

Sports MONDAY

Pressure's Mounting for Pimm

BY SCOTT HENNESSEE
Staff Writer

The UCSB men's basketball team has produced more excitement off the court than it has on it over the past three weeks.

The Gauchos made news across the nation when they didn't attend a scheduled Dec. 15 practice and instead held an internal, players-only meeting in which they expressed dissatisfaction with 15th-year Head Coach Jerry Pimm.

KEYT-TV reported that the players held a vote in which they decided to ask for Pimm's resignation. Pimm met with the players that same evening in an attempt to right the ship. Apparently it worked, because Pimm is still in command and the players are back on the court.

"The players met with Coach Pimm, and it was a long meeting with Coach Pimm," UCSB Athletic Director Gary Cunningham said. "Out of it came a dedication that they would all work together."

The meeting came two days after an 88-73 home loss to Santa Clara, in which Santa Barbara was down 21-2 after the first seven minutes and trailed by 30 points with 13 minutes to play.

"It was a culmination of a number of factors," Cunningham said of the players' dissatisfaction. "It's no fun to lose and they were looking for solutions."

In the 20-plus days since the shake-up, UCSB seems to have reached rosier pastures — for now, anyway.

"Coach said some inspiring things to the team," senior forward Kealon Wallace told the *Santa Barbara News-Press* Dec. 27. "We're just trying to play right now."

The problem is that the Gauchos have not been playing well. Their record now stands at a very uninspiring 3-7, with only one of their wins against Division I competition (an 87-66 victory over St. Mary's on Dec. 27).

The university has stood behind Pimm throughout the incident and has said that it intends to honor his contract, which is good through the 1999-2000 season. UCSB has struggled through four straight losing seasons and only has one road win since the 1995-1996 season.

GaUCHO Volleyball Makes Final Eight

■ Crawford, Gehlke All-Americans

BY SCOTT HENNESSEE
Staff Writer

The UCSB women's volleyball team went where it had never been before — the quarterfinals of the NCAA Championships. But it was there that the Gauchos met the team that owns the national tournament.

Santa Barbara had a good run at the Final Four, but ran into a Stanford squad that simply couldn't be stopped. The Cardinal defeated UCSB 15-12, 15-12, 15-3 on Dec. 13 in Maples Pavilion, and nine days later went on to win its third national championship in the past four years.

The Gauchos managed to put a good scare into the Stanford juggernaut, pulling within a point at 13-12 in games one and two. The second game proved to be the turning point in the match, when both teams had multiple sideouts with Stanford in the lead 13-12. Stanford broke the scoreless streak

when senior outside hitter Kristin Folkl put away one of her match-high 19 kills. On the ensuing point, sophomore outside hitter and Mountain Regional All-Tournament MVP Keri Walsh put the game away with one of her 16 kills.

Cardinal Head Coach Don Shaw knew how important it was for his team to be the one to seize the momentum of the match by winning the second game.

"That second game was quite a battle," Shaw said. "It's a big turning point when you can go into the locker room at the break up 2-0. I think as well as UCSB played, it's tough to come back when you've battled that hard and aren't quite able to pull it off."

With the ball fully in their court, Stanford rolled to an easy 15-3 victory in game three to advance to the Final Four. The Cardinal then proceeded to defeat Long Beach State in the semifinal round before upsetting top-



NEXUS FILE PHOTO

CONGRATULATIONS: Kathy Gregory has guided UCSB to 17 straight NCAA tournaments, but this season marked the team's first appearance in the quarterfinals.

seeded Penn State in the national championship game.

Cardinal senior middle blocker Barbara Ifejika was impressed with the Gauchos' resiliency in the first two games.

"It was like there was no floor on the other side," said

Ifejika, who had eight kills to go with 12 digs. "They just kept digging it up. I credit them for great defense and not really giving up. It was definitely a battle out there."

UCSB was held to a .135 hitting percentage, includ-

ing a .000 (eight kills, eight errors) performance in the deciding game. Sophomore middle blocker Heather Bown led the team with 14 kills. Junior middle blocker Katie Crawford and sopho-

See NCAA, p.3A

Women's Basketball Earns Votes in National USA Today Poll

BY BEN ALKALY
Staff Writer

So many wins, so little space to recap them in.

