

# SPORTS MONDAY

Daily Nexus

May 13, 1996

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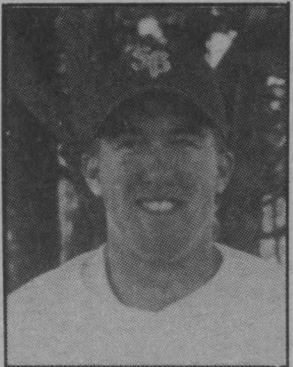
## Big West Tourney Equals Trouble for Gaucho Bats

■ #22 UCSB Loses to UNLV, LBSU; Team Awaits At-Large NCAA Bid

By Curtis Kaiser  
Staff Writer

FULLERTON — It was a game the UCSB baseball team had to win to stay alive in the Big West Conference Tournament and be certain that the squad would continue its Cinderella season.

By losing 2-1 Saturday to the 21st-ranked Long Beach State 49ers (34-23 overall) in the double-elimination tournament at Titan Field, the 22nd-ranked Gauchos (32-18) completed a disappointing



Seth Bean

weekend that had begun Friday when they suffered a 6-3 loss to 25th-ranked UNLV (42-15). The squad's hitting, which has drawn attention for its success in averaging 8.7 runs per game, struggled all weekend, collecting only 12 hits and four runs.

Las Vegas ended up winning the tournament by beating Long Beach State 11-2 Sunday, thereby earning an automatic bid to the NCAA Tournament.

Santa Barbara won't know if its season has ended until May 20, when the NCAA will announce its seedings for the 48-team baseball tournament.

UCSB third-year Head

Coach Bob Brontsema, who was named the Big West's Co-Coach of the Year along with Long Beach State's Dave Snow, feels that despite the Gauchos' two losses at the tournament, his squad deserves to be selected for a regional bid.

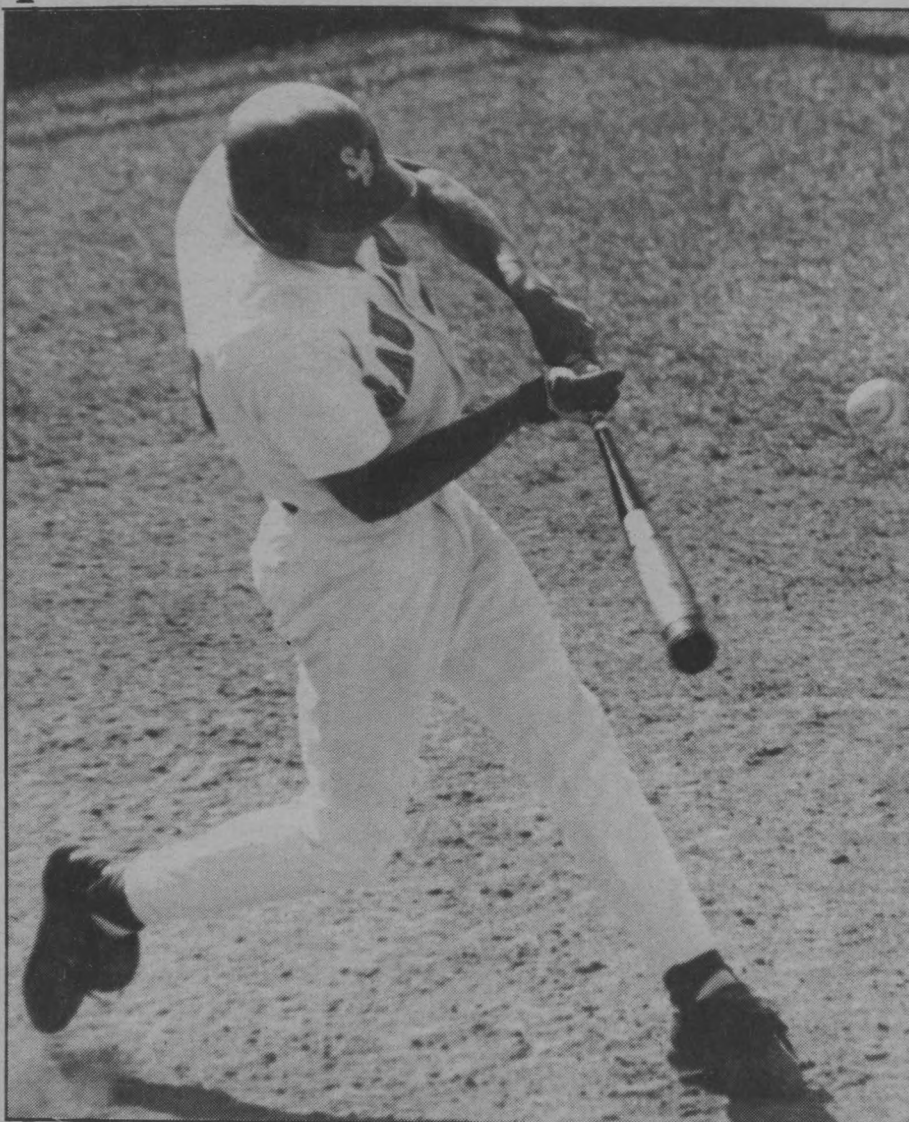
"We've played a great schedule. For them [the NCAA] to only look at two games would be wrong," he said. "[The Big West] is a great conference. They should take four teams. We've seen a lot of good teams in the country and there are four — at least four — in this conference."

