

Sports MONDAY

Vuk Cooking Up a Storm; Gauchos Rolling on Road

BY ELIAY APPELBAUM
Staff Writer

If Mike Vukovich keeps this pace up, he'll be pushing for an NBA lottery pick two summers from now.

The UCSB men's basketball team was sparked by their junior power forward's perfect night from the floor, while the Gauchos overpowered Pacific 73-67 on Saturday night for their third straight victory. After four agonizing defeats, Santa Barbara (8-11, 5-4) finds itself tied for third in the Big West with Long Beach State, after shredding the Tigers.

"This is great," sophomore guard B.J. Ward said. "You know we struggle on the road. To get two wins on the road is great. We've just been playing well our last three games, the last two especially. The difference has been a real positive attitude. We know we can win these games, and we play with a lot of confidence."

Vukovich, the anchor and the answer in the middle, has propelled himself

to the elite of the Big West's interior players. Vukovich nailed all twelve of his field goals for 27 points, and snatched eight rebounds, stole two balls, dished off three assists, and blocked two shots in his finest collegiate game.

"He's the man," said freshman swingman Nick Jones, who scored 13 points. "He stepped it up big time. I think he's starting to realize that he can just take over by him stepping up and being the man in the middle. For us to be successful, he needs to score 15 points or above and 30 post touches. No big man in the Big West can contain him."

Ward shared the same sentiments about how dominating Vukovich has become the past few weeks, highlighted by Saturday's performance.

"Vuk was bombing," Ward said. "I love to play with that dude. He's got great offensive moves. He's got a hook shot no one can stop. He's been playing real well."

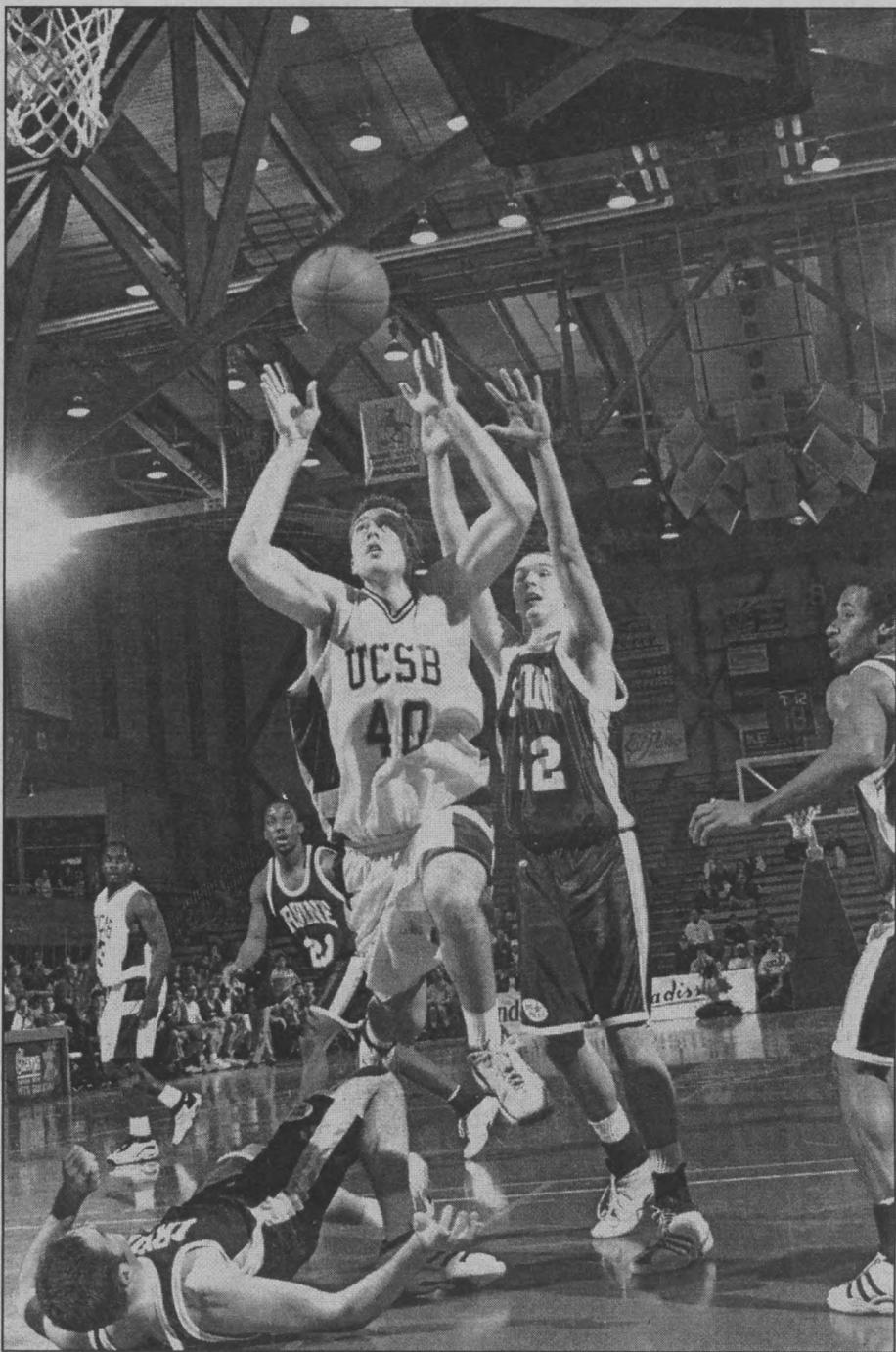
Santa Barbara jumped out to a 10-0 run to start the game behind four Vukovich shots and a

