

conference
outlook
1990-91

A Daily Nexus
Basketball Supplement

THE

BEST

AND THE

REST

OF THE


Big West

**NEXUS
PROPHECY**

- 1 UNLV
- 2 NMSU
- 3 UCSB
- 4 LONG BEACH
- 5 PACIFIC
- 6 UTAH St.
- 7 FRESNO St.
- 8 IRVINE
- FULLERTON
- 10 SAN JOSE St.


PREDICTION BEFORE LEAGUE PLAY BEGAN

SJSU




Terry Cannon

UOP




Don Lyttle

USU




Kendall Youngblood

UNLV




Larry Johnson

FSU




Wilbert Hooker

UCSB




Gary Gray

LBSU




Lucious Harris

CSUF




Wayne Williams

UCI



Ricky Butler

NMSU



Randy Brown

January 7, 1991

THE BEST...

2A •

No Doubt About It, Rebels Are Team to Beat ... Again

After blowing out Duke, 103-73, for the NCAA championship last April, the UNLV Runnin' Rebels couldn't bear the possibility of not being able to defend their title this year.

Shortly after their win, the NCAA Infractions Committee banned the Rebels from participating in this season's tournament because of recruiting violations stemming from 1977. The committee eventually reversed its decision, allowing the Rebels to compete in the tournament this season in exchange for probation in 1992.

UNLV Athletic Director Dennis Finrock felt that had the players been banned from playing in the tournament, their attitude toward this season would have been affected.

"It's one thing to be ranked number one in the nation, but it's another thing to be able to play for it and be able to prove that you are," he said. "I think (the reversal of the decision) has given our kids a whole new outlook."

The reason for their plain-and-simple dominance is the return of four starters, three of whom are seniors:

Power forward Larry Johnson is back after becoming the school's first-consensus All-American after averaging 20.6 points, 11.4 rebounds and 2.1 assists per game. He was also named the Big West Player of the Year, and was a member of the All-NCAA Final Four team.

Slick forward Stacey Augmon is one of college basketball's top defensive players, as well as one of its most complete small forwards. Last season, he averaged 14.2 points, 6.9 rebounds, 3.7 assists and 1.8 steals on his way to earning Honorable Mention All-American honors. He, too, was selected to the All-NCAA Final Four team.

Senior guard Greg Anthony begins his third season as the Rebels' versatile point guard after shooting 11.2 points per game and dishing out 7.4 assists last year. A scrappy defender, he broke his own record with 106 steals in a season, and was also an Honorable Mention All-American.

The only non-senior returnee is junior guard Anderson Hunt. Hunt was named the MVP of the Final Four after he scored 20 points against Georgia Tech in the semifinal game and 29 points against Duke in the title game. He was also selected to the All-Big West Conference Honorable Mention team.

Center George Ackles returns after a redshirt season to complete the starting five, a lineup being compared to the Indiana Hoosier teams of the 1970s, particularly the team that cruised to an undefeated season and the national championship in 1976. Stan Morrison, former UCSB Ath-



Larry Johnson (right) looms larger than ever in the Big West as the senior forward, guard Anderson Hunt (top right) and the rest of the Rebels begin their quest for another conference and national title.

Nexus File Photo

Nevada—Las Vegas

Coach: Jerry Tarkanian (18th year).
Record Last Season: 35-5 (16-2, tied first).
Key Loss: David Butler (15.8 ppg).
Key Returnees: Larry Johnson (20.6 ppg, 11.4 rpg), Stacey Augmon (14.2 ppg), Greg Anthony (11.2 ppg), Anderson Hunt (15.9 ppg).
Key Newcomers: H Waldman, Spencer Elmore.
Quick Fact: Team was selected as the number-one team in the pre-season by *The Sporting News*, and *Street & Smith*.



Rob Carpio

letic Director and current Head Coach of the San Jose State Spartans, told the *San Jose Mercury News* that the Rebels "are the best college (team) in the last 10 years," making them once again the favorite to win the national title.



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La Cumbre is Breaking the Rules

NMSU Seeks Second Straight NCAA Bid

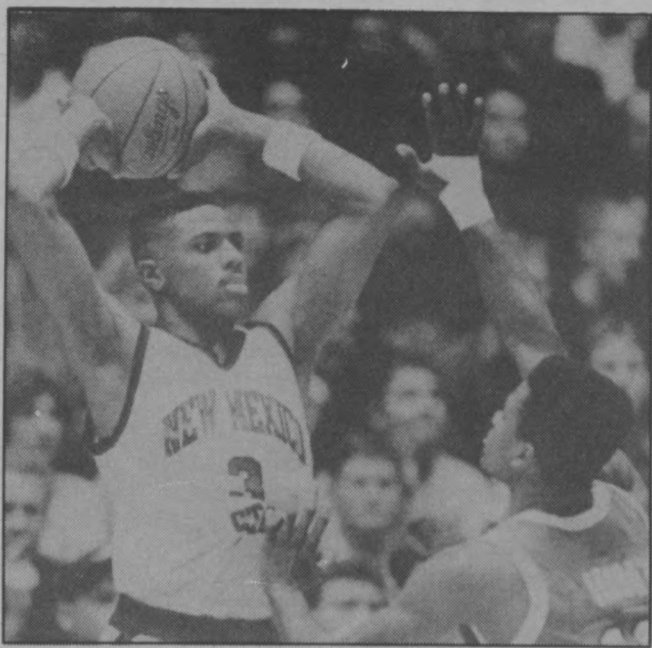
Poor New Mexico State. After trudging along in virtual anonymity for the last 10 years, mainly due to a bunch of average seasons, the New Mexico State Aggies emerged in the 1988-89 season as a force to be reckoned with in the Big West. That season, the Aggies won 21 games and finished second in the conference, only to be shunned by the NCAA tournament committee.

Last year, the Aggies served notice to the tournament committee that they wouldn't take "no" for an answer. New Mexico State finished 26-5 and tied UNLV for the conference title. However, the Aggies found it practically impossible to emerge from the shadow cast by the Vegas juggernaut.

This season appears to hold more of the same for the Rodney Dangerfields of college basketball. New Mexico State has bolted to a 9-1 record this year and has even cracked the AP Top 25 poll. With UNLV's continuing dominance, however, the Aggies are once again finding themselves lost in the shuffle. Or are they?