The UCSB women's basketball team posted a 6-2 record during the past month, including two road wins over top-30 programs, to finish its nonconference schedule. The Gauchos (9-4 overall) have been rewarded for their solid play, garnering 16 votes in the latest *USA Today* college basketball poll.

"We're very pleased at this point to be 9-4," Santa Barbara Head Coach Mark French said. "Being such a young team and with the schedule we played, anything above .500 is outstanding."

At least a small portion of UCSB's success can be attributed to luck, which the squad was graced with in an 82-79 win at San Diego State on Dec. 15. With two seconds remaining and the score deadlocked at 79-79, Santa Barbara sophomore point guard Stacy Clinesmith took an inbounds pass and let fly a shot as time expired that somehow found the basket — a mere 65 feet away.

"I was a little far out, but time was running out so I thought I'd better shoot it," said Clinesmith, who paced the team with 17 points. "I've never done that before in a game. It was pretty neat."

The momentous victory in San Diego was preceded by another big win, a 79-61 thumping of USC on

Dec. 4 in the Thunderdome. Santa Barbara grabbed a school-record 66 rebounds and ended a string of seven consecutive losses to the Women of Troy.

"We controlled the defensive glass, and got out on the fast break because SC didn't have the depth to run with us," French said. "That's the way we play best."

UCSB then combined work with pleasure as it traveled to Honolulu, Hawai'i to take part in the round-robin Ala Moana Paradise Classic Tournament, Dec. 19-22.

Up first was Michigan State University, the seventh consecutive Gaucho opponent who participated in the 1997 NCAA Tournament.

Unlike the USC game, Santa Bar-

bara played its best basketball in the first half, leading by as many as 15 points and ahead 47-37 at the intermission. The Spartans, however, went on a 12-0 run to open the second stanza, taking a lead they would not relinquish and going on to win 80-74.

"We were up by 15 and then just totally let down," said freshman center Nicole Greathouse, who tallied a career-high 17 rebounds. "Then there wasn't enough time to fight back."

UCSB then got a breather, easily defeating McNeese State (La.) 95-75 in a game that saw every Gaucho tally at least one point.

See WOMEN, p.2A



NEXUS FILE PHOTO

UP AND IN: It's been more like down and out for senior forward Kealon Wallace and the 3-7 Gauchos.

Men's Hoops Falters to 3-7 Mark

BY SCOTT HENNESSEE
Staff Writer

It's obvious that the team has talent. What's not so clear is just why they can't seem to win a game.

The UCSB men's basketball team has struggled through a 3-7 preseason, winning only one game against a Division I opponent in those 10 contests. The latest casualty, a 69-66 loss to Pepperdine on Saturday in the Thunderdome, was typical of the Gauchos' woeful season.

Santa Barbara had an eight-point lead at halftime but saw it quickly deteriorate thanks to an abundance of

turnovers to begin the second half. The Gauchos looked confused on offense, especially when the Waves went to a zone defense a few minutes into the period, and could only get their leading scorer Raymond Tutt two shots in the second half.

Maybe it is clear why they've only won three games.

Senior forward Dwayne Williams, who responded to regaining his spot in the starting lineup by scoring a team-high 15 points, is just as curious as Gaucho fans are as to why Santa Barbara can't play 40 minutes of good basketball.

"I don't know. I wish I

had an answer," Williams said of his team's collapse early in the second half. "That first five minutes of the second half really killed us. I think we'd have won the game if we came out to play the first part of the second half ... We always have a good first half. We just have to put 40 minutes together."

Santa Barbara had a chance at a win down the stretch when Tutt took his first shot of the second half and drained a three from the wing to pull his team to within three points. But that was as close as it would get, as UCSB missed its remain-

See MEN, p.2A

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WOMEN

■ Continued from p.1A

In the final game of the tournament Santa Barbara ran into a brick wall: host school University of Hawai'i. The Rainbow Wahine raced out to a 17-0 lead and then put the game in cruise control, blowing out UCSB 91-66.

After a well-deserved break for Christmas, the squad went looking for redemption on a two-game swing through Colorado.

On Dec. 28, the Gauchos engaged in an old-fashioned shoot-out with #27 Colorado State, rallying from 12 points down in the second half to pull out a 105-98 victory. Freshman guard Erin Buescher had a monster game, scoring 24 points to go along with 13 boards in her first collegiate start.