On Saturday Brontsema sent his ace starter, Seth Bean (9-3), to the mound, hoping that Bean would rise to the occasion. The sophomore right-hander certainly was up to the challenge, pitching scoreless ball through seven innings.

In the eighth, however, Bean ran into problems with his control. That, coupled with some controversial ball-strike calls by the home plate umpire, led to two runs for the 49ers. Bean, who walked seven in the game, surrendered a couple of base hits and base on balls to give LBSU its first run.

Then, with a 2-2 count on right fielder Mike Sternbridge, Bean threw a pitch that seemed to graze the inside corner of the plate. As he began to walk off the field, confident that he had notched a strikeout to end the inning, home plate umpire John Gatson called the pitch a ball.

The next pitch was a change-up that also seemed to be a strike and Bean began to step off the mound again. When Gatson called the second pitch a ball and awarded



ALAN JACOBY/Daily Nexus

**CRACK!** The baseball squad had trouble producing runs this past weekend against UNLV and LBSU, scoring a combined four runs in two games.

Sternbridge first base to score the baserunner, Bean had to be restrained from arguing with Gatson by freshman catcher Justin Lehr. Brontsema came out of the dugout to argue with Gatson, while pitching coach Tim Montez waited until Gatson came to the mound to break up a conference between him and Bean to let the umpire know what he thought of his calls.

"I was pretty upset," Bean said. "The 2-2 pitch was right on the inside corner and the 3-2 pitch was a

change-up that I dropped right over. I thought at least one of those was strike three."

Despite the loss, Brontsema was proud of Bean's performance.

"We needed someone to step up and he did that," Brontsema said. "I'm very disappointed in the outcome, not the effort. Our pitching was outstanding."

Bean's strong performance was overshadowed by that of Long Beach State starter Steve Hueston, a second-team all-

conference selection who managed to handcuff the Gaucho lineup all afternoon, limiting UCSB to six hits in eight scoreless innings of work while striking out five.

"Their pitchers took away a lot of options, so did the defense," Brontsema said. "Hueston deserves credit — he's an outstanding pitcher."

The Gauchos' only run came with two outs in the ninth inning when junior first baseman Brooks Mor-

See LOSSES, p.3A

## The Waiting Game

By Brian Berger

FULLERTON — Let the game begin — the waiting game, that is.

The UCSB baseball team suffered two heart-breaking defeats this weekend at the Big West Tournament held at Cal State Fullerton. The Gauchos' regular season came to an end as they dropped a pair of highly competitive games to their archrivals UNLV and Long Beach State, 6-3 on Friday and 2-1 on Saturday, respectively.

With its less than perfect performances, Santa Barbara (32-18) must now wait (what will seem like an eternity) until May 20, when the 48-team field for the NCAA regionals will be announced. There are two hurdles UCSB must overcome if it is to advance to the postseason, which begins May 23.

The first is that the NCAA has never been kind to West Coast baseball. Last year the committee selected only seven squads for the playoffs and grouped four of them in the same region, but the one team that caught a break was the Titans, who went on to take the national title.

Coming into this weekend, eight West Coast teams were ranked in at least one of the nation's three top 25 polls. In that list reside three teams from the Pac 10, one from the Western Athletic Conference and four from our own Big West.