"Last year, we didn't get into the polls until we were 14-1," Head Coach Neil McCarthy said. "Of course, we had the win over Vegas at that time — that propelled us — but you'd think even a 13-1 record would get us some mention. This year, we've been in the polls for the last couple of weeks."

There's no doubt that McCarthy's team is deserving of the recognition it's getting. NMSU is currently outscoring its opponents by an average of 24 points per game and have forced over 20 turnovers per contest. As with last year's team, the current Aggie squad focuses primarily on defense.



Guard Randy Brown helped lead NMSU to a 26-5 record last year.

15.3 ppg average, followed by frontcourt-mate Tracey Ware with 14.2 ppg. Both grab over seven boards per game.

In the backcourt, guards William Benjamin and Randy Brown average 13 ppg, while Brown averages six assists from his position at point. Sub Terry Bennett has played only two games but has canned 11 of 15 three-point attempts. In fact, the whole team has a penchant for putting it up from behind the stripe.

"We're shooting a few more (three-pointers) than we did last year," McCarthy admits. "We have better shooters this year from three-point range, so we've opened it up a little bit."

"Opening it up" may be an understatement. The Aggies are firing 19 three-point attempts a game, hitting 38 percent of them. Even the 6'8" New has gotten into the long-range act. After not attempting a trey during all of last season, New has already connected on over a dozen this year.

"It's always been a part of my summer league game," New said. "Some assistants were watching me shoot them in summer league, and they told coach Mac. He fit it into the offense."

Rodney Dangerfield has complained of his wife, "She gives good headache." The New Mexico State Aggies, trying to break the Dangerfield mold, will probably cause headaches for quite a few teams before the 1990-91 campaign is over.

— Dino Scoppettone

New Mexico St.

Coach: Neil McCarthy (6th year).
Record Last Season: 26-5 (16-2, tied 1st in Big West).
Key Losses: Keith Hill (12.9 ppg, 3.9 apg), James Anderson (13.6 ppg, 6.9 rpg).
Key Returnees: Randy Brown (13.2 ppg), Reggie Jordan (10.6 ppg), Michael New (10.4 ppg).
Key Newcomers: Terry Bennett, Tracey Ware, David Lofton.
Quick Fact: Brown and New were also teammates at Chicago's Collins High School and at the University of Houston, and took classes together at Howard County JC in Texas.

"We're an exceptionally quick team at all positions," center Michael New said.

"We have the offense, but this is a defensive team. Our defense has won us a lot of games."

New is currently second in the Big West conference with an average of 8.1 rebounds per game while adding 11.7 points. In fact, all the Aggie starters are averaging double figures in points. Forward Reggie Jordan leads the team with a

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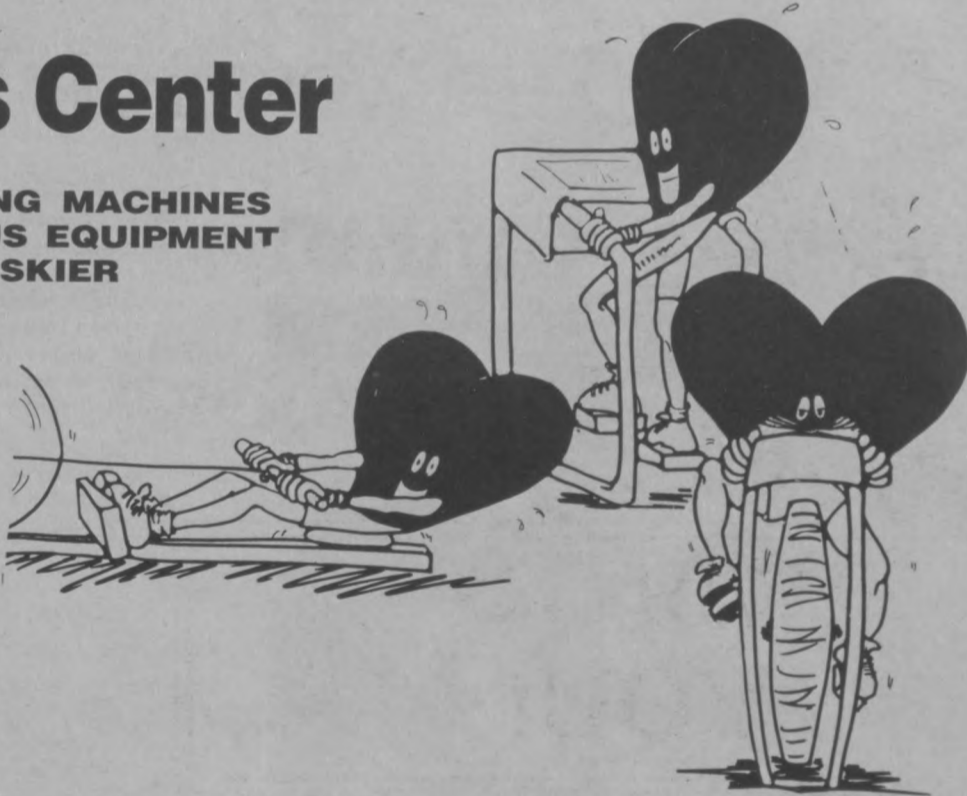
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THE REST...

Newcomers Take Key Roles As Gauchos Eye NCAA Bid

The questions of where do the Gauchos go from here (without Carrick and Eric) have finally worn off and, as some have noted, there is "New Thunder in the Dome" — or at least that's what a recent poster proclaims.

The truth is that new and old faces show up on the Gaucho roster for 1990-91 as the post-DeHart/McArthur era has kicked in. This new look includes last season's sturdy standbys Gary Gray, Paul Johnson and Lucius Davis, while guards Ray Kelly, Ray Stewart and forward Sam Robson freshen the lineup.

Santa Barbara's main advantage this year appears to be its depth, as 10 players were averaging more than 10 minutes a game heading into the conference opener against San Jose State. Among the surprises include the play of guard Mike Meyer and forwards John Sayers and Bob Erbst, who have added size to the Gaucho lineup. Erbst and Sayers have also filled in for Robson, who suffered from the flu early in the season and now has a sprained left ankle.