layup from Jones. Freshman guard Branduinn Fullove, sophomore forward Mark Hull and Jones highlighted an 11-1 run minutes later with their buckets from downtown Stockton to build a 21-7 lead.

UCSB led 34-26 at the half, and built its lead all the way to 55-40 with 9:34 in the second half, off freshman forward Casey Cook's three straight buckets.

UOP wasn't finished, putting their stamp on a 12-0 run to make it 55-52 with 7:07 on the clock. Tiger guard Peter Heizer made a shot that put the Tigers within one, 63-62, with only 2:24 in the game. Jones made a short bank shot, and Vukovich sealed the deal with an old-fashioned three-point play and a press-break layup to extend the lead to six with a minute left.

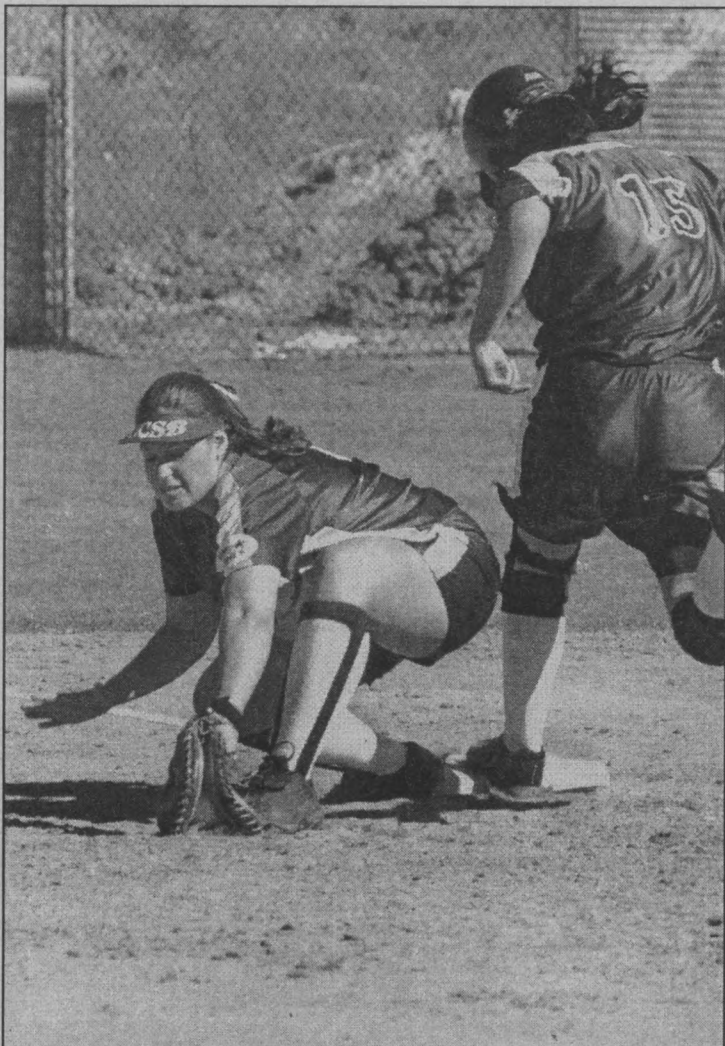
"We seemed to be having more fun on the court," freshman center J.J. Todd said. "We are more relaxed, and we've grown up a lot, finding the fun of the game again ... we got to critical points in the game and played strong."