It seems the Gauchos should have no worries about their playoff future, but the team is probably in a panic. A year ago the selection crew invited only two teams from the Big West despite the University of Nevada-Reno's 35-18 overall record and third-place conference finish.

This season the Big West's top four teams are all ranked in the three major polls, and to confuse the matter more, all four have picked up the minimum 30 wins (which has been the magic number to qualify for the NCAAs).

"I believe that this conference deserves four teams in the regionals," said LBSU Head Coach Dave Snow after his squad had defeated the Gauchos on Saturday. "This is a tough conference with some of the nation's best teams."

The second hurdle Santa Barbara must deal with is a bit more serious. While the NCAA has traditionally been hard on the West, it has specifically been brutal on UCSB. If you look at this year alone, the Gauchos have been snubbed by selection committees in many sports.

See NCAAs, p.3A

## UCSB Women's Tennis Season in Review

By Steven Large  
Staff Writer

If there is one aspect of sports that has been proven time after time, it is that a team's ability to compete cannot be determined on paper. A field, track, court, etc. — these are the only places where judgment on ability can be passed in the sporting world.

The UCSB women's tennis team confirmed that truth this season, as it developed from a team that on paper looked to be a little light in talent to a team that, on the court, nobody took lightly.

The Gauchos finished their season having accomplished the three goals that Head Coach Pete Kirkwood had set before the season started: beating a top 15 nationally ranked team, winning the Big West Conference and attaining an NCAA regional berth.

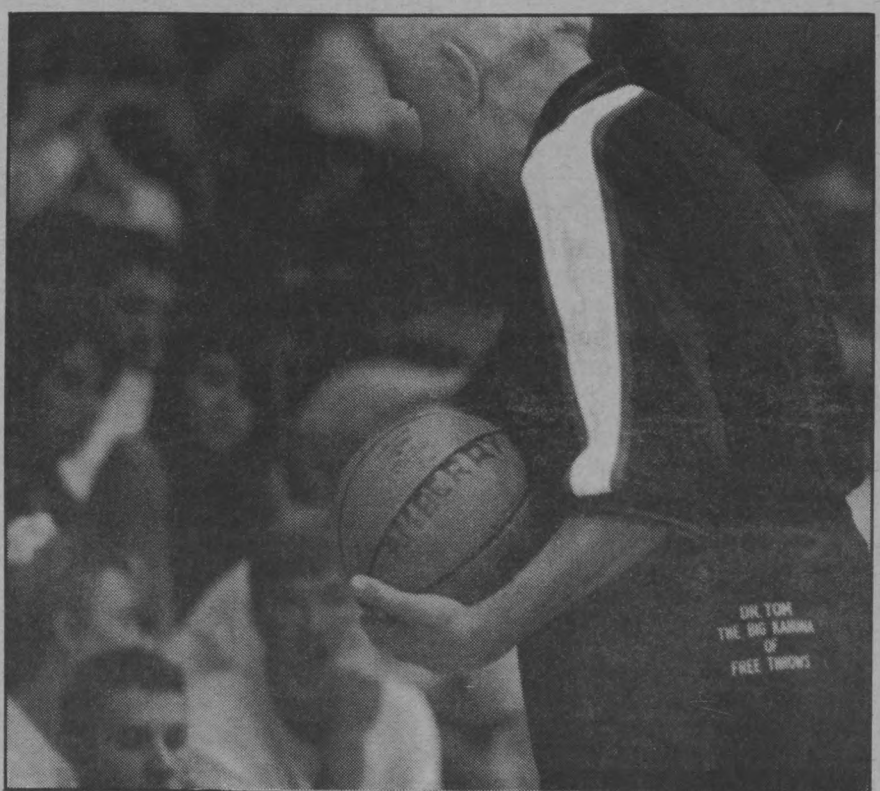
UCSB beat Brigham Young University on Feb. 6 to complete its first mission, then won the Big West Conference with a victory over UNLV on April 27 for its sixth straight title.

The Gauchos' season came to an end in the first round of that NCAA regional berth last Thursday, when the team lost to #11 Pepperdine 6-0.

Santa Barbara finished the season ranked 32nd in the nation with a 14-13 record, not exactly overwhelming numbers for a team that two seasons ago ranked 17th nationwide. But as in any collegiate sport, player personnel has a high turnover rate, and this season UCSB played with a lineup that only produced wins from its top four singles players and top two doubles teams.