"Our league is always tough; whatever happens in pre-

UC Santa Barbara

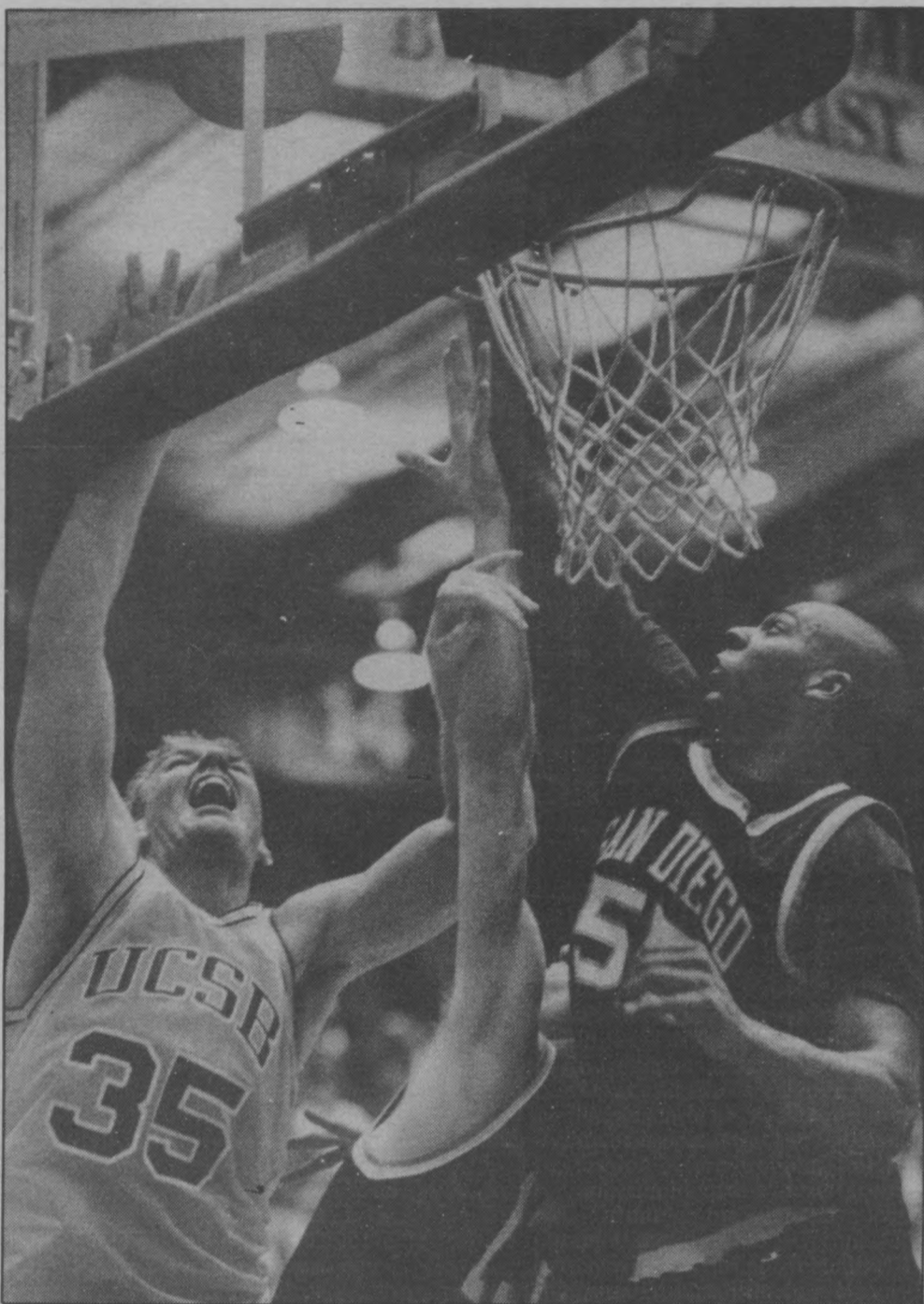
Coach: Jerry Pimm (8th year).
Record Last Season: 21-9 (13-5, 3rd in Big West).
Key Losses: Carrick DeHart (15.9 ppg, 3.9 apg), Eric McArthur (15.6 ppg, 13 rpg).
Key Returnees: Gary Gray (12.9, 7.7 rpg), Paul Johnson (10.3 ppg), Lucius Davis (6.5 ppg), Idris Jones (7.6 ppg).
Key Newcomers: Ray Kelly, Sam Robson, Ray Stewart.
Quick Fact: Dick Vitale named guard Ray Kelly as one of the nation's most-important transfers in his college basketball magazine.

season type of games doesn't really foretell what's going to happen," Sayers said. "Everything changes, (from season to season), and that happens in every league, especially in ours because it has gotten so much better with UOP and Fullerton playing really well this year — anybody can beat anybody."

Sayers' point is valid. Aside from New Mexico State and UNLV, no less than three teams have a legitimate chance in the battle for the following top spots and the Gauchos are certain contenders.

Among those who will determine if Santa Barbara is a contender or pretender is Gray. The senior had clocked in the most minutes (33.5 mpg) heading into conference play and brings down 7.1 boards while scoring 16.4 points per game. Davis, last year's sixth man, has stepped up and become the team's leading scorer, averaging 17 ppg during pre-conference play. And while not being the scoring threat that many had predicted, Johnson usually draws the toughest defensive match-up in a game. Kelly (4.4 apg) gives the team a legitimate point guard for the first time in two years.

Road-tested and a bit weary, the Gauchos relish the thought of returning to Santa Barbara as seven of their first 10 contests have been away.



DAVID ROSEN/Daily Nexus

UCSB forward Gary Gray, otherwise known as Mr. Consistency, has averaged 33.5 minutes and 16.4 points per game before heading into conference play. The senior was also voted a preseason Honorable Mention All American.

"We've had a lot of game practice and we've been successful. We've won six of our first 10 games and seven of those 10 have been on the road," UCSB Head Coach Jerry Pimm said. "So we've had a successful winning season so far in the preseason, basically, and now it's time for us to get back into school and a normal routine. I think that will help us, especially when we get back to practice."

— Melissa Lalum

Lyttle, Demp

Tigers Roarin' to Take T As Big West's Most Imp

Despite the fact that the University of Oregon are coming off their first winning season and are returning four starters and are the most-improved teams in the Big West problem. As their level of play has increased the rest of the conference.