JASON SCHOCK / DAILY NEXUS FILE

Junior power forward Mike Vukovich told Pacific to lay down in a 73-67 victory. Vukovich had one of the finest shooting nights for a Gaucho, drilling all 12 shots for 27 points.

UCSB Succumbs to Loyola Marymount in Season-Opening Doubleheader



TRUC BUI / DAILY NEXUS

UCSB first baseman Jami Trinidad snags the ball to get Christy Ceredes out at first during the Gauchos' doubleheader with Loyola Marymount.

BY JASON CHAU
Reporter

The players on the UCSB women's softball team began their 2001 season Saturday with their eyes set ahead to a Big West championship.

Unfortunately, the Gauchos realized they couldn't look too far ahead after dropping both games of a doubleheader in a disappointing home opener against Loyola Marymount, 3-1 and

4-0.

Santa Barbara was able to stay close, due to strong pitching efforts from sophomore aces Loren Thornburg and Sylvia Santos, but was ultimately done in with poor offensive execution and costly defensive errors.

"This was very disheartening," Head Coach Liz Kelly said. "We didn't play our best. We match up with them, but we just didn't execute."

The first game featured tough pitching

performances from both sides. UCSB jumped out to an early 1-0 lead in the bottom of the third on a run-scoring single by junior shortstop Erin McFarland. The score looked like it was going to hold up, since Thornburg was mowing down the Lion's lineup.

LMU evened up the score in the top of the fifth, as shortstop Kim Bissett scored on a two-out error by senior co-captain and third baseman Teresa Tolson.

That miscue kept the inning alive for the Lions, who capitalized two batters later when first baseman Erin Hogan smacked a decisive two-run single into left field.

"We faced a tough pitcher [Corianne Rogalsky]," said Thornburg, who finished with seven strikeouts and gave up three runs. "We got some hits, but we just weren't able to put them all together."

See UCSB, p.2A

Santa Barbara Attack 49s 49ers, Thrash Pacific

BY MATT HEITNER
Reporter

The UCSB women's basketball team looked forward to this past weekend, determined to make a point that they're the best in the Big West.

By defeating Pacific and Long Beach State, the Gauchos left no doubt that they are still the best in the Big West Conference, extending their conference winning streak to 49 games.

Santa Barbara relied on some unlikely sources for offensive punch Friday night, rallying twice from an eight-point deficit to defeat the Tigers, 77-64. Senior forward Rachele Rogers poured in 21 points, and junior reserve guard Kristyn Miller

scored two clutch baskets during a 28-7 second half burst that finished off UOP.

"Tonight I was just working really hard on my post-ups, and we were running plays to me so I could score," Rogers said after the game on 1250 AM. "I guess I proved something tonight."

Without the inspired play of Rogers — who has not lost a conference game in her Gaucho career — the Gauchos' amazing winning streak might have come to a screeching halt Friday. Pacific opened up a 49-41 lead early in the second half. UCSB responded, cutting the Tiger lead to two at 49-47. Pacific then threatened to blow the game open by retaking their eight-point lead, 57-49.

See HOOPS, p.3A

Gauchos Whack Lions

By JOHN LIU
Reporter

The UCSB men's tennis team outplayed Loyola Marymount Saturday afternoon at home to notch their first win of the season in convincing fashion, five games to two.

Santa Barbara started strong by soundly winning two of the three doubles matches played. The intensity the Gauchos established in doubles play helped them overpower the Lions in singles play.

"We prepared a lot and worked hard this week to get ready," UCSB sophomore J.J. Stewart said. "We had a lot more confidence coming into this match. Everybody was fired up to play."

Junior co-captain Marcin Kosakowski exemplified the Gauchos' spirited play in his singles match against Lions' sophomore Ryan Gerstner. Kosakowski won the first set of the match quickly six games to two. However, Kosakowski found himself in a hole early in the second set, behind 3-5. Undaunted, Kosakowski clawed his way back to a 5-5 tie before winning the second and deciding set with seven games to five.

"The crowd at the match really helped me

through the second set," Kosakowski said. "I had played [Gerstner] before and actually lost to him, so I really wanted to beat him. I couldn't have come back in that second set without those guys cheering me on."

Even though the crowd was not large, they had a definite effect on the match. A half dozen or so rowdy Gaucho supporters cheered continuously, rattling the Lions and firing up the home squad.

Kosakowski and Stewart defeated Lions' senior Carsten Bitschkus and sophomore Leopold Graeubig eight games to one in doubles action. Gaucho freshmen Scott Shnugg and Alex Yaftali defeated sophomores Michael Levin and Iman Nilipour 8-1. Freshman Mike Placek and senior David Angert lost to Lions sophomore Johannes Asuja and freshman Beau Bergland.

Stewart beat Graeubig in singles play, winning the first set 6-3 and winning the third set 6-4. Schnugg defeated Bitschkus 6-2, 6-0 in his singles match. Placek lost to Asuja 6-3, 4-6, 3-6. Angert lost to Beglund 6-7, 6-7. Yaftali defeated the Lions' senior Erik Nelson Kortland 6-2 in the first set and 6-4 in the second set.

"Even though my day

wasn't so great, the team played really well," Placek said. "We were determined to go out and win. We felt ourselves playing better."

The Gauchos will host #73 Georgia Tech Feb. 10, Saturday at noon.

"[Georgia Tech] is a really tough team," Stewart said. "We need to go in there and see what we can do. We have a lot of confidence right now. Everybody is looking forward to playing."



Swimming With All the Big Fishies

TRUC BUI / DAILY NEXUS

The current UCSB women's water polo team splashed around Campus Pool this past Saturday while facing Gaucho alumni. Santa Barbara won their season opener 13-3 nine days ago against Cal State Bakersfield.

HOOPS

Continued from p.1A

But with their winning streak in jeopardy, UCSB went on a 12-0 run, capped by Rogers' three-point play. After the heroics of Rogers, UCSB never let Pacific back in the game, with freshman center Lindsay Taylor and junior forward Kayte Christensen bringing home the victory down the

stretch.

"I think tonight was a



Kayte Christensen

great game and a great win," Head Coach Mark

French said on 1250 AM.

"We're going to enjoy this win tonight and tomorrow get ready for Long Beach."

UCSB prepared well for Long Beach State, while the Gauchos ripped their rivals 80-70 at the Pyramid. Christensen finished with 21 points and 13 rebounds. With the impressive victory, Santa Barbara ended any talk of a letdown after the big win at Pacific.

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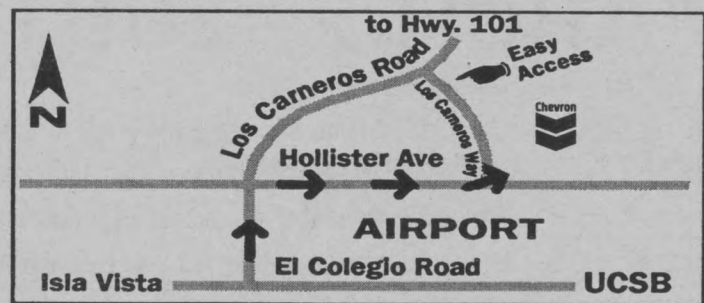
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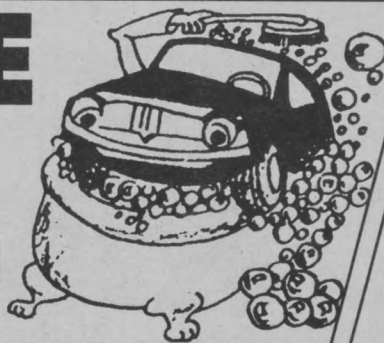
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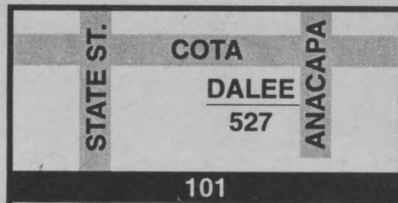


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