A loss from any two of those six matches meant a loss

See SEASON, p.3A

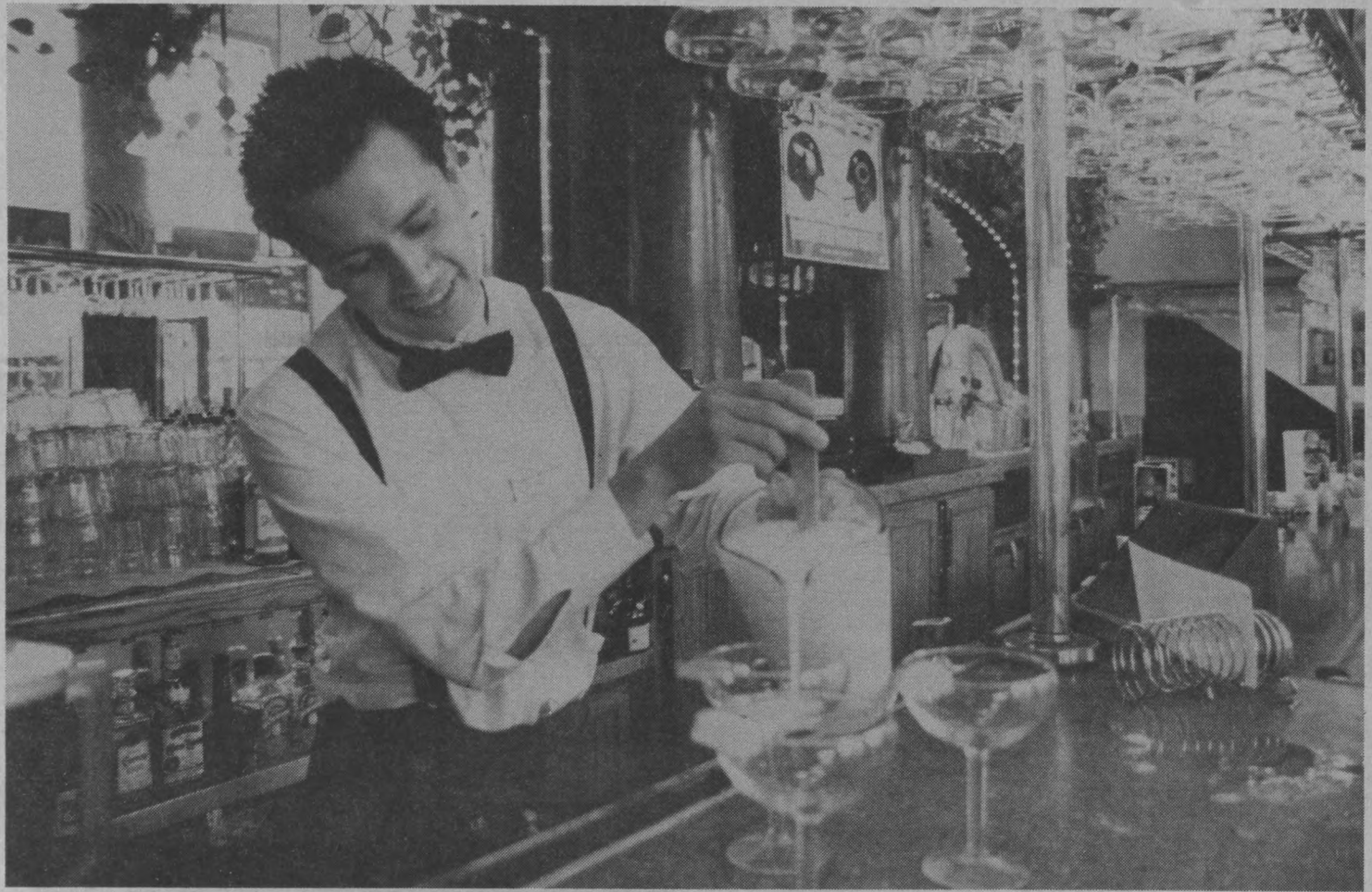
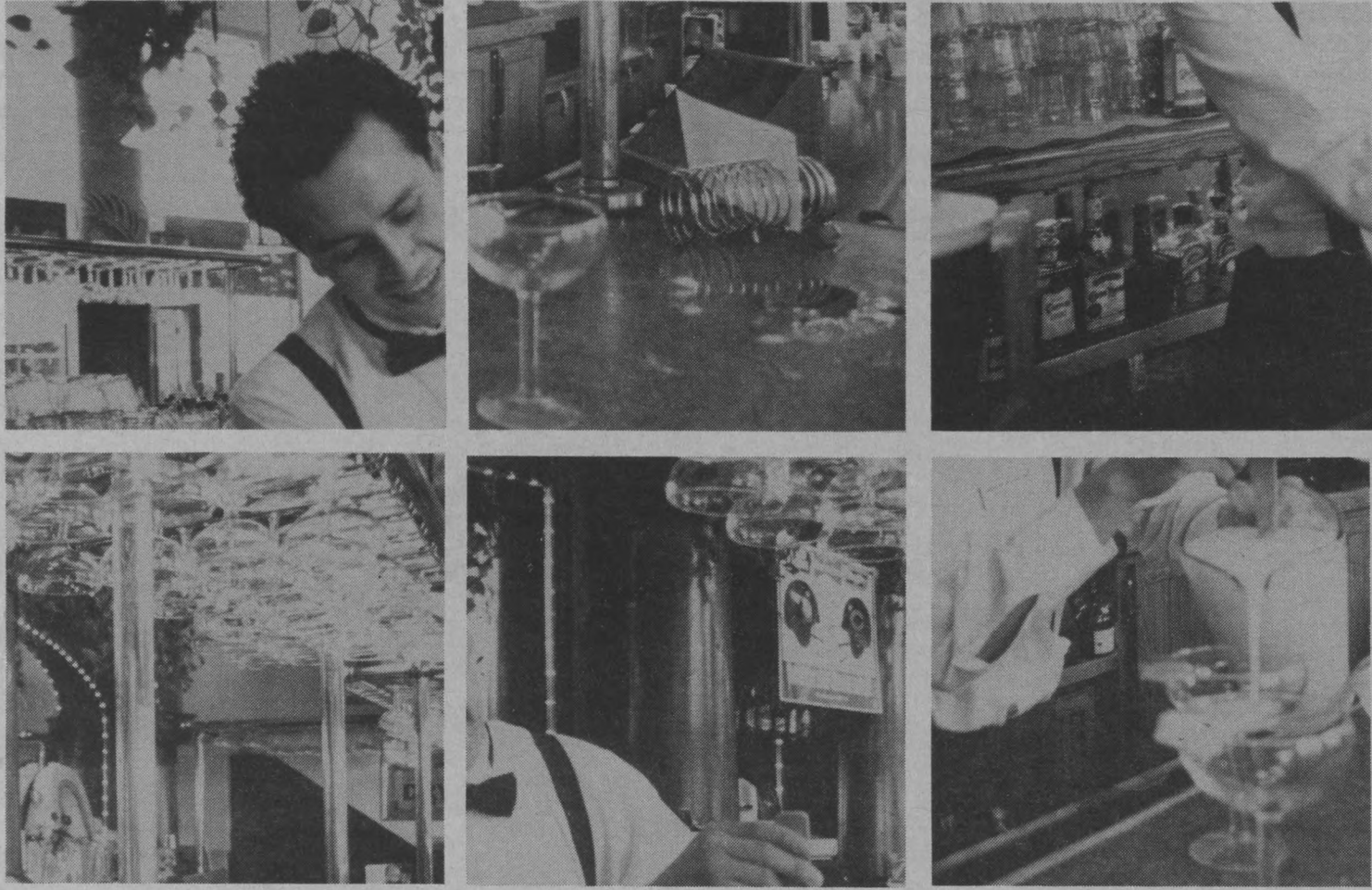


ERIN DERBY/Daily Nexus

## The Big Kahuna

Dr. Tom "The Big Kahuna" Amberry, world record holder for consecutive free throws made (2,750), gave a lecture in Rob Gym last Wednesday on the lost art.





# Get it Together

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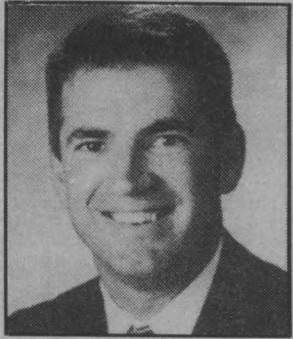
**Daily Nexus**



# LOSSES

Continued from p.1A  
ris blasted his third homer of the season, a shot just over the right-field fence off Long Beach closer Ryan Brannon, a first-team all-conference selection.

Snow said his team's continued success against the Gauchos — Long Beach won all four meetings between the two squads this season — can be attributed to his pitching staff.



**Bob Brontsema**

"I think it's a credit to our pitching," he said. "Our guys have pitched as well as they have all year against Santa Barbara."

Friday afternoon against 25th-ranked UNLV, UCSB sent its hottest pitcher to the mound, hoping to put itself in the tournament's winners bracket and take some pressure off the team in the second game.

Junior Brian Noyes, boasting a 2.77 ERA in his previous 22 innings, continued his hot pitching early in the game, giving up just one run through five innings. The bad news for the Gauchos was that the

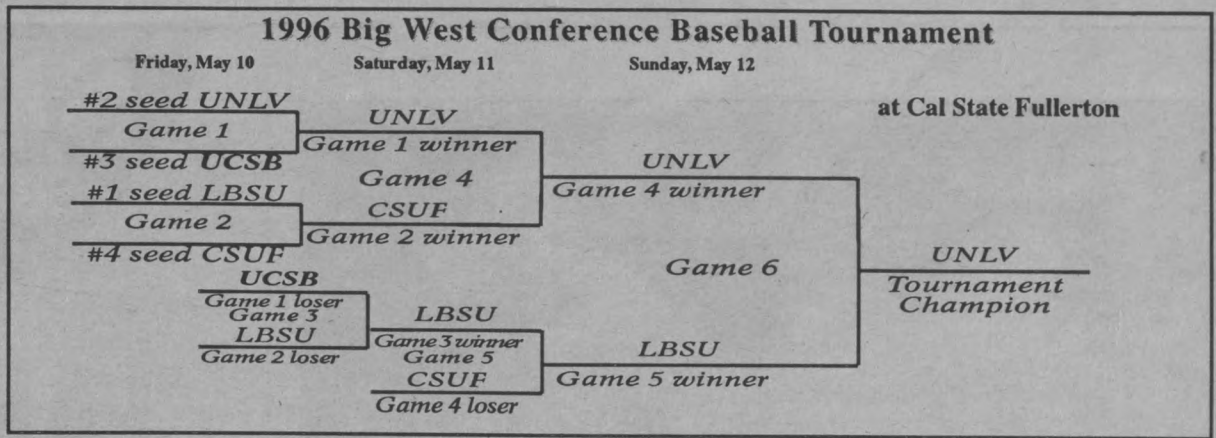
Rebels' starter Tom LaRosa, a first-team all-conference selection, was pitching just as well, resulting in a 1-1 tie through five innings.

In the sixth inning, however, Las Vegas began to get to Noyes, scoring one run in the sixth and seventh and putting two men on base in the eighth with one out before Brontsema went to the bullpen for junior closer John Minton.

With one out and runners on second and third, UNLV right fielder Ted Wilkes worked Minton to a 3-1 count. Instead of pitching an intentional ball to Wilkes to walk him and load the bases, UCSB elected to pitch to the eighth-place hitter. Wilkes greeted the Minton fastball by sending it over the center field fence for a three-run home run, his ninth of the season.

UCSB center fielder Wynter Phoenix was the only Gaucho to collect two hits in the game. Wilkes and third baseman Ryan Hankins each delivered two hits for the Rebels.

Although the Gauchos put one run on the board in the seventh and eighth innings, it wasn't enough and UNLV came away with the 6-3 win to advance to Saturday's game against fifth-ranked Cal State Fullerton. The Rebels won that game 9-8 and moved to the tournament championship game Sunday against Long Beach State. Defending national and conference champion Fullerton (42-12) was eliminated Saturday evening by Long Beach State 13-9.



# NCAAs

Continued from p.1A

The women's volleyball squad did not receive a first-round bye, men's volleyball wasn't invited to the Final Four and women's basketball was not granted an at-large bid despite winning the regular-season title.

Some believe that the hiring of Gary Cunningham as UCSB's athletic director last summer would smooth out the bumpy relationship with the NCAA selection committees. However, one man can do only so much and the main reason for Santa Barbara's lack of respect is simple — the Gauchos have not

been able to win the big games in recent years.

Had UCSB been able to capture just one game in the three-day tourney this weekend, the Gauchos would have all but reserved the hotel rooms (assuming they knew which region they'd be in). Instead, the team was the first to be eliminated and the first to begin lobbying for a second chance.

Whatever the result, Santa Barbara enjoyed its most successful season in recent history and has nothing to be ashamed of. Still, I'm sure it would be nice to be playing ball on Memorial Day, instead of frisbee at the beach.

# SEASON

Continued from p.1A

for the team. Consequently, the Gauchos played in more than their fair share of close contests — 10 of their 14 wins were by a 5-4 score while five losses were also by the score of 5-4.

Santa Barbara's ability to win the close matches twice as often as it lost them can be attributed to the match toughness that its top hitters showed all season. That toughness has brought the players some individual awards now that the team's season has ended. UCSB's #1 singles player, senior Jean Okada, ranked 25th in the country, has earned a trip to the individual NCAA nationals, as has the Gauchos' #1 doubles team of seniors Amelia White and Kelly Spencer, ranked 12th nationwide.

Okada and White were also named to the singles' Big West all-conference first team, while UCSB's top two doubles teams of White and Spencer and junior Page Bartelt and Okada were named to the doubles' Big West all-conference first team.

Bartelt and Spencer were also named to the singles' all-conference second team.

UNLV 6, UCSB 3	LBSU 2, UCSB 1
UCSB 0 0 0 1 0 0 1 1 0 3 5 4	UCSB 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 1 1 7 1
UNLV 0 0 1 0 0 1 1 3 6 9 0	LBSU 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 2 2 8 1
Noyes, Minton (8) and Lehr, LaRosa, Bauder (8), Luce (9) and Kleiner.	Bean and Lehr, Hueston, Brannon (9) and Snow.
E - Lehr, Parker, Tapia 2.	E - Parker, Snow.
3B - Young.	3B - Knupfer
HR - Wilkes (9)	HR - Morris (3)
SB - Weitzman, Tanner.	SB - Hardy
WP: Bauder (8-3) LP: Noyes (5-3).	Winner: Hueston (6-3) LP: Bean (9-3).



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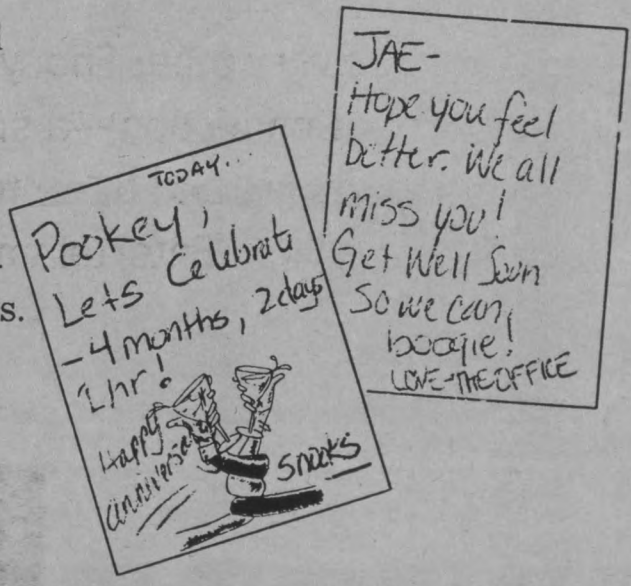
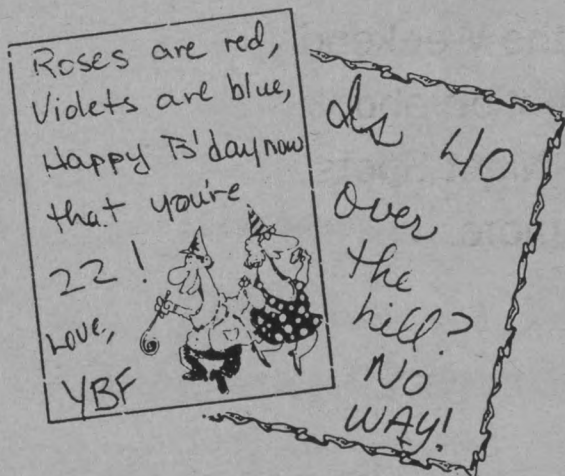
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