"I probably think of us as being better than people think of us (as) being. I think we're third, fourth, fifth spots," UOP basketball coach Bob Thomason said. "I know we're better than we were last year."

Returning starters for the Tigers are guard Lyttle (.459 FG, .375 three-point), and guard Demp (FG, .368 three-point) and Anthony Williams (assists). Forward Rich Ressa, who started last season, has been moved to the bench in favor of Glenn Griffin and JC transfers Randy Lavender round out the team.

Thomason is impressed with the play of Lyttle, Jordan and Griffin, citing that Jordan despite not getting a lot of quality stretch minutes while backing up Demps and Woods. That Griffin, a Stockton native, showed he could contribute immediately, causing Thomason to reverse their initial decision to redshirt him. The decision seems to be wise, as Griffin has averaged 15.5 and 4.5 rebounds, has blocked 10 shots and is a leading candidate for Big West Freshman of the Year.

"Glenn Griffin is a big surprise," Thomason said. "He just gets better and better. He's making everybody makes, but I think that by the end of the (league play) he should be playing like a star."

The Tigers started the season off slow with their first five games, but have gone on to win their only losses coming to UNLV and San Diego State, who beat them on a last-second shot.

Pacific's major problem this season has been injuries. Demps has a chronic knee injury that has caused occasional rest, and Morphew has played only a few weeks while suffering from strep throat. But the worst injury has befallen Woods, who despite having a stress fracture in a toe has managed to play one you have to live with. He wears a boot and he's not playing basketball. He's playing basketball, it's very courageous of him to do that.

Despite the injuries, Thomason says the team is confident for the next week we'll know where we'll be. "We've got Irvine and San Diego State on the road, and it will be kind of a determining factor. We can go into Irvine and Santa Barbara and win."

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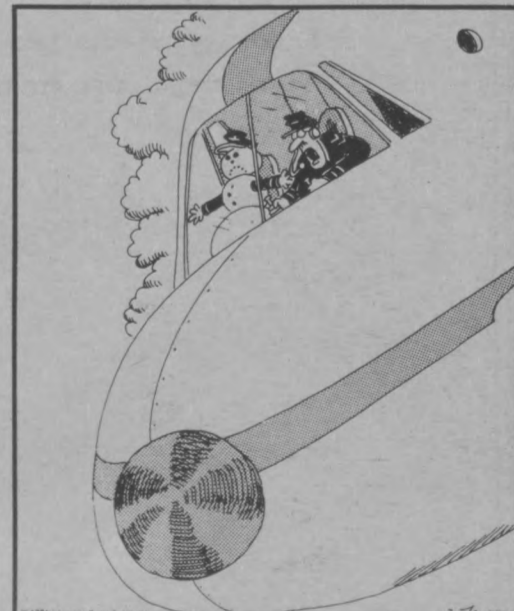
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University of the Pacific Tigers winning season since 1986-87, and are considered one of the Big West, they still have a... has increased, so has that of

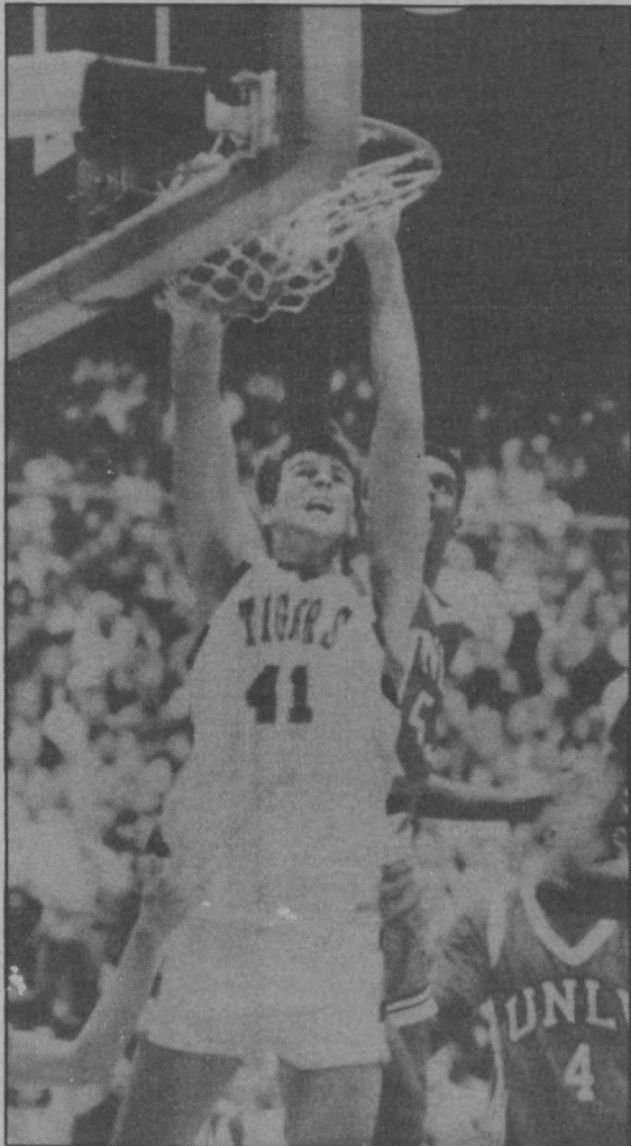
being better than maybe other I think we're in a fight for the UOP basketball Head Coach w we're a better basketball ar."

Tigers are center Don Lyttle and guards Dell Demps (.477 Anthony Woods (.533 FG, 53 who started much of last season on bench in favor of freshman ers Randy Morphey and the team.

th the play of his two fresh- g that Jordan has played well ility stretches of playing time I Woods. He has also noted e, showed in practice that he y, causing the coaching staff n to redshirt him. Their deci- ff in has averaged 6.2 points d 10 shots in 10 games, and is West Freshman of the Year. prise," Thomason said. "He He's making mistakes that k that by the second half of playing like a sophomore." on off slowly, dropping four ave gone 4-2 since then with UNLV and Loyola Mary- a last-second basket.