Santa Barbara's good fortunes continued two days later against #21 University of Colorado, as the squad never trailed en route to an 83-77 upset in Boulder. The well-balanced Gauchos were led in scoring this time by sophomore forward Kristi Rohr, who poured in 26.

Last Friday UCSB was dealt a scare by Loyola Marymount University, trailing the lightly-regarded Lions well into the second half before taking care of the task at hand 99-84.

MEN

■ Continued from p.1A

ing tries at the goal from long range.

Santa Barbara made its final attempt with 12.9 seconds to play, when the team gained control of the ball with only a three-point deficit, but Tutt and senior Matt Stock missed their long-range attempts at a tie.

While the Gauchos still had a chance at victory in the end, Coach Jerry Pimm knows they lost control of the contest when they took

the floor to begin the second half.

"Every Division I team we've played this year, the first five minutes of the second half we've been minus and our opponents have been plus," Pimm said. "We need to take care of that."

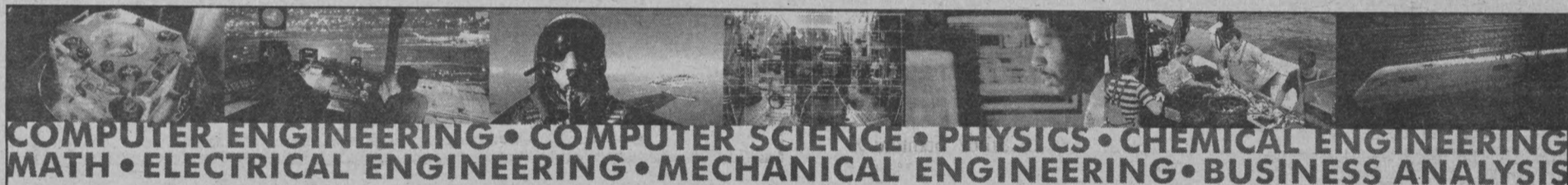
The teams of the West Coast Conference have done their best to take away the life of the Gauchos. Santa Barbara has lost five of six to WCC teams as well as being blown out by Stan-

See MEN, p.3A



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Raytheon
 EXPECT GREAT THINGS

NCAA

Continued from p.1A

more outside hitter Roberta Gehlke each had 10 put-aways.

Crawford and sophomore setter Tanja Hart were each named to the Mountain Regional All-Tournament team. Crawford was also named as a first-team All-American for her outstanding season, becoming only the second Gaucho to receive such an honor. Gehlke was named to the second team.

In the earlier rounds of the tournament, Santa Barbara's draw proved to be as tough as coach Kathy Gregory anticipated it to be. The Gauchos first had to get by national powers UCLA and the University of Texas before getting a shot at Stanford, and both matches lived up to their top billing.

After receiving a first-round bye, UCSB squared off with the Bruins in a second-round match in the Thunderdome. Santa Barbara appeared to have things under control early, winning the first two games by a score of 15-8. But UCLA wasn't ready to go back to Westwood just yet — it took the next two games 15-6 to force a rally-scoring final game that had the 1,104 in atten-

dance on the edge of their seats. Neither team had a lead of more than two points the entire game.

It looked as if the Bruins would pull off the improbable when sophomore middle blocker Tamika Johnson slammed a kill to put her team ahead 13-12, but Crawford would respond for the Gauchos, pounding down her 21st kill to even the score. UCSB caught a break on the next point when senior outside hitter Tanisha Larkin hit long to give Santa Barbara match point, 14-13.

With Crawford at the service line, the anxious crowd rose to its feet, but Bruin senior setter Kim Coleman sat them down with her fifth kill of the match to tie it at 14-14. Bown got the ball back on her side of the net with an emphatic kill on the next point, giving the Gauchos their second match point. Junior outside hitter Erin McCown then took matters into her own hands by serving up an ace to end the match.

McCown said she felt the pressure, but still managed to get the job done.

"I was a little nervous, especially in rally scoring [in which every serve results in a point]," she said. "You just have to take a deep breath and go for it."

The victory marked only the second time that UCSB has advanced past the second round of the tournament.

Santa Barbara's next match, a round-of-16 affair with the Texas Longhorns, may have been the best all-around performance the team had all season. The Gauchos came out on top, 15-13, 16-14, 15-6, allowing them to advance to the quarterfinals for the first time in the school's storied volleyball history.

"This match has to go as one of the best because it's under pressure in the NCAA tournament," Gregory said. "We knew that Texas was a great physical team. I would say it's the best team effort and I think offensively it was one of our best performances."

Much of the credit for the team's performance has to go to the near-flawless play of sophomore outside hitter Charlene Conley. She had 15 kills and six digs while hitting .429. With Conley complementing Gehlke's 19 kills on the outside, Crawford had a field day in the middle, posting a match-high 24 kills.

The Gauchos finished the year at 32-5, giving them their second-highest win total ever.



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MEN

Continued from p.2A

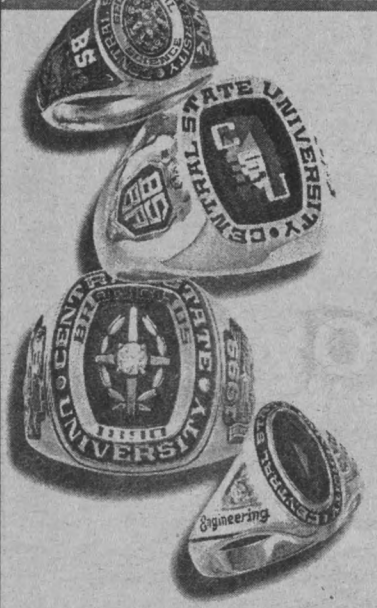
ford, who is ranked in the top 10 and plays in the Pac-10 Conference. UCSB's only win against a

Division I opponent was an 87-66 home win over St. Mary's College.

Here's a rundown on what's happened over Winter Break:

- UCSB 92 SF State 50
- UCSB 73 Santa Clara 88
- UCSB 60 USF 71
- UCSB 62 Stanford 95
- UCSB 87 St. Mary's 66
- UCSB 66 Pepperdine 69

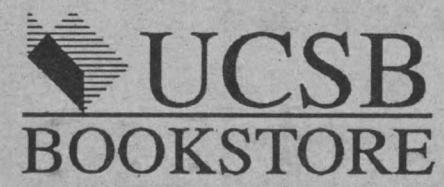
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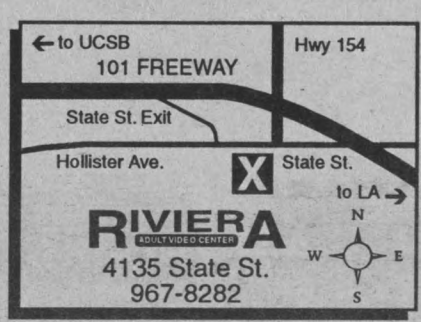
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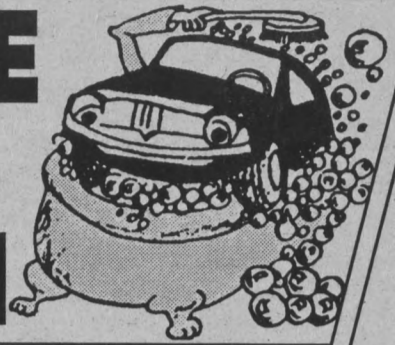


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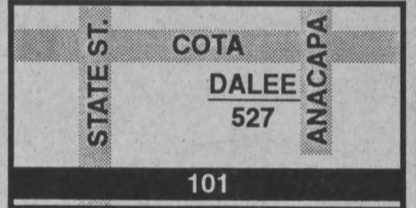
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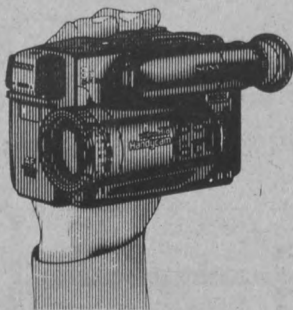
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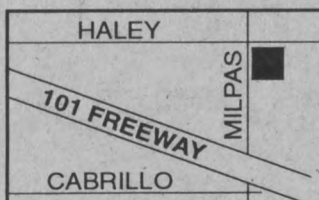
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