging. To get the advantage, check the day's rating: 10 is the easiest, 1 the most challenging.

Cancer (June 22-July 22) - Today is a 6 - You're getting stronger, and with good reason. You've been facing things that scare you, and they haven't gotten you yet. You've found a friend who can help. Together, you can put some of those fears behind you and get back on track. (See next)

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) - Today is a 6 - Some do, and some don't get too enviable. You'll be able to see the things that you can fix, and the things you can't. Your investment would pick a fit if you did, anyway. Instead of finding this venture, it's picking up on a good year.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) - Today is a 7 - Compliment your outfit for the next few days. This will happen anyway, so you might as well do it for yourself. This is a great day to make up this outfit, or simply to call it quits. (See next)

Scorpio (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) - Today is a 6 - It's time you had a little time for yourself. Even when there's a crowd, there's still a time to do whatever you need to. Now is that time, and you should cherish it.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) - Today is a 6 - It's time you had a little time for yourself. Even when there's a crowd, there's still a time to do whatever you need to. Now is that time, and you should cherish it.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) - Today is a 5 - Your recent troubles are behind you. Now you're free to get practical. If you're still fussed about something, what are your reasons? Compelling reasons may be more difficult than you expect. Be patient, and the truth will come out.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) - Today is a 5 - You've been having a lot of fun. Now it's time to get practical. If you've recently formed a new partnership, what are your reasons? Compelling reasons may be more difficult than you expect. Be patient, and the truth will come out.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20) - Today is a 7 - A friend is working on some things that are going to be done anytime. New information helps you figure out what's wrong and out to help. It's going to help you understand the situation.

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first, but UCSB answered with three runs of its own to lead 3-2 after one inning. The first inning was a sign of things to come, as both clubs would exchange hits and leads for the next eight innings, leading to a 10-10 tie after a full nine innings.

Notre Dame then jumped ahead on a solo shot from Brian Stavisky in the top of the tenth. The Gauchos' final rally in the bottom of the inning fell short, and the game ended on a groundout from senior third baseman Dave Molidor with Schumaker on third base.

Despite the loss, UCSB enjoyed a spectacular 2001 campaign. The Gauchos recorded their first 40-win season since 1986, and staked their claim as one of the top Santa Barbara baseball squads of all time.

“We’re proud of what we did,” freshman pitcher Matt Vasquez said. “We accomplished a lot this year and we broke a lot of team and individual records. We wanted to go further [in the tournament] but it just didn’t happen.”

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