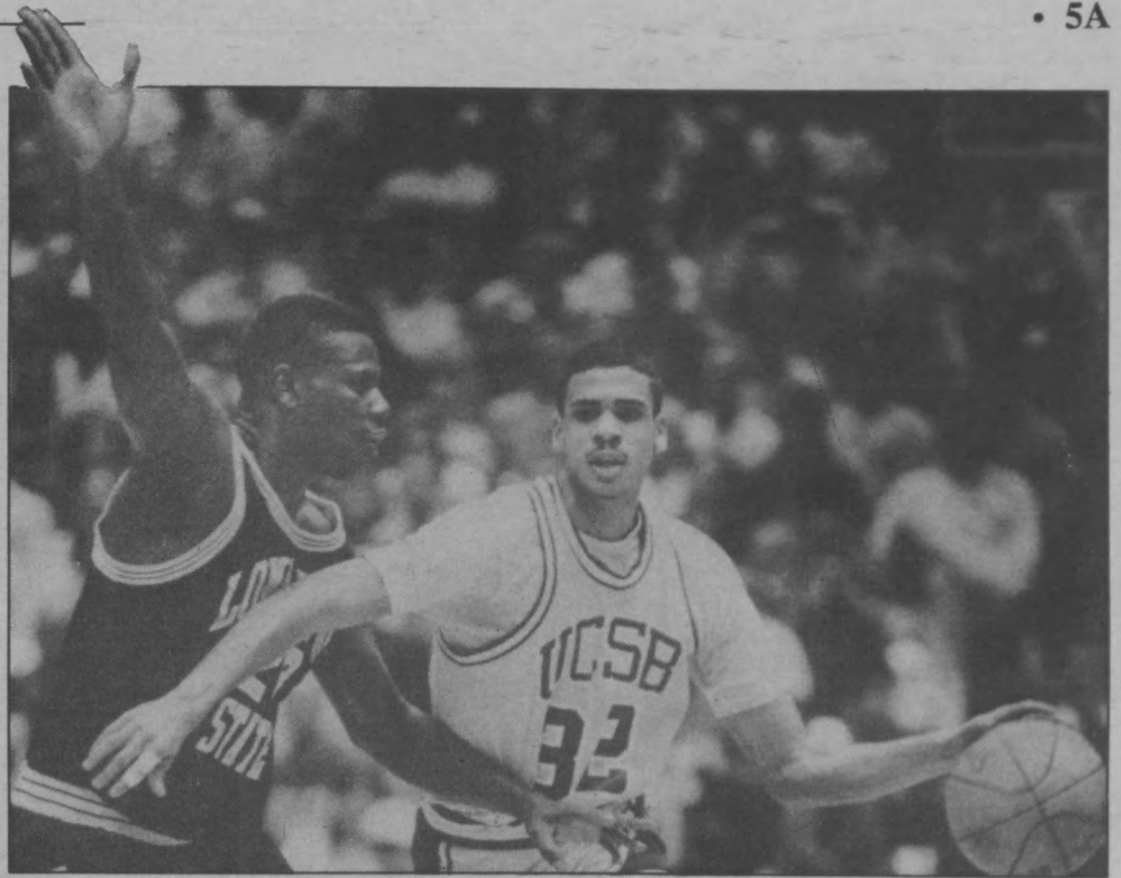
s season has been with inju- ee injury which requires oc- as played sparingly in recent strep throat and bronchitis. llen Woods, who is playing e in a toe on his left foot. "It's e wears a walking cast when He's playing well for us, and o do that," Thomason said. son's optimistic. "I think by ere we'll fit in (the league) a and Santa Barbara on the determining factor whether ta Barbara and see if we can

— Ross French



Don Lyttle (41) plays big for UOP.

Pacific
 Coach: Bob Thomason (3rd year).
 Record Last Season: 15-14 (7-11, 6th in Big West).
 Key Losses: Daryl Wolfe (7.6 ppg), Reggie Ricks (5.4 ppg).
 Key Returnees: Don Lyttle (15.7 ppg, 8.0 rpg), Dell Demps (15.9 ppg).
 Key Newcomers: Glenn Griffin, Randy Lavender, Randy Morphey.
 Quick Fact: The one-two punch of Lyttle and Demps combined for over 46 percent of the Tigers' points last season.



Kenny Jarvis (left) is a co-captain along with Kevin Cutler for LBSU.

New Coach Takes Helm Of 49ers' Veteran Team

Long Beach State followers were optimistic about the beginning of the Seth Greenberg era in 49er-land as the 1990-91 season approached. But after a 4-7 start that includes losses to North Texas and Georgia Southern, as well as an 0-2 league mark, LBSU is hardly looking like a team that closed out the 1989-90 season in blistering fashion before dropping to Hawaii in the second round of the postseason NIT.

Although the 49ers have lost their leader in two-time team MVP Tyrone Mitchell, they do have nine returners, including Big West Freshman of the Year Lucious Harris. But according to Greenberg, the loss of Mitchell has had a more dramatic effect than he had first expected.

"Losing a player of Tyrone Mitchell's caliber and (starter) Rudy Harvey, it's had even more of an effect than it has maybe had at Santa Barbara, losing Dehart and McArthur," Greenberg said. "Tyrone Mitchell was our leader — he was the heart and soul of our team. He was our tough guy and it's taken us a while to reestablish that personality."

Greenberg thought he had a formidable replacement for Mitchell in junior point guard

Long Beach St.

Coach: Seth Greenberg (1st year).
 Record Last Season: 23-9 (12-6, 4th in Big West).
 Key Loss: Tyrone Mitchell (10.7 ppg, 5.8 apg).
 Key Returnees: Lucious Harris (14.3 ppg), Kevin Cutler (10.5 ppg, 6.6 rpg).
 Key Newcomers: Bryon Russell, Adam Henderson.
 Quick Fact: Four members of last year's starting lineup are returning to this season's squad.

Bobby Sears, who was a Big West All-Freshman team selection in 1989. But Sears has struggled, and LBSU has now moved Harris from his more natural position of shooting guard to the point guard spot.

"Lucious is doing a real nice job at the point, and that's helped Bobby's game as well because it's taken some of the pressure off of him," Greenberg said.

The 49ers should have one of the deeper teams in the Big West. Up front, Greenberg is currently starting 6'8" Kevin Cutler, 6'8" Frankie Edwards and Bryon Russell, a 6'7" Prop. 48 victim a year ago. LBSU also has the services of 6'11" Mike Massucci off the bench, as well as a pair of 6'8" forwards, Kevin Williams and Ronnie Winbush. In the backcourt, Harris is joined by 6'5" senior Kenny Jarvis, while Sears and Troy Joseph are the backups.

— Jonathan Okanes

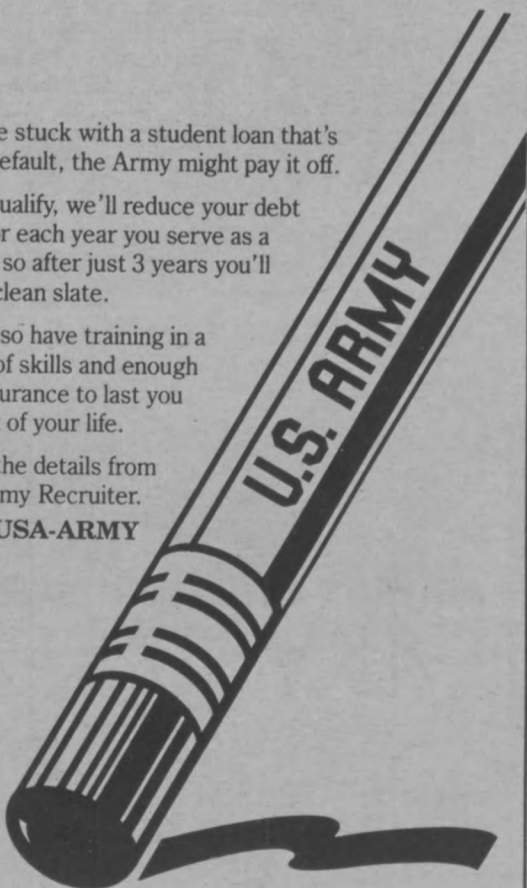
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Utah State Hopes to Surprise Doubters

Maybe it's the weather — 30 degrees below zero — or it could be the flu, which has stricken down some key players, but whatever it is, Utah State has gotten off to a rather cold start in the 1990-91 basketball season.

Even third-year Head Coach Kohn Smith has been feeling a bit under the weather, but the Aggies' 3-6 start may have more to do with that than the somewhat less-than-tropical Northern Utah climate. Smith will be the first to admit that the Aggies will have to improve if they hope to repeat last year's fifth-place finish in the Big West.

Returning from last year's squad, which posted a 14-16 record overall, 8-10 in the Big West, are several key players, including

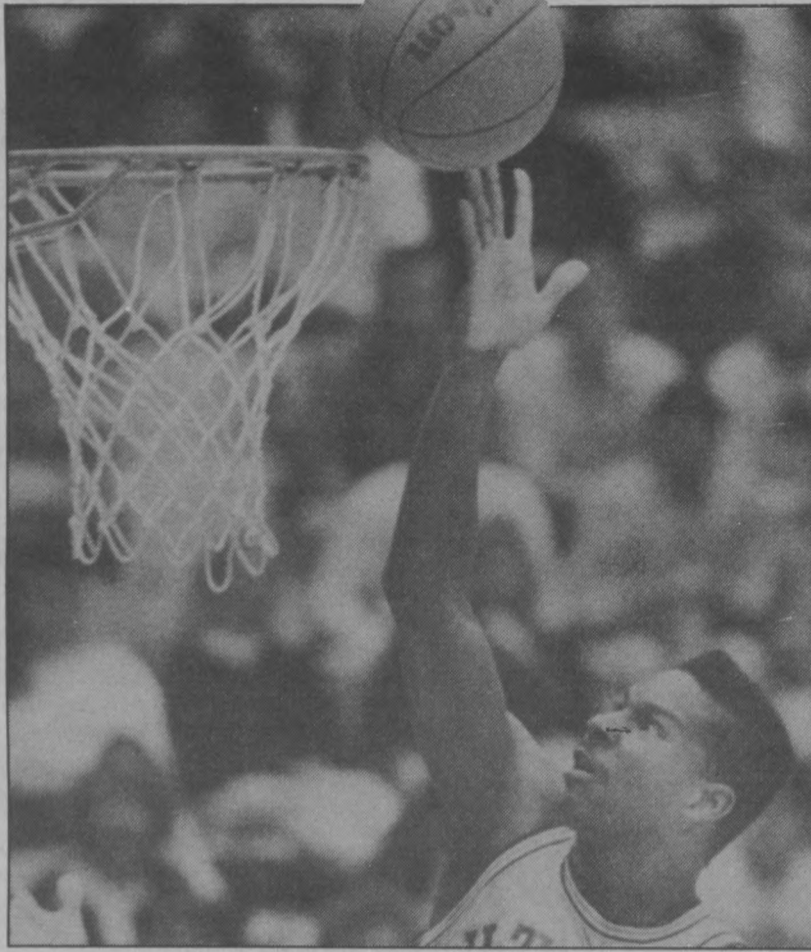
Utah St.

Coach: Kohn Smith (3rd year).
 Record Last Season: 14-16 (8-10, 5th in Big West).
 Key Loss: Darrel White (11.4 ppg).
 Key Returnees: Kendall Youngblood (15.4 ppg), Rich Jardine (11.8 ppg), Randy Funk (11.4 ppg).
 Key Newcomers: Jay Goodman, Eric Franson.
 Quick Fact: Youngblood was a consensus all-state selection in football as a running back and safety at Bonneville High School in Utah and was heavily recruited as a football player.

junior guard Kendall Youngblood who was named to the All-Big West second team last season. Utah State can also look to seniors Rich Jardine and Randy Funk, who both averaged over 11 points per game last season.

Looking to get a lot of playing time as well is freshman Eric Franson. During his senior year in high school in American Fork, Utah, 6'8" Franson averaged 28 points and 11 rebounds. Another key player is guard Jay Goodman, who red-shirted last year after transferring from Iowa State.

Having lost only one starter from last year's team, the Aggies figured to be a team on the rise in the Big West. But they have struggled early, partly because of a tough preseason schedule which includes two games each against Utah and BYU, which are difficult games according to Smith be-



Kendall Youngblood leads Utah State's attack.

cause they "are all big in-state rivalry games."

Utah State's biggest problem this season so far is one that can sink a team in a hurry - finding the nets. Hoping that they can solve their shooting woes quickly, Smith said, "We haven't shot the ball that well, and that has really hurt us."

Senior leadership could be a factor for the Aggies this season, and Smith noticed that it could actually be a weakness for his squad. "The seniors should help, the only thing is the seniors aren't in leadership roles. That's Funk and Jardine and those guys."

How does Kohn Smith see the Aggies finishing in the Big West this year? "I don't know. It will be interesting to see how it goes this year. The first week should tell a lot."

—Mark Brubaker

Fullerton Adjusting to Life Without Ceballos

Coming off a seventh-place finish in the Big West and having only one full-time returning starter, the Titans don't figure to be a contender for the Big West conference title. John Sneed, in his third year as head coach, is just beginning to rebuild the program, and is anticipating a promising future.

"This is our first real recruiting class," Sneed said. "With the addition of two or three more players next year, we should be competing at a solid level in the Big West conference."

Even though Fullerton probably will not make a run for the conference title, it hasn't thrown in the towel for this season. The Titans opened up their preseason with an impressive 6-2 record and have gained some confidence going into league play.

"We have a long way to go in order to win the conference," Assistant Coach Dan Dion said. "But with our strong start, we feel that we have a better chance of

Cal State Fullerton

Coach: John Sneed (3rd year).
 Record Last Season: 13-16, (6-12, 7th in Big West).
 Key Losses: Cedric Ceballos (23.1 ppg, 12.5 rpg), Mark Hill (18.2 ppg).
 Key Returnees: Wayne Williams (9.8 ppg, 6.5 apg), Agee Ward (6.4 ppg).
 Key Newcomers: Joe Small, Kevin Ahsmuhs.
 Quick Fact: With two years of eligibility left, Wayne Williams is in pursuit of breaking Leon Wood's career assist record of 744.

making an impact in the Big West than we did at the start of the season."

Because they are lacking in depth, the Titans are counting on receiving considerable contributions from Joe Small, Wayne Williams and Agee Ward. Small, a transfer guard who led all California JC players last year with 25.3 points per game, has already displayed his scoring abilities by leading CS Fullerton with over 22 points a game during the preseason. Williams is a two-year starting guard and is leading the team with seven assists a game. Ward is the only other player on the roster who has any starts under his belt as a Division I player.

The Titans could prove to be a spoiler within the conference. This team has many similar characteristics to the one that Sneed took over on Nov. 3, 1988, when there were no returning starters and they finished with a surprising 16-13 record, which included their first win over UNLV in six years.

—Michael Wilson



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New Coach Unleashes New System for Bulldogs

Many basketball coaches will claim that defense wins games. But like anything else, there will always be those who disagree.

Although his style is not as extreme as that of Paul Westhead, the offense-minded head coach of the NBA's Denver Nuggets, Gary Colson is of a similar mold, differing from the norm.

Last season under Head Coach Ron Adams, the Bulldogs finished with the lowest scoring average of any Big West team at 65.9 ppg. That led to a dismal 10-19 overall record, including a 4-14 mark in conference play to end up ninth in the 10-team league.

Under the direction of Colson, Fresno State is looking for new life. Colson

Fresno St.

Coach: Gary Colson (1st year).
Record Last Season: 10-19 (4-14, 9th in Big West).
Key Losses: Bijou Baly (4.9 ppg), Chris Henderson (9.1 ppg).
Key Returnees: Wilbert Hooker (15.5 ppg), Tod Bernard (14.3 ppg), Dave Barnett (8.4 ppg), Pat Riddlesprigger (8.4 ppg).
Key Newcomers: Doug Harris, Kevin Cooperwood.
Quick Fact: Freshman point guard Harris, the Arizona high school Player of the Year, hopes to fill the shoes of the departed Baly in leading the new "run and gun" offense.

has implemented a faster-paced type of play which has already produced a drastic rise in the team's scoring.

In this season's first 11 games, in which the Bulldogs compiled a 6-5 record, they averaged 83.3 ppg.

"In all due respect to Ron Adams, I have inherited some of the nicest people I have ever been associated with," Colson said. "They

have worked hard and the pressure is on them in changing their style of play."

Colson takes over a squad that has four starters returning from last year, nine returning lettermen in all. Wilbert Hooker, who topped the Bulldogs in scoring last year with 15.5 ppg, will return to play the small forward position, while fellow junior 6'5" Tod Bernard, who scored 14.3 ppg,

will move inside to play the big forward spot.

The Bulldogs had high expectations for senior Chris Henderson, until the 6'6" center decided after the final exhibition game to quit the program for personal reasons. This leaves a void in the middle in which Colson plans to fill with the duo of 6'9" sophomore Dimitri Lambrecht and 6'6" junior Pat Riddlesprigger. Rounding out the starting lineup for Fresno State is senior point guard Dave Barnett and sophomore redshirt Carl Ray Harris at the shooting guard, replacing graduated Bijou Baly.

"With our small lineup, we can't expect to get a lot of rebounds and I hope we can shoot it well," Colson said.
 — Andrew Paul



Pat Riddlesprigger (left) brought down 5.2 rebounds for FSU last year.

Sophomores Hope to Lead Anteater Resurgence

Head Coach Bill Mulligan is well-known for his sense of humor, but even he must have had a difficult time laughing after last season, in which the Anteaters won just five games and finished with the worst record in school history. But the end of the season showed promise, as Irvine won three of its final six games and a trio of freshman stood out as future stars.

With four starters returning, UCI is expected to fare better this season, as sophomores Jeff Von Lutzow, Dylan Rigdon and Craig Marshall will continue to play a major role in the team's resurgence. They accounted for 34 points a game in the

UC Irvine

Coach: Bill Mulligan (11th year).
Record Last Season: 5-23 (3-15, 10th in Big West).
Key Losses: Justin Anderson (8.1 ppg), Rod Palmer (10.6 ppg).
Key Returnees: Ricky Butler (13.8 ppg), Jeff Herdman (11.4 ppg), Jeff Von Lutzow (9.4 ppg).
Key Newcomers: Gerald McDonald, Cornelius Banks.
Quick Fact: Senior Ricky Butler, the Oprah of college basketball, has lost a total of 65 pounds since his freshman season at UCI.

preseason, during which the Anteaters compiled five wins. Rigdon's backcourt teammate is JC transfer Gerald McDonald, a 6'0" point guard who guided UCI to victory with 21 points in the championship game of the Freedom Bowl Classic.

Go-captain Ricky Butler — weighing in at a svelte 245 pounds — gives Irvine a

big man in the middle, and Butler has proven that he can be a legitimate offensive threat. He was named MVP of the Freedom Bowl Classic and led the team with a 18.6 ppg preconference average. Senior forward Jeff Herdman was relegated to a reserve role last year after "going in the tank", according to Mulli-

gan. He is back in the starting lineup and averaged 15 ppg so far.

The Anteaters suffered some embarrassment in the preconference after losing to UCLA, 134-101 in the opening round of the Great Alaska Shootout. Reserve forward Cornelius Banks scored 20 points for UCI, but Mulligan insists it was a mistake to even be there. "I don't know how we got into that tournament," he said. "I see all of these other teams going to places like Maui and we got to go to Alaska. I see the weather reports from there and it is below zero, plus we got to play UCLA in the opener."

— Brian Banks

Staff Box

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RECYCLE

After Finishing Eighth Last Year, Spartans' Next Step is Respectability

The motto for the San Jose State squad this season is "Take the Next Step," a reference to the vast improvements made last year and the expectations of even greater success this season. But for a team that won just five Big West games and eight overall, the next step might be just gaining some respect.

Head Coach Stan Morrison, former UCSB Athletic Director, begins his second season with the Spartans, and has great plans to continue the team's turnaround. Last season's 8-20 mark was a three-game improvement on the 1988-89 campaign, and included 11 losses that came in overtime or by five points or less. Picked by Big West coaches to finish last in the conference, Morrison guided the team to eighth place.

Eleven players from last year's squad return to a team that was voted to finish ninth by conference coaches. With Kenne Young, the Spartans' leading scorer last season and team MVP, gone, Morrison will look to a crop of young

San Jose St.

Coach: Stan Morrison (2nd year).
Record Last Season: 8-20 (5-13, 8th in Big West).
Key Losses: Kenne Young (14.2 ppg, 7.4 rpg), Tom Desiano (5.2 ppg, 2.2 apg).
Key Returnees: Kevin Logan (7.6 ppg, 6.2 rpg), Charles Terrell (6.2 ppg), Terry Cannon (6.8 ppg).
Key Newcomers: Jason Allen, Michael St. Julien, Mike Brotherton.
Quick Fact: Andrew Gardiner, a 6'7" freshman, hails from Auckland, New Zealand, where he was the 1987 under-20 decathlon champion.

players to pick up the slack. Against UCSB on Jan. 2, the Spartans started three sophomores, a freshman and junior transfer. Philip Crump, who came off the bench in that game to collect 12 points and four assists, is also a sophomore.

"We are a little bit inexperienced," said Morrison after his team's league-opening loss to the Gauchos. "We've been close a lot lately, which is better than not being close. I thought we played the hardest 40 minutes of the season and I think that's the hardest we can play."

The leading candidates to take over the scoring title are Charles Terrell and Terry Cannon, a pair of second-year guards who are averaging 15 and 11 points a game, respectively. Michael St. Julien, a transfer from Blinn College, is also scoring 11 points a game.

With Crump and Cannon sharing time at point guard, the only other question mark remaining from last season is the center position. Sophomore Robert Dunlap at 6'11" provides a big body, but little else. His six points and six rebounds a game have left a major void in the middle for Morrison, whose team was outrebounded by the Gauchos 39-23.

— Brian Banks

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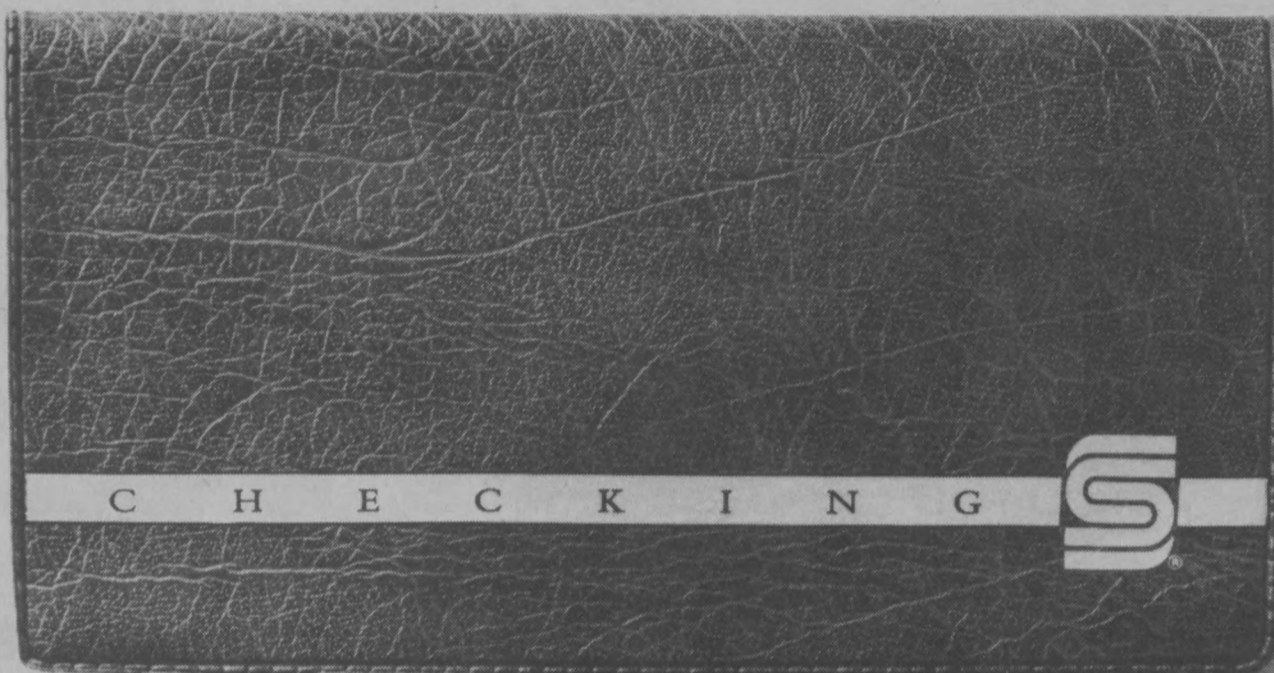
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