

SPORTS MONDAY

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January 22, 1996

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UCSB Outplays Utah State by Shooting T-Dome Lights Out

■ Gauchos Win 85-80 off McDougal's 9-10 Performance From the Floor

By Michael Cadilli
Staff Writer

And the crowd roared emphatically again and again: "OVERRATED!"

Well, that wouldn't tell the whole story because the truth is that the Utah State men's basketball squad played good, hard ball against the Gauchos for the full 40 minutes last Saturday in front of 4,564 Thunderdome fans.

But UCSB played better.

By shooting .644 on the night, including 9-13 from three-point range and an impressive 18-22 from the charity stripe, Santa Barbara broke its two-game losing skid on its way to an 85-80 victory.

Leading the Gaucho (7-8, 4-3 in the Big West, tied for fifth) charge was senior guard Lelan McDougal, who seemed to have a magic stroke by nailing 9-10 shots from the field, bombing both his long-distance attempts and sinking all four free-throw tries to score a game-high 24 points.

"Well, I got a couple good looks in the beginning of the game. My first couple shots went down and from there I just had the feeling. I felt for the rest of the game I was going to be on," said McDougal, who remembers the bad memories of the Aggies coming out on top in Santa Barbara last year. "This was a big win for us. They beat us twice last year and to beat them our first time out this year feels good."

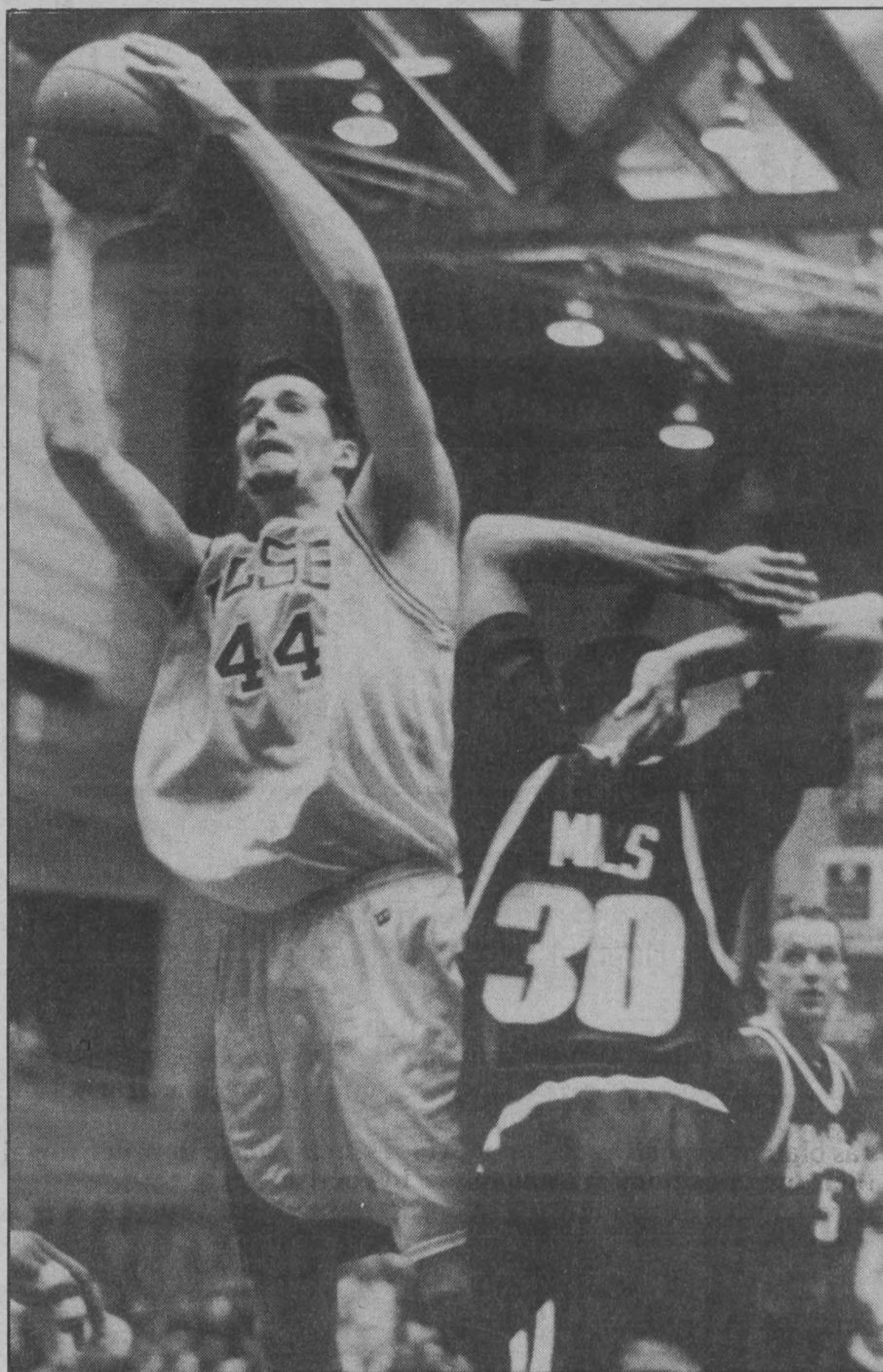
But by no means was McDougal a one-man show — every Gaucho contributed to the fall of Utah State. Senior guard Dane Prince (12 points in only 19 minutes of play) hit three baskets from behind the arc in a 2:42 span in the first half to help UCSB to a 32-26 lead.

"I had to let them fly because they were leaving me open in the beginning [of the game]," he said. "It's kind of hard to guard five people who can score anytime they want."

However, the Aggies (9-9, 3-2) wouldn't go away and 6'8", 240-pound senior center Eric Franson (22 points, 10 rebounds) gave Santa Barbara all it could handle by putting in two layups down the first-period stretch to give the Gauchos only a 46-38 lead at the break.

Matching up on the USU big man was 6'6" sophomore forward Kealon Wallace, who tried to front Franson on defense. Despite the Aggie center scoring over his 18.1 ppg average, it could have been a lot worse.

"Kealon tried to beat him with his quickness and did a pretty good job," said UCSB Head Coach Jerry Pimm. "He got four steals on balls going in there where Franson didn't go meet it or Kealon beat him to it —



JARROD BRADLEY/Daily Nexus

AND ONE: Senior forward Mark Flick got two of his 13 on this play and completed the three-point play on the Silas Mills foul. Flick was 6-8 from the line.

Parity Packs the Big West Conference

By Chris Oyama

Going into Saturday night's men's basketball game against the Utah State Aggies, the UCSB Gauchos, on paper, should have lost. They should have, but didn't.

Welcome to the parity that is the Big West Conference.

As of Monday's standings only 1½ games separate first-place Nevada at 4-2 from ninth-place Pacific, who is at 3-4. Only New Mexico State at 1-5 is out of contention, but since it's on probation, it's not likely it will figure into the equation.

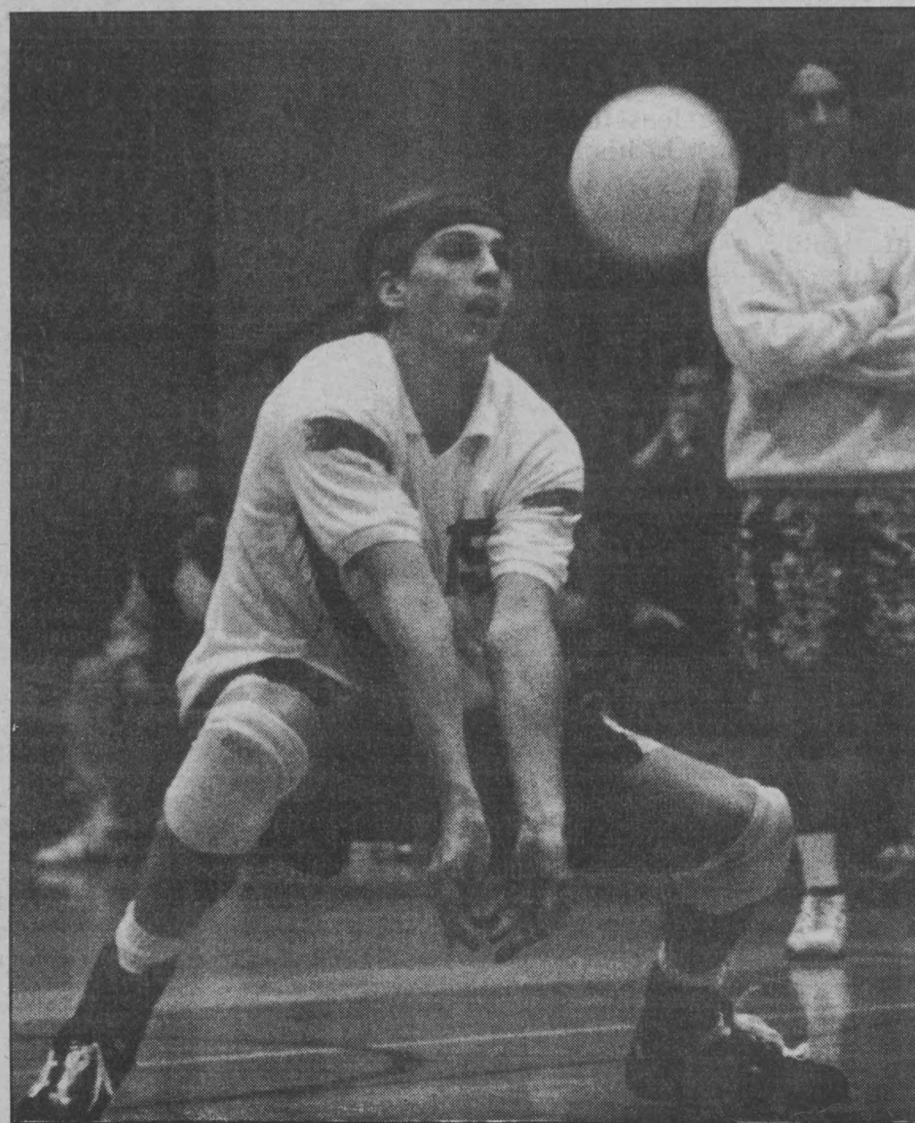
With the demise of the all-powerful UNLV Runnin' Rebels and New Mexico State's off-court troubles, what has emerged is a power vacuum within the Big West — on any given night, any team can win.

Case in point: last Monday, UNLV beat the UCSB squad. The week before, the Gauchos defeated UC Irvine. This past weekend, Las Vegas fell to the Anteaters. But before you start scratching your head, I've got more.

Two weeks ago Utah State defeated Nevada, last Thursday the Wolf Pack triumphed over Santa Barbara and on Sa-

See PARITY, p.3A

See VICTORY, p.2A



ERIN DERBY/Daily Nexus

DIG IT: The #3 Gauchos won seven straight matches last weekend before losing to the #5 UCLA squad in the finals of the UCSB Collegiate Invitational.

UCSB Collegiate Invitational Finals Results

Santa Barbara Spikers Beaten by #5 Bruins in Tourney Final

By Jenny Kok
Staff Writer

After winning seven best-of-three matches in a row — dropping only one of the 15 games played to #4 Stanford — the #3 UCSB men's volleyball team simply couldn't hold its ground against the defending national champion #5 UCLA in the finals of the 32nd Annual UCSB Collegiate Invitational volleyball tournament.

The 2½-hour best-of-five match ended sorely for UCSB (0-1 — only the championship match counted towards the teams' record) in the fourth game, 15-7, 15-5, 14-16, 17-16. The Bruins (1-0) fought back from a 14-8 deficit and took the coveted tournament title as they reached the 17-point cap first.

"As far as the tournament goes, I feel good about how we played," UCSB Head Coach Ken Preston said. "We played hard most of the time and our mental game was strong most of the time, but we just didn't compete the first two games [against UCLA]. After that, we played very well up until the end. It's a little disappointing because we should've been the aggressors. They were in our gym, on our turf."

In game one, bad passing got the Gauchos off to a terrible start as the Bruins took advantage and jumped out to a 12-0 lead and soon thereafter took the game. Santa Barbara continued to struggle as they entered the second game. UCLA setter Stein Metzger, who was

named MVP of the invitational, directed the attack with 65 assists — baffling the Gaucho block.

The tide turned in favor of UCSB in the third game. Junior outside hitter Donny Harris and all-tournament selection junior middle blocker Robert Treahy connected big with senior setter Todd Rogers (74 assists) helping to push the Gauchos out to a 14-8 lead. But before anyone knew it, the Bruins made a huge comeback.

"I was looking across the net saying, 'We should beat these guys.' But I think there's a mental block there and volleyball is 80 percent mental," Rogers said.

Three Santa Barbara hitting errors and kills from UCLA's Matt Noonan, Matt Taylor and Metzger put the Bruins right back in the game, tying the score at 14 each. But after a series of sideouts, UCSB took a 15-14 advantage after a hitting error by Noonan and quickly finished it off with a kill from Harris.

Hitting errors caused the Gauchos to fall to a 6-11 deficit early in the fourth, but this time it was UCSB that made the attempt at the comeback. Rogers more than earned his all-tournament team selection, repeatedly dishing up sets to Treahy and Harris, who had 11 and nine kills, respectively, in the last game. Strong defense and blocking from senior outside hitter Morgan Chapman and Treahy brought the Gauchos back, tying the game at 12 each.

See INVITE, p.3A

UCSB Men Block Out Rebel Cry, Women Get Road Win Over CSUB

By Steven Large
Staff Writer

A split to Division II Cal State Bakersfield on the road Saturday was a sour note to an otherwise sweet weekend that saw the UCSB men's swim team on Friday at home beat archrival UNLV 136-101 and the Santa Barbara women narrowly lose to the Rebels 130-113.

The CSUB men's team scored an upset by downing UCSB 128-113, while the Gaucho women came out victorious, 72-62.

"We prepared all week for UNLV," Santa Barbara Assistant Coach Victor Wales said. "It was a very emotional victory for us. We were on a very high high when that was over."

Against the Rebels the Gaucho men were led by senior Mark Andersen, who won the 200-meter breaststroke, and senior Joel Gustafson, who won the 50-meter freestyle. Junior Kevin McLain also provided a spark for Santa Barbara with a win against the Big West's defending champion in the event.

"[McLain] went stroke for stroke with him until the last lap and then he just stretched it out," UCSB Assistant Coach Derigan Silver said.

The UCSB women may have appeared to be a loss on paper against Vegas on Friday, but thankfully for the Gauchos, Santa Barbara's swimming meets aren't held on paper.

"The UNLV women's team was so strong, we were going into the meet just trying to hold our own," Silver said. "But they definitely were not as fast as we anticipated and we came right out at them. We had a moral victory."

UCSB's women were led once again by senior-captain Erin Patrick, who won both the 100- and the 200-meter



JAMES KU/Daily Nexus

BUTTERFLY BULLET: The UCSB women's swim team lost a close battle to UNLV at home on Friday, but bounced back to bury Cal State Bakersfield 72-62 on the road on Saturday.

freestyle events. Junior Lia Schraeder finished first in the 50-meter freestyle and freshman Stephanie Stuppi came in first in the 200-meter backstroke.

The Gaucho men divers were on their own against UNLV, as the Rebels didn't have a diver to their name; however, the women did have some competition. Santa Barbara freshman Courtney Miller won the three-meter diving event, while junior Tannon Brown outdove his Gaucho teammates to earn a victory in both the one- and three-meter diving events.

Friday's meet was one of historic proportions — it

marked the last time that UCSB and UNLV will ever compete in a Big West dual meet. The Rebels will be a-runnin' for the Western Athletic Conference next season.

While the situation may have called for a friendly farewell between the two rivals, the UNLV coach apparently was not in the right mood for graciousness, according to Wales.

"He thought that they were going to kill us," he said. "He was pretty upset and what he would have liked to have said, he couldn't have said the way he was feeling."

Women Hoopsters Win First Game of Big Road Trip Gaucho-Spartan War Turns Into UCSB Victory

By Brian Berger
Staff Writer

In what came as no surprise to those who follow women's Big West basketball, UCSB walked away Friday night with a 85-43 road victory over San Jose State.

With the victory, the Gauchos (10-4 overall, 6-0 in the Big West) remained perfect in conference play while stretching its win streak to eight consecutive games.

As in games past, Santa Barbara relied on its pressure defense to disrupt its

opponent. UCSB's wall of a defense forced the Spartans (5-9, 1-5) into 40 turnovers which allowed easy baskets at the other end of the court. The 40 turnovers were the highest amount committed by a Gaucho opponent this season, and continues the club's streak of forcing 30 or more errors a game.

SJSU, who played without the services of freshman center Kylie Page, claimed the first lead of the contest when forward Gail Dennis knocked in a three-pointer 15 seconds into the game.

"We were typically

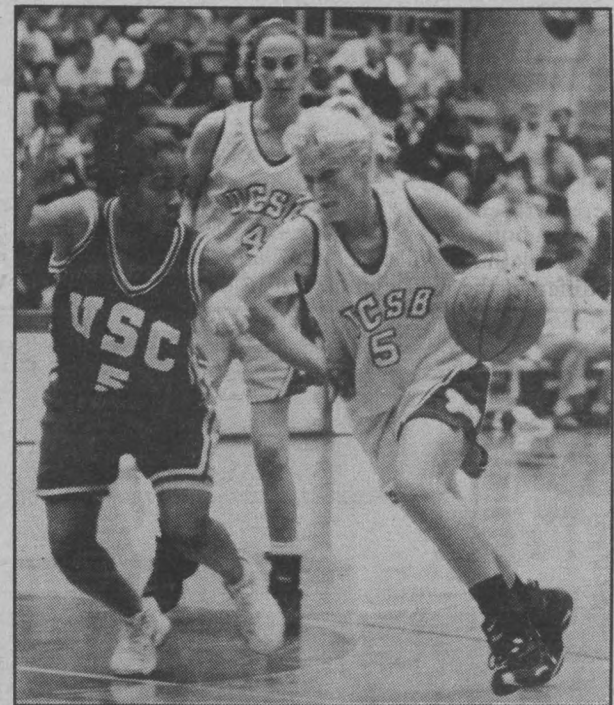
lethargic in the first half," said UCSB Head Coach Mark French. "They played a box-and-one on Erin [Alexander] and we hadn't seen that this year. We got a little frustrated."

However, San Jose's lead was short-lived as Santa Barbara took control of the game with 16:40 remaining in the first half when senior center Amy Hughlett converted a layup from the right baseline.

After Hughlett's basket, everything went downhill for the Spartans. The Gauchos stepped up their defensive intensity and af-

ter sophomore Alicia Sims' free throw, Santa Barbara had a 12-point lead. But after a technical foul against French, San Jose was able to regroup and trailed by only 10 at halftime.

UCSB opened the second half in explosive fashion as it outscored SJSU 29-4 in the first 11 minutes to take a 69-32 lead. After French cleared his bench, giving valuable minutes to players who normally would not see them, the Gauchos continued their output while the Spartans struggled from the floor — shooting a dismal 25 per-



Nexus File Photo

GOOD DRIVER: Junior guard Erin Alexander was the Gaucho top scorer (12) over SJSU on Friday.

cent in the second half. "We didn't have anybody play too many minutes so it was a good game from that perspective," French said. "We got some rest going into Hawai'i."

Offensively, UCSB continued its balanced scoring as all five starters finished

in double digits. Leading the charge was junior guard Alexander, who finished with 12 points. Senior guard Dio Aguinardo and senior center Amy Hughlett contributed 11, while forwards Sasha Scardino and Amy Smith each added 10 points and 11 rebounds.

VICTORY

Continued from p.1A those were key plays, too."

Wallace ended up with a team-high four steals and nine rebounds to go along with his 17 points, most of which were inside layups handed to him by senior point guard Phillip Turner (10 assists). Guarding Utah's leading scorer (18.6 ppg) in forward Silas Mills (22 points, 10 boards) was senior forward Mark Flick. Although Flick didn't record a rebound, he made 6-8 free-throw attempts — two of which gave the Gauchos an 83-80 lead with 13 seconds left on the clock. "It's a great thing to be

good at because you need those free throws down the stretch," said Flick of his squad, which ranks first in the Big West in free-throw shooting percentage (.708). "If we could just be up there in rebounding we'd probably be in first place."

The Aggies got 17 offensive rebounds to Santa Barbara's three in the contest. But UCSB was able to play strong defense on Utah State, led by junior guard Bakir Allen.

"Yeah, this was the first time I haven't fouled out in the last couple of games," he said. "I've been hacking a lot but I came down to try and help [guard] the big men and not to foul too much and play solid post defense."

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PARITY

Continued from p.1A
 turday the Gauchos beat