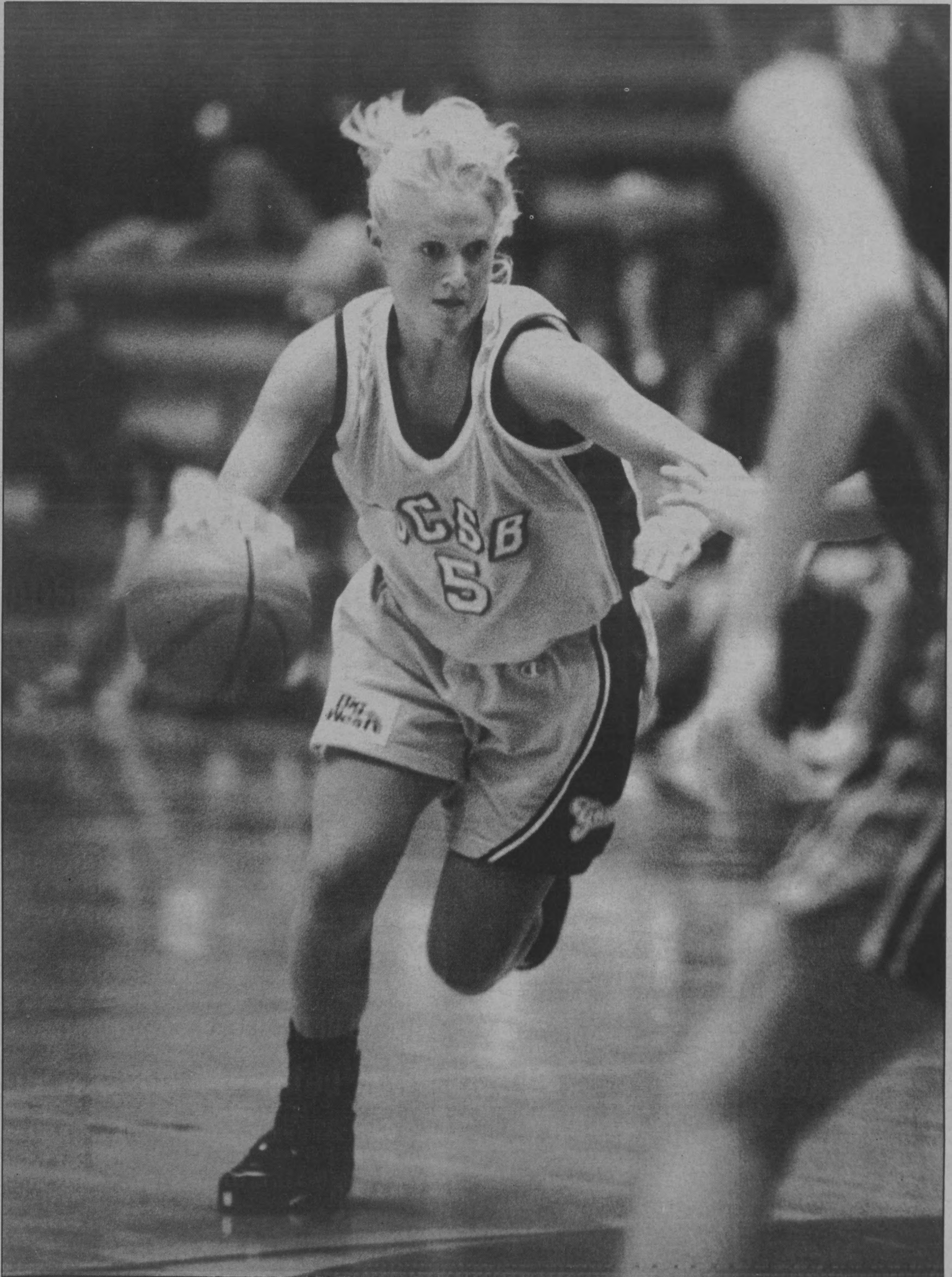


# Guide to the 1995-96 Big West Conference

Part Two: Women's Basketball Team-by-Team Analysis

Cover Photo:  
Junior Guard  
Erin Alexander



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By Leigh Rubin

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# Big West Women's Basketball Hopes to Ride Wave of Sport's Rising Popularity

■ Hawai'i, UCSB and New Mexico State Are Conference's Top Squads in 1996

As women's basketball moves into the post-Rebecca Lobo era, the state of the game has changed dramatically. Last season's National Player of the Year helped guide the University of Connecticut to an undefeated season and an NCAA championship.

With Lobo's performance, the women's game moved into the public eye for the first time since Cheryl Miller lit up opponents at USC.

Entering the 1995-96 season, the Big West Conference was hoping that some of the increased attention would be focused its way. Headlining the league is the exciting play of New Mexico State's Anita Maxwell, Cal State Fullerton's Shayla Bradshaw, University of Hawai'i's Tania Brunton and UCSB's Erin Alexander, who all look to vault the conference to the next level.

Midway through the season, the big-name players have not disappointed anyone. Maxwell is pacing the Roadrunners and the league in scoring en route to her third consecutive Big West Player of the Year honor. Bradshaw has shouldered much of the headline responsibilities for a young Titan squad that returned only two players, while Alexander continues to bomb away

from long distance as the Gauchos chase Brunton's Hawai'i squad for the top spot in the standings.

Although a select group of players may be drawing national recognition, no Big West squad has been able to crack the top 25 poll this year. The lack of respect from national pollsters is nothing new to the league, however. Last season the conference sent only one team, UC Irvine, to the NCAA tournament, where it was quickly bounced 88-55 by #4 Stanford University in the first round.

Unfortunately, this season looks no different, and with only six teams, not all 10, advancing to the Big West tournament this season, fewer teams will have the opportunity to advance to postseason play and gain exposure.

Hawai'i tops the league's standings with its perfect mark of 10-0 but has played many of its games at home. UCSB follows the Wahine, but unless it wins the conference tournament, it is doubtful that the Gauchos will make the dance even with its tough non-league schedule. Last year's regular-season champion New Mexico State Roadrunners round out the top three positions, but except for Maxwell, the Roadrunners have been inconsistent throughout the year as



well as in league play.

The University of the Pacific ranks fourth and is dominant across the front-line. However, the Tigers lack depth and scoring power in the backcourt, which has proven costly. Rookie Head Coach Dallas Boychuk is keeping Long Beach State competitive in the middle of the field, but the 49ers have been surging lately, winning four of its last five, and could make some noise in the conference tournament come March.

UC Irvine, the University of Nevada-Reno, San Jose State, UNLV and Cal State Fullerton round out the current standings and each team has struggled with sub-.500 records.

As the game continues to emerge, the Big West Conference needs to progress with it. And as Hawai'i, UNLV and San Jose State bid farewell this sea-

son to move into the Western Athletic Conference, the quality of the league will be greatly diminished. The survival of the division will rest solely in the hands of the UCSBs, LBSUs and CSUFs, all of whom have recruited young talent that will hopefully move the programs into the upper echelon of women's hoops.

This year the conference will also make another change as it moves its season-ending tournament from the glamorous strip of Las Vegas to the snow covered streets of Reno, Nevada. Like the men's tournament, the women's field will consist only of the top six teams according to regular season-ending standings. This change will attempt to prevent upsets such as ninth-seeded Fullerton's upset of #2 UCSB last season.

## HAWAI'I

By Brian Berger

# Perfect Conference Campaign in Sight

Rainbows Rebound from Last Season's 9th-Place Finish

The University of Hawai'i women's basketball team has everything going its way right now. Not only is the school located in one of the world's most desirable locations, but the Wahine are also in first place in the Big West Conference.

Hawai'i (16-2 overall, 10-0 Big West) cruised past conference rivals in the first half of the season and has remained perfect during its second run through league play. This season's record shows a team that's a far cry from last year's squad, which finished with a 6-20 overall mark and in ninth place.

Junior college transfer Tania Brunton has sparked the Wahine attack. The senior forward, who missed most of last season due to a knee injury, leads the squad with 17.9 points per game, which places her fourth in the league.

Joining Brunton across the frontline are senior forward Nani Flores and junior center Kendis Leeberg. The 6'2" Flores has returned to Hawai'i after spending a year at the University of Illinois-Chicago and leads the Wahine with 8.9 rebounds per game. Flores' mark ties her with two others for third place in the Big West, behind New Mexico State's Anita Maxwell and UC Irvine's Leticia Osegura, each of whom averages 10.5 rebounds. Leeberg has done a solid job at securing the UH post, where she tops the squad in field goal percentage (.506) and blocked shots per game (18).

"[Kendis] has lost a lot of weight, is very fit and trim this season and is playing well," said University of Hawai'i Head Coach Vince Goo.

The Hawai'i backcourt is led by shooting guard Nani Cockett. Like Brunton, the 5'11" sophomore competed in only four games last season due to a knee injury. This season, however, Cockett has added extra firepower for the Wahine, ranking second on the team with a 14.2 ppg average.

A major factor in UH's success is its schedule. The team has played 13 of its 18 games at home in the Special Events Arena, where it has an 11-2 mark. But to their credit, the Wahine have also been successful on the road with a perfect 5-0 record. However, the team still has games remaining at Long Beach State, UNLV, New Mexico State and UCSB.

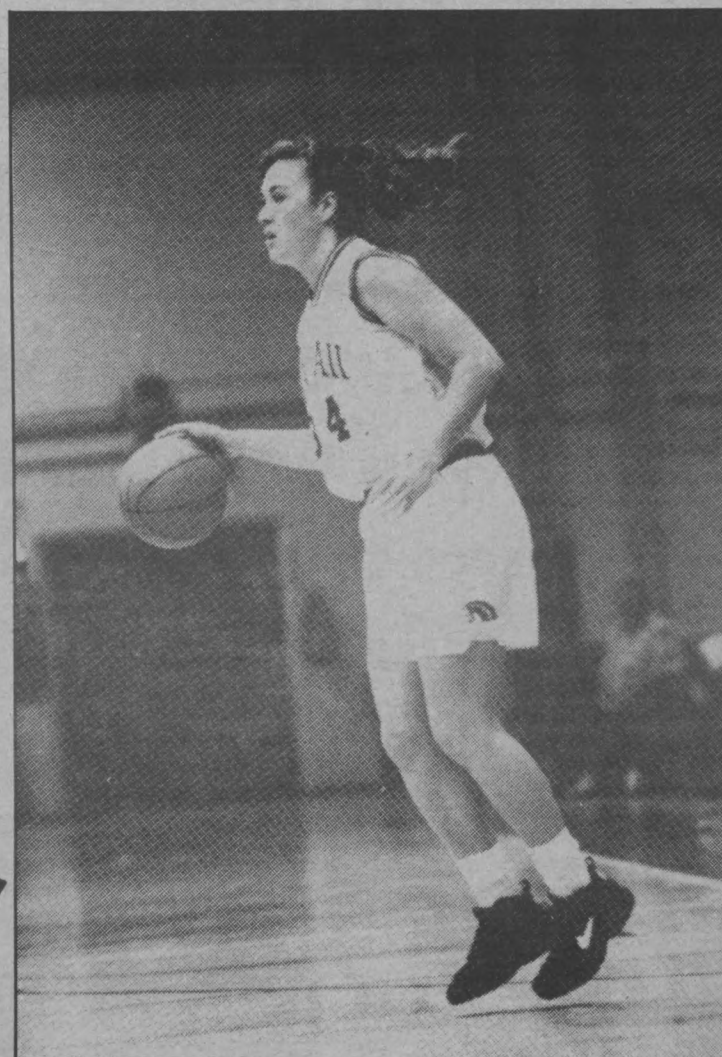
The bout against the Gauchos on Friday will be a rematch of the Jan. 21 contest in which Hawai'i defeated Santa Barbara 64-57. The game will also mark the final league matchup between the two schools, since the Wahine will move to the Western Athletic Conference next season.

The move could not come at a better time, according to Goo. "There are some things that we will miss: especially the flood waters in Santa Barbara, driving through fog in Stockton, the quarter-mile hike to the locker room in Las Cruces and the snow and icy sidewalks in Reno."

Currently Ranked First

### QUICK FACTS -

Location: Honolulu, HI **W**  
 Head Coach: Vince Goo **A**  
 (172-81, 9th year) **H**  
 1994-95 Finish: 6-20 overall, 4-14 **I**  
 in the Big West (9th place) **N**  
 1995-96 Record: 16-2 overall, 10-0 **E**  
 Big West



Big West Media Guide

**RAINBOW BRITE:** Off to a perfect start in Big West play, Hawai'i has rallied behind the success of senior forward Tania Brunton, who averages 17.9 ppg and 3.4 assists per game.



# UC SANTA BARBARA

By Brian Berger

## Gauchos Gunning for NCAA Tourney

### UCSB Bets on Backcourt and Bench to Spur Squad

Owning the identical record of last year's squad at the same point in the season, the UCSB women's basketball team must carefully look ahead in order to avoid last season's disappointing conclusion.

The Gauchos stand at 15-5 overall, 11-1 in the Big West, which places them only half a game behind top-seeded University of Hawai'i, a team that dealt Santa Barbara its lone league loss with a 64-57 home victory Jan. 21. However, UCSB has rebounded nicely from the defeat and will take on UH Friday night in the Thunderdome.

After opening the season with a victory over the University of Maryland at the Hawkeye Classic Tournament, UCSB dropped a pair of games to #5 University of Iowa and USC. The Gauchos then picked up a home victory over the University of San Diego to even their record before falling to the University of Utah and Brigham Young University on the road.

After the difficult road trip, Santa Barbara turned the season around with an eight-game win streak that included victories over national powerhouse University of Kansas as well as conference rivals UNLV and New Mexico State.

"We're pretty much in a focused mode right now," said UCSB Head Coach Mark French. "[We are] not taking anyone for granted."

Experience is a key factor for the team's success. French returned four starters from last year's squad, which finished second in the Big West, and is blessed with six seniors on the roster. Senior forward Sasha Scardino has been the biggest surprise for the team this season. Scardino, who was always highly touted for her defensive abilities, has proven that she can perform at the other end as well, averaging 7.4 points and 5.6 rebounds per game.

Senior center Amy Hughlett and junior forward Amy Smith join Scardino in the Gaucho frontline. Like Scardino, Hughlett has also raised her offensive performance this season, pouring in 10.1 points — second on the squad — and grabbing a team-best 6.5 boards per game.

With the emergence of Hughlett, some pressure has been taken off Smith, last season's All-Big West selection. Smith, who was plagued by a preseason injury, has begun to show signs of last season's performance as she averages 9.7 points and 5.4 rebounds.

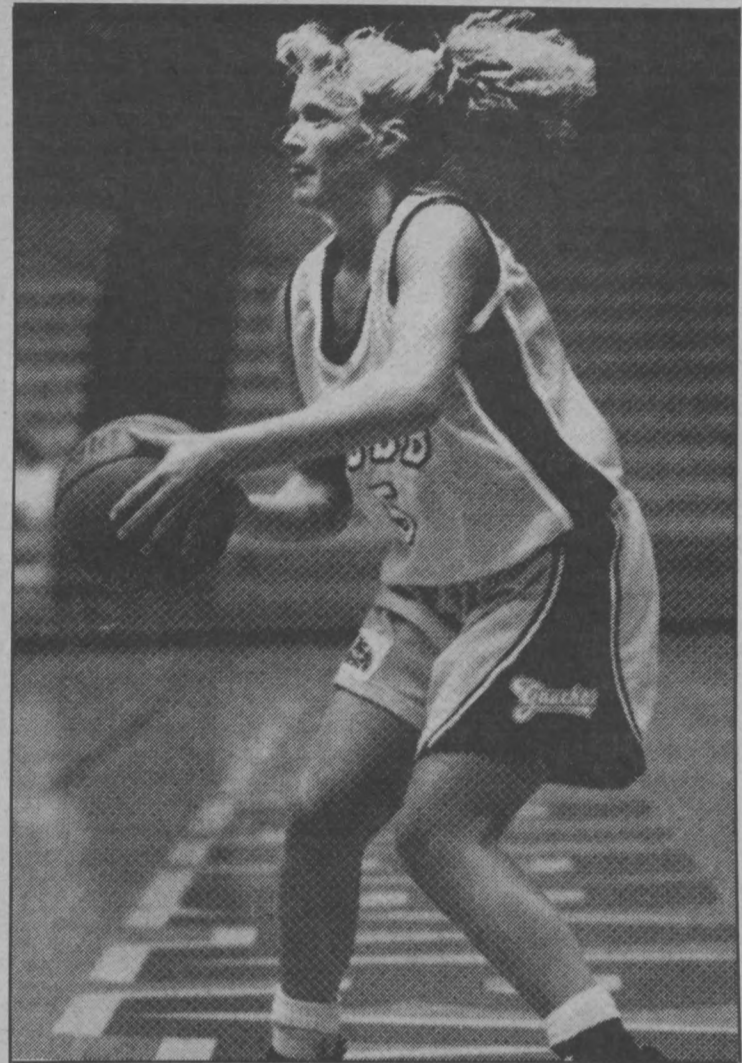
While Santa Barbara's frontcourt has been effective, the backcourt play has been nothing short of spectacular. Not only are guards senior Dio Aguinaldo and junior Erin Alexander dangerous offensively, they are also the top thieves in the conference, each averaging 2.9 steals a game, tying them for the top spot in the Big West.

Alexander has led the squad offensively all season, pacing the team with 19.1 ppg. Aguinaldo, known more for her playmaking than scoring, leads the team with 89 assists and averages 7.8 ppg.

#### QUICK FACTS -

Location:	G
Goleta, CA	
Head Coach:	A
Mark French	
(140-106, 9th year)	U
1994-95 Finish:	C
17-9 overall, 13-5	
in the Big West	H
(2nd place)	
1995-96 Record:	O
10-1 overall, 14-5	
Big West	S

Currently Ranked Second

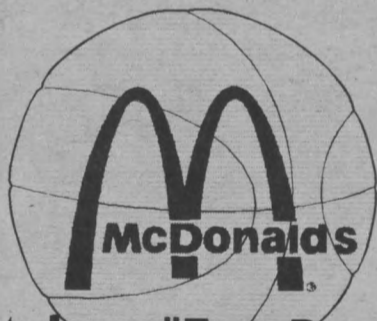


Big West Media Guide

**THREE-POINT WIZARD:** Junior guard Erin Alexander ranks second in the Big West with 19.1 ppg, a .437 three-point field goal percentage and a .744 free throw percentage.



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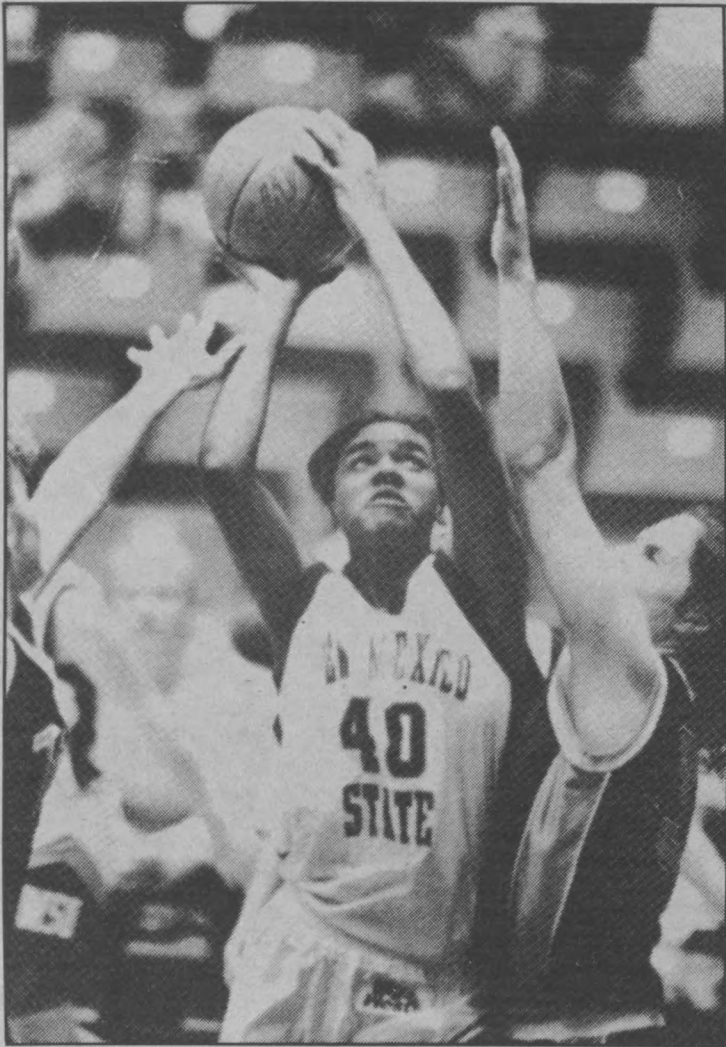
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# NEW MEXICO STATE

By Curtis Kaiser

## Roadrunners Play in Maxwell's House

Currently Ranked Third



Big West Media Guide

**BEEP! BEEP!:** Senior forward Anita Maxwell, whom some consider to be the best player in the history of the Big West, hopes to lead the Roadrunners to the NCAA playoffs.

Conference's Top Player Hopes to Lead Team to Title

### QUICK FACTS -

**Location:**  
Las Cruces, N.M.  
**Head Coach:**  
Mike Petersen  
(87-44, 4th year)  
**1994-95 Finish:**  
20-9 overall, 15-3  
in the Big West  
(1st place)  
**1995-96 Record:**  
13-8 overall, 8-3  
Big West

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P icked to finish second in the Big West in the coaches' preseason poll, the New Mexico State women's basketball team came into the season with hopes of winning the conference and advancing to the NCAA tournament.

With a 9-3 conference record and a 14-8 overall mark, the Roadrunners have lived up to most expectations. However, NMSU ranks third in the conference, due to the strong play of UCSB and the University of Hawai'i.

Two-time Big West Player of the Year Anita Maxwell leads the Roadrunners. A 5'11" senior forward, Maxwell averaged 19.2 points during her freshman and sophomore years, 25.4 points during her junior year and 22.6 points this season — tops in the conference and 13th in the nation. Her 10.5 rebounds per game place her at the top of the conference and 15th in the country, while her 2.4 steals per game rank her third in the Big West.

Among the all-time Big West career leaders, Maxwell ranks third in scoring, fourth in rebounding and first in steals. By the end of the season, she should be first in scoring and steals and second in rebounding.

Fourth-year Roadrunner Head Coach Mike Petersen, who has posted a 74-36 record with New Mexico State, is aware of Maxwell's tremendous contributions to the squad.

"Her job is getting harder each year because so much is expected of her and other teams are solely focusing on her," Petersen said. "She is not a flashy player. At first glance, there is nothing that jumps out at you. But Anita is the single most efficient player that I've ever worked with."

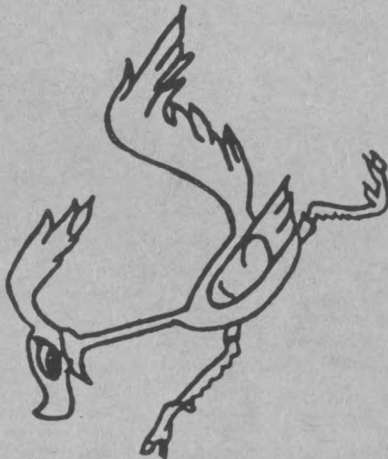
Maxwell is only 135 points away from becoming the first documented player, male or female, in NCAA history to register 2,500 points, 1,000 rebounds and 300 steals during a college career.

The Roadrunners have only one other player who averages double figures in scoring, on a squad that lacks a great deal of depth. At 5'11", senior forward Share Johnson chips in with 10.4 ppg and is tops in the conference and seventh in the nation with a .443 three-point shooting percentage.

"I think this is an area which has improved," Petersen said. "We have four players who can shoot from outside and two of them [Johnson and freshman point guard Stephanie Frisch] will be on the court at the same time."

Rebecca Fresquez, a 5'6" sophomore point guard, runs the offense and dishes out 5.0 assists per game, third best in the Big West. Wendy Ray, a 5'11" sophomore forward (7.0 ppg), and Frisch (8.0 ppg) round out the team's starting five.

New Mexico's hopes of success in the conference tournament and a possible berth in the NCAA tournament rest entirely on Maxwell's shoulders.



# PACIFIC

By Michael Cadilli

## Tigers in the Thick of Conference Hunt

McAllister and Blaisure Hold Down Middle for UOP

The University of the Pacific women's basketball squad is a team on the rise in the Big West, and in 1996 the Tigers expect to finish the same way they ended up last season, which was among the top teams in the conference.

Although UOP lost to UC Irvine in the conference tournament finals a year ago, it returned five seniors, two juniors and a very talented sophomore to be one of the most seasoned squads in the Big West.

"We have some experience with five seniors, and the returning three starters and Christa Randall was our sixth player. So I would say that we have experience at quite a few positions," said eighth-year Head Coach Melissa DeMarchi. "The fact that our team was close [to the NAAs] will hopefully mean they know what to expect."

Pacific (13-7 overall, 8-3 in the Big West) is tied for third in the standings, largely because it has a perfect 5-0 conference record at the Spanos Center in Stockton. The Tigers, picked to finish fourth in the conference, are proving that their experience and ability to win at home are valuable assets to build upon last season's success.

"The biggest expectation is to continue where you left off. That's kind of hard because as a coach, you want them to be ready from the gun," DeMarchi said. "Sometimes it takes players and teams longer to get adjusted to each other and I feel they should already be adjusted. I think that knowing what it takes on a daily basis is important. They know that, so they have to give that every day."

At the heart and soul of the UOP squad is 6'1" junior center Kate McAllister (All-Big West Tournament honors in 1995), who leads her team in points per game (18.0, sixth in the conference) and rebounds per contest (8.5, good for fifth).

Also in the frontcourt for the Tigers is 6'2" sophomore forward Missy Ross, an All-Big West Freshman in 1995 who has continued where she left off in '96 by ranking among the Big West leaders in steals (2.8) and blocks (0.9) per game. She also ranks highly in rebounds per game (8.0, ninth) and field goal percentage (.548, third).

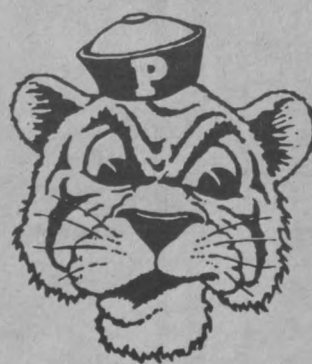
After UOP started the season with uncertainty about who would run the point, senior Tina Miteko stepped up to fill the void and has become the most prolific passer in the conference with her 6.0 assists per contest. Senior captain Christina Randall backs her up and is ninth in the Big West with 3.3 assists.

"I think you have to look at Christina Randall and Kate McAllister as our top returners. Missy Ross is another top returner, who made the all-freshman team last year," DeMarchi said. "Actually, we played a lot of kids last year, so every returning player has game experience."

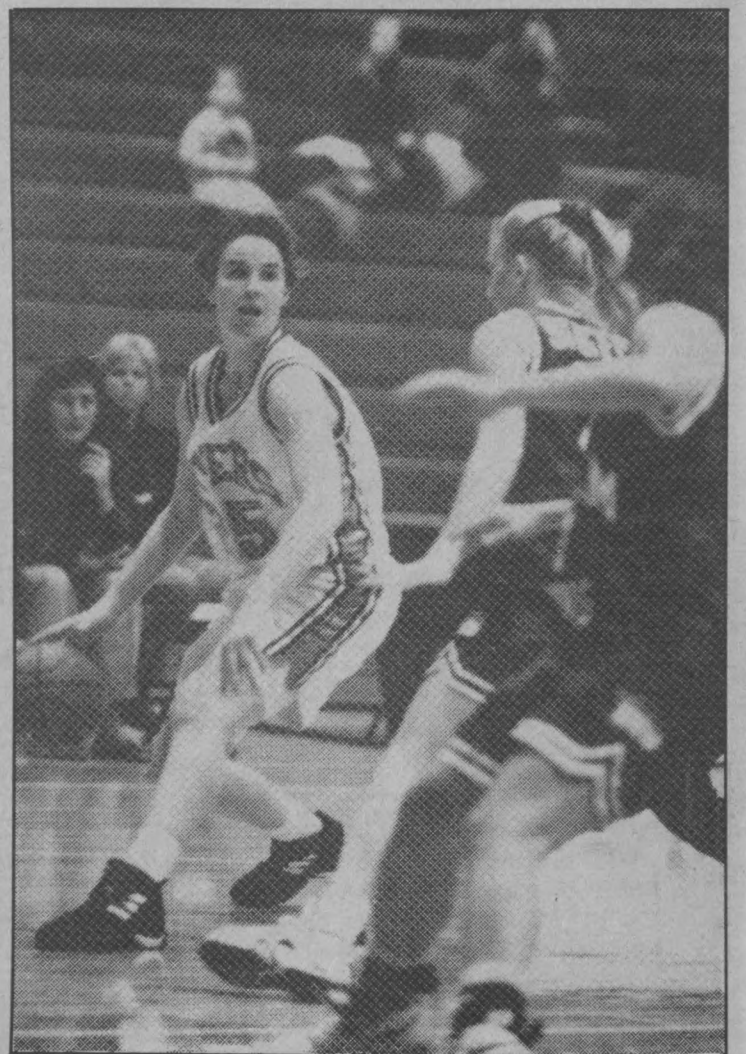
### QUICK FACTS -

**Location:**  
Stockton, CA  
**Head Coach:**  
Melissa DeMarchi  
(117-107, 8th year)  
**1994-95 Finish:**  
20-15 overall, 11-7  
in the Big West  
(4th place)  
**1995-96 Record:**  
13-7 overall, 8-3  
Big West

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Currently Ranked Fourth



Big West Media Guide

**TIGERS UNCAGED:** Senior Connie Blaisure and the UOP Tigers have surprised many in the Big West this season. The squad hopes to continue its success at Reno in March.

# LONG BEACH STATE

By Curtis Kaiser

## Long Beach Fighting for Spot in Reno

### 49ers Look to Shot-Blocker Davis to Anchor Defense

**S**tarting the year with a new head coach, Dallas Boychuk, as well as a core of returning upperclassmen, the Long Beach State women's basketball team had high expectations for the 1995-96 season.

While those lofty goals have been tempered a bit by the 49ers' mediocre record (11-9 overall, 6-5 Big West), the Beach nevertheless has an excellent shot at finishing among the conference's top six teams and advancing to the Big West Tournament in Reno, Nev., in March.

Long Beach is led by a trio of seniors who all score in double figures: guard Akia Hardy, forward Kim Barfield and center Ja'net Davis.

The 5'6" Hardy, who earned a Big West Conference honorable mention last year, leads the 49ers with 15.3 points per game and is tops on the team and in the conference with 6.7 assists.

The 5'11" Barfield, also a Big West honorable mention selection last season, has been a force inside for the Beach, pouring in 13.6 ppg while shooting .519 from the floor and pulling down 7.2 rebounds per game.

Before the season started, Boychuk had called Davis the most improved player on the squad.

"She came into the games as a reserve last year and did not see a whole lot of minutes, and I think that now she realizes that this is her senior year," Boychuk said. "I know her capabilities and I think she's shown up to this point what she can do."

Davis, a 6'4" senior center who has developed into one of the nation's top inside players after having come off the bench for the 49ers for two seasons, averages 13.1 ppg and 8.3 rpg. Davis was named the Big West's Co-player of the Week on Feb. 5, along with Cal State Fullerton senior guard Shayla Bradshaw. She leads the conference and ranks third in the nation with 3.3 blocks per game.

Having a balanced offense is a definite plus for Boychuk.

"I want all five of our starters to be scorers. I think that is an advantage for this year's team because they realize that the scoring can come from anywhere," she said. "If someone is being shut down, somebody else can take over."

Rounding out the starting five for Long Beach are 5'10" junior forward Adara Newidonski, who averages 6.9 ppg and 3.5 rpg, and 6'1" junior guard Michelle Esparza, who pours in 8.2 ppg and grabs 4.4 rpg.

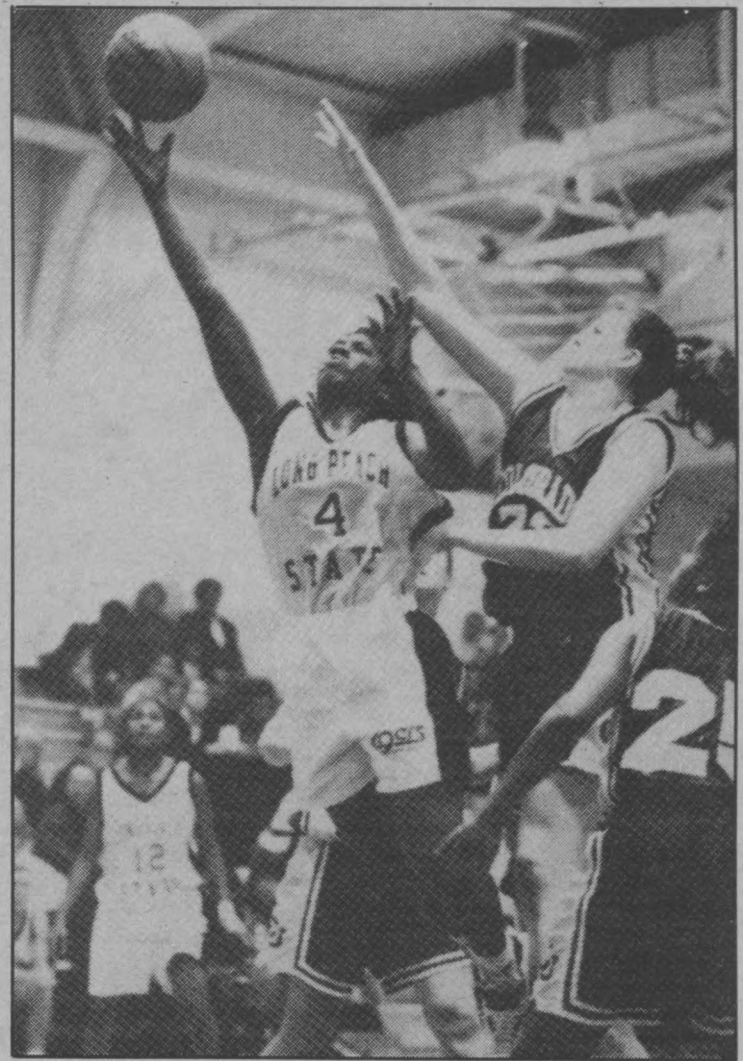
The Beach's definite weakness is its bench, however. Besides the starting five, only 6'2" junior forward Toby Metoyer (6.4 ppg) averages more than three points a game.

The 49ers, picked to finish eighth in the Big West preseason coaches' poll, are slowly rising in the conference standings, having won four of their last five conference games.

#### QUICK FACTS -

**Location:**  
Long Beach, CA  
**Head Coach:** 4  
Dallas Boychuk 9  
(11-9, 1st year) E  
**1994-95 Finish:** R  
13-14 overall, 10-8 S  
in the Big West  
(5th place - tie)  
**1995-96 Record:**  
11-9 overall, 6-5  
Big West

Currently Ranked Fifth



Big West Media Guide

**DIGGING FOR GOLD:** 49er senior forward Kim Barfield teams up with senior Ja'net Davis to provide Long Beach State with one of the strongest inside games in the Big West.



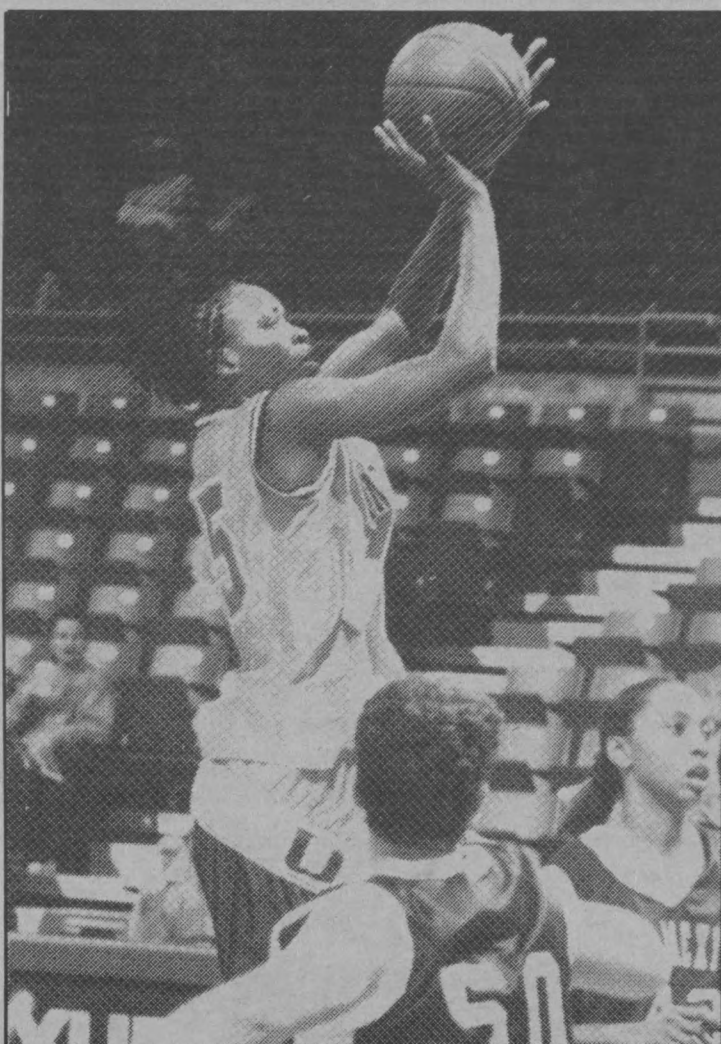
# UC IRVINE

By Jenny Kok

## '95 Big West Champs Struggling in '96

Currently Ranked Sixth

### High Expectations Lowered by Poor UCI Performance



Big West Media Guide

**BASHEER DELIGHT:** Senior Anteanter center Allah-mi Basheer averages 17.8 ppg, shoots .507 from the field, pulls down 7.7 boards per game and blocks 1.2 shots per game.

#### QUICK FACTS -

**Location:**  
Irvine, CA  
**Head Coach:** A  
Colleen Matsuhara N  
(40-91, 5th year) T  
**1994-95 Finish:** E  
19-11 overall, 12-6 A  
in the Big West T  
(3rd place) E  
**1995-96 Record:** R  
9-11 overall, 4-7 S  
Big West

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**A**fter shocking the conference last season by winning the Big West tournament, the UC Irvine Anteaters were given some respect in the 1995 preseason coaches' poll, being picked to finish fourth in league play. Maybe that was a little too much respect.

Eleven games into conference play and currently in sixth place, the Anteaters (9-11 overall, 4-7 in the Big West) have yet to show signs of life for the postseason. With the sudden loss of senior point guard Tamera Thomas, UCI will have a lot of work to do if it hopes to finish among the top six and head to Reno for the Big West tournament. Thomas' strong defense was expected to be a key factor if Irvine is to succeed, according to UCI Head Coach Colleen Matsuhara.

"Hopefully, Tamera will take up where she left off last season," Matsuhara said. "We need this to occur to be successful. Tamera is strong and has provided other guards with stiff challenges."

Thomas left UCI 12 games into her senior season after being unable to resolve personal conflicts with Matsuhara. Until her departure, Thomas was third on the team in scoring, averaging 10.8 points per game, and was the defensive leader, averaging 2.11 steals per game.

Besides the loss of Thomas, the Anteaters have been plagued with other problems. Having lost its last three games, UCI continues to struggle on the floor, shooting 42.3 percent overall and 41.7 percent in conference play. The team has shot under 45 percent in 14 of 20 games.

To make matters worse, Irvine is averaging 22.9 turnovers per game. As a team, UCI has committed 20 or more turnovers in 10 of the last 11 games. With no depth in the lineup, it doesn't look like things will get much better.

Any success that Irvine might have this season can be credited to post players Leticia Oseguera and Allah-mi Basheer, who are making their marks on the Big West.

Oseguera, a 6'0" sophomore, is tied with New Mexico State's Anita Maxwell for most rebounds per game with a 10.5 average. From the field, she is shooting fourth-best in conference with a .532 percentage and is ninth-best with 15.8 points per game.

After being named 1995's Big West Tournament MVP, Basheer, a 6'2" senior, has continued her winning ways by being one of the top 10 players in six different conference individual statistics.

Offensively, Basheer ranks fifth in scoring with 17.8 points per game and is eighth with a .507 percentage from the field. At the charity stripe, she has hit 71.1 percent of her shots, good for seventh in the conference.

She is third defensively in the Big West, blocking 1.2 shots per game and is eighth with 7.7 rebounds a game.

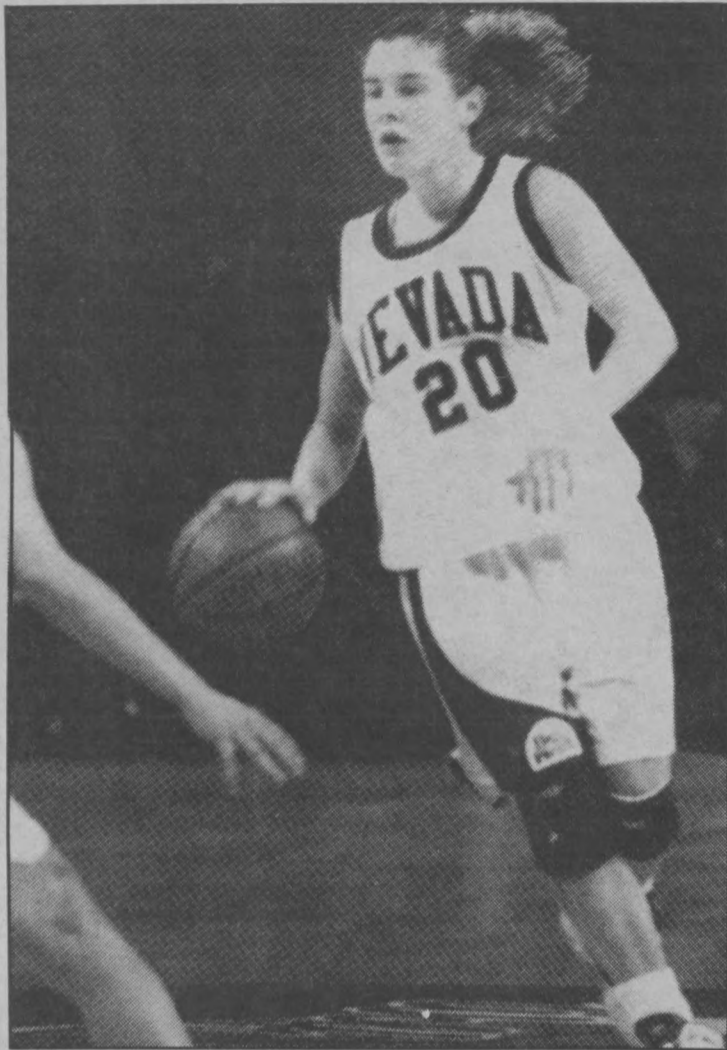
# NEVADA-RENO

By Brian Berger

## UNR Certainly Not Leader of the Pack

Currently Ranked Seventh

Nevada Playing for Pride in Remainder of Campaign



Big West Media Guide

**BOTTOM OF THE PACK:** Sophomore guard Carissa Meyer and the Nevada Wolfpack have had a rough season. The squad hopes to finish the season out of the Big West cellar.

### QUICK FACTS -

Location:	W O L F  P A C K
Reno, NV	
Head Coach:	
Ada Gee	
(18-55, 3rd year)	
1994-95 Finish:	
10-18 overall, 6-12	
in the Big West	
(8th place)	
1995-96 Record:	
5-13 overall, 3-8	
Big West	



The University of Nevada-Reno has been in the Big West Conference for three years now. Unfortunately for fans of the Wolf Pack, the first two and a half years were a learning experience for the women's basketball team.

In its first season UNR went 4-22 overall, 4-14 in league. The 1993-94 season proved to be even more disappointing as the Pack went winless in conference games and mustered only a 3-24 overall mark. The first part of last year did not look promising either, as Nevada was held winless in its first eight Big West games and produced only a 2-13 record.

However, after the dismal start, UNR managed to turn its program around, finishing the season with a 10-18 overall record and a 6-12 conference mark, placing the team eighth in the league.

Before the season, Nevada Head Coach Ada Gee was optimistic about her squad's chances this year. "We think a winning season is a very realistic goal, and we definitely expect to be a part of the six-team Big West tournament field in early March," she said. "If we can get there, and the tournament is on our court, who knows what might happen?"

Currently, Gee's hopes of a winning season seem unlikely. The Wolf Pack have struggled this season and occupy seventh place with a 3-8 conference record and a 5-13 overall mark.

One bright spot for Nevada has been the play of forward KaTrina Crenshaw. The 6'0" junior from Greenville, Ala., has nearly doubled her offensive contributions this season. Crenshaw's 17.2 points per game has surprised many Big West opponents, but Gee is not surprised by her numbers.

"KaTrina overcame back problems last season to become one of our most consistent players down the stretch. She has tremendous talent and the potential to dominate the inside game while also being a strong force on the boards."

While Crenshaw's scoring average places her sixth in the conference, she is also tied for third in the Big West in rebounding with 8.9 boards per game.

Forward Ieasha Donadelle assists with the frontcourt duties. The 6'2" sophomore ranks third on the squad in both scoring and rebounding with 9.7 points and 5.3 boards. Brenda Owens also adds support up front in her first year with the team. The Reno native transferred to UNR after playing for St. Mary's University.

The Wolf Pack backcourt is guided by three sophomores who have all contributed this year. Shawna Franceschini, who led the squad in scoring last season, is second on the team with 10.9 ppg and ranks 10th in the Big West with 3.1 assists. Noelle Fable is the three-point specialist, having knocked down a team-best 17. Carissa Meyer handles point guard duties for the Pack but has struggled this season, averaging only 5.2 points and two assists.

# SAN JOSE STATE

By Alex Nugent

## SJSU Eager to Turn the Page on 1996

Spartan Freshman Kylie Page Is Bright Spot on Squad

Currently Ranked Eighth

Carrying on the tradition similar to its men's basketball program, the San Jose State women's basketball team is finding itself at the bottom of the Big West Conference standings again this year.

After posting a dismal record of 4-24 overall and 2-16 in the Big West last season, the Spartans have eclipsed their record from a year ago with a current mark of 7-12 overall, 2-8 in conference.

A crop of fresh new faces could be attributed to San Jose's improvement as SJSU Head Coach Karen Smith starts three freshmen a game.

"The fact that we are a young team may be a blessing or it may be a curse," Smith said. "It's a blessing because our opponents are unfamiliar with our abilities, but our lack of experience could negatively affect our success."

Freshmen Kylie Page, Natasha Johnson, Erin Irving, Becky Hunt and Gail Dennis have made considerable impacts on the team by helping the Spartans in offense and defense.

Page is definitely the diaper dandy on the team — and maybe in the conference — as the forward from Australia leads the team in scoring, averaging 17.0 points, while pulling down 5.7 boards a game.

So far this season, Page has scored double figures in 13 of 19 games and posted a career-high 33 points against Cal State Sacramento. She ranks seventh in the Big West in scoring and field goal percentage (.518) and has been named Big West Player of the Week twice this season.

"This season some of the pressure will be taken off Kari Steele, an honorable mention All-Big West Conference selection and our leading scorer from last year," Smith said. "We have other key players stepping up as offensive threats, such as Becky Hunt, Kylie Page and Gail Dennis. This makes us a more difficult team to defend because there will be less focus on one specific individual."

Steele ranks second on the team in scoring with 10.1 ppg and ties for second in rebounds at 4.1 rpg. The 5'8" junior guard from Oregon also leads the team in assists with 55 for the season.

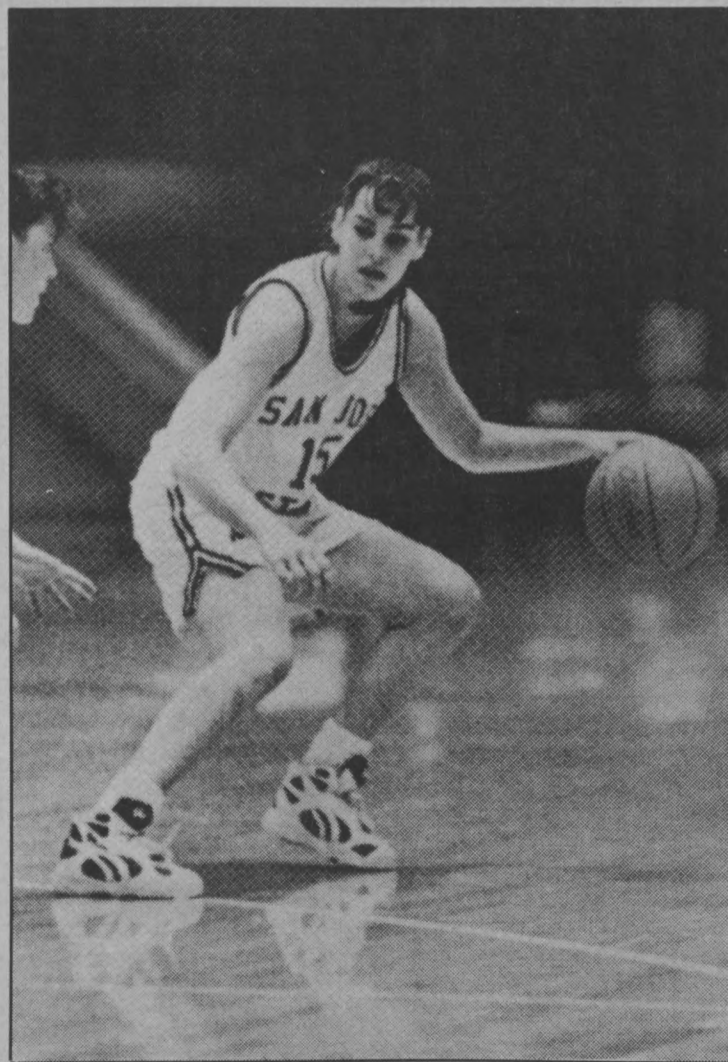
Ranked eighth in the Big West, the Spartans have only two victories in conference, and those have come against UNLV and Cal State Fullerton — the second-to-last and last-place teams in the Big West, respectively.

As a team, SJSU ranks first in the conference in three-point field goals made per game (5.1), third in three-point field goal percentage (.315) and fifth in steals per game (9.2).

"We look to fast-break at every opportunity this year," Smith said. "With the new recruiting class comes a much quicker lineup, which enables us to run with any team on the court."

### QUICK FACTS -

Location:	S P A R T A N S
San Jose, CA	
Head Coach:	
Karen Smith	
(30-70, 7th year)	
1994-95 Finish:	
4-24 overall, 2-16	
in the Big West	
(10th place)	
1995-96 Record:	
7-12 overall, 2-8	
Big West	



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**WOMAN OF STEELE:** Junior guard Kari Steele has been one of the few bright spots this season for San Jose State. She leads the Spartans in steals with 2.2 per game.

# UNLV

By Chris Oyama

## 9th Place UNLV Says Bye to Big West

### Rebels' Last Conference Run Is Not Memorable One

Coming off a season it would simply like to forget, this year's UNLV Lady Rebels basketball team is looking to simply stay afloat in the Big West Conference.

For Head Coach Jim Bolla, who just announced this will be his final year as Rebel coach, last season was perhaps the worst he had ever experienced.

"In all my 18 years of coaching, I've never had a team with as many injuries as we had last season. It was as bad as I think it can get in terms of things going wrong," he said.

Gone from last year's squad were perhaps two of the greatest players ever to suit up for the Lady Rebels, guard Gwynn Hobbs and center Tracy Titus. Hobbs finished sixth on the all-time UNLV scoring list, ranked second in assists and connected more three-point shots than any Lady Rebel. Titus ended her career with 446 rebounds, an average of almost five each game.

"What we lost with Hobbs and Titus finishing their career was a known entity. Right now we don't know what kind of team we have. That works both ways because our opponents don't either," Bolla said.

Lost also was guard Farrah Wynne, who was forced to retire from playing basketball due to a plethora of physical setbacks.

The lone starter returning from last year's squad is junior guard Loriessa Randle, who averaged 7.6 points and 4.3 rebounds last season.

"Loriessa is a leader in many ways," Bolla said. "She cares about every aspect of the program. She's the kind of kid you always want on your team."

The Lady Rebels currently rank ninth in the Big West with a 2-9 record in the conference, 3-15 overall. Once again, injuries have plagued the team.

Senior guard Desiree Weimann, junior forward Marija Sladojevic and sophomore center Summer Peterson all have spent significant time on the injured list. In addition, junior guard Elana Adams and sophomore center Nakia Jones have both been suspended from the team indefinitely for violating team rules.

A bright spot has been the play of Randle, who leads the team in scoring with 12.7 points per game and is second on the squad in rebounding, averaging almost six per game. Senior forward LeAnn Kazmer — who is second on the team in scoring, averaging 11.3 ppg — also has stepped up her play.

Hoping to salvage what's left of the season, Bolla plans to use a balanced attack against opponents. But with only six players suiting up, the task may be more difficult than expected.

"As of right now, we're going to have a balanced attack," he said. "We'll move the ball inside and outside and utilize the strengths."

#### QUICK FACTS -

Location: Las Vegas, NV  
 Head Coach: Jim Bolla (299-114, 14th year)  
 1994-95 Finish: 11-15 overall, 10-8 in the Big West (5th place - tied)  
 1995-96 Record: 3-15 overall, 2-9 Big West

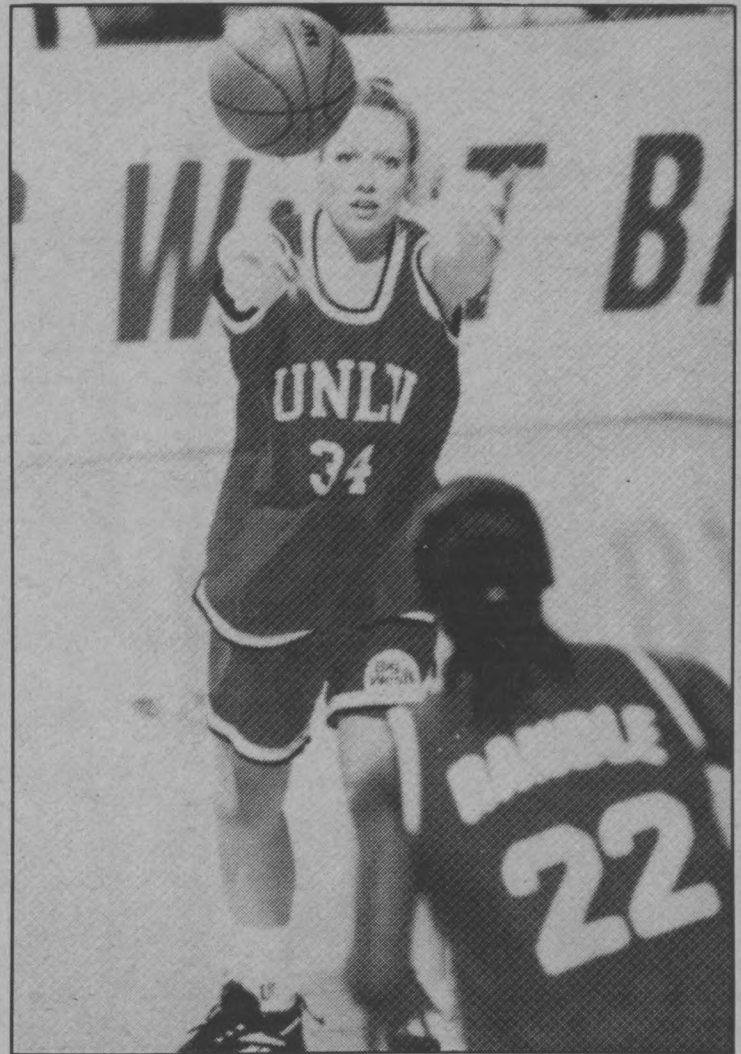
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UNLV



Rebels

#### Currently Ranked Ninth



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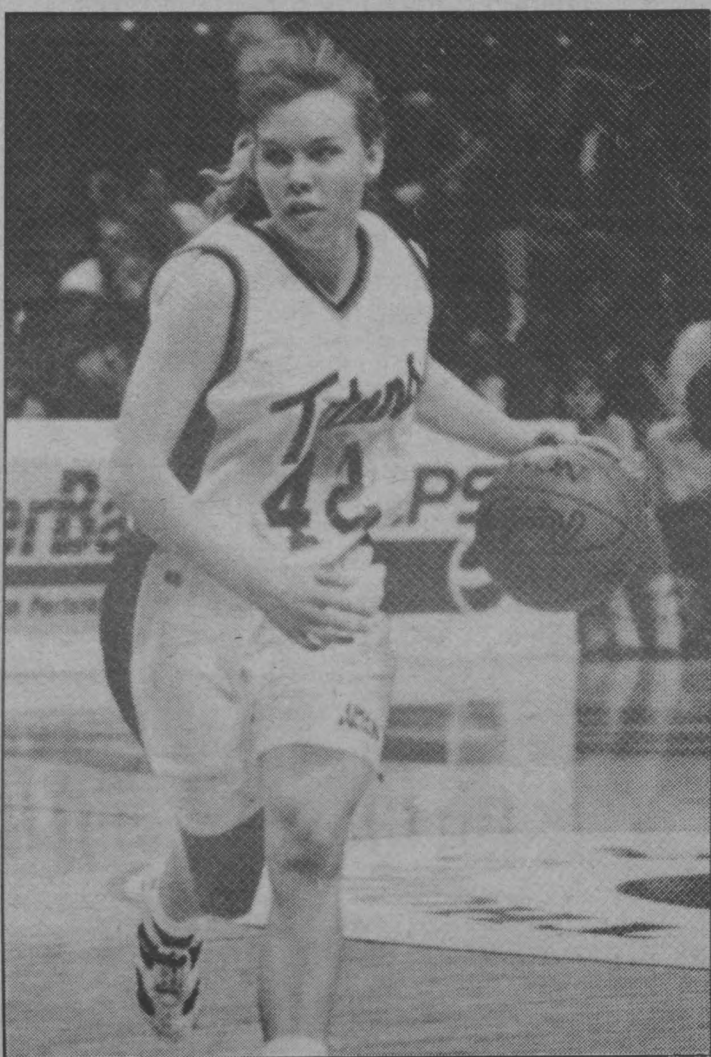
**THE KAZ:** Senior forward LeAnn Kazmer has been the Lady Rebels' top player in their final year in the Big West Conference. Kazmer leads the squad with 6.7 boards per game.

# CAL STATE FULLERTON

By Deborah Rafii

## '96 Fullerton Season Is Titanic Disaster

#### Currently Ranked Tenth



Big West Media Guide

**TITANIC SCORER:** Senior guard Shayla Bradshaw is averaging 16.9 points per game and shooting a conference-leading .818 from the charity stripe for the last place Titans.

### Bradshaw Keeps CSF in Games But Can't Do It All

#### QUICK FACTS -

Location: Fullerton, CA  
 Head Coach: Deborah Ayres (31-72, 4th year)  
 1994-95 Finish: 14-15 overall, 8-10 in the Big West (7th place)  
 1995-96 Record: 4-16 overall, 1-10 Big West

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Despite the fact that the Cal State Fullerton Titans are in last place, the green squad gave the Gauchos quite a scare Feb. 4 at the Thunderdome, taking the game to double overtime before falling to UCSB 90-87.

With only two returning players, the Titan team consists mostly of freshmen just getting a taste of collegiate basketball.

Senior guard Shayla Bradshaw and junior forward Kim Cram are the only two athletes familiar with the Big West Conference level of play. Bradshaw is the only full-time starter back from the 1994-95 season.

"Shayla is our stabilizer," Fullerton Head Coach Deborah Ayres said. "She has developed more confidence with this young group. They look up to her and respect her. Her on-the-floor leadership has been displayed more so than in her previous three years."

The Titans (4-16 overall, 1-10 in the Big West) collected their only conference win over UNLV in mid-January but have suffered several close losses to the University of Hawai'i, San Jose State and UCSB.

The Fullerton lineup was a question mark at the start of the season, especially as to guards. Although the coaching staff had hoped Bradshaw would fill some of the void left after former senior guard Marisa Frial left the point, the sole senior starter leads the team with an average of 20 ppg in conference and plays most of the game at the two or three spot.

"We need to get a lot of scoring from Shayla, and playing point would detract from that role," Ayres said.

Playing strong at point guard is freshman Andrea Thieme, whose key three-point shot forced the Gauchos into the first overtime in their last meeting with CSUF. Thieme averages 7.5 ppg in conference play and displays tremendous athletic ability and talent as a newcomer.

At center, freshman Dee Braxton has played an integral role on the team, averaging 16 ppg and leading the squad with 8.1 rebounds per contest.

"Dee gets better every day. She is one of the most talented athletes we have had," Ayres said. "She never was taught some of the fundamentals, so it is really exciting to see her learn things and visibly get better day by day."

The Titans may not have too many impressive numbers to indicate they have played good basketball this season, but the young athletes will gain much experience by the time the Big West tournament rolls around.

The end of the stretch for Fullerton includes three home matches vs. UC Irvine, New Mexico State and UNLV before the Titans go on the road to match up with SJSU and Hawai'i.



Gauchos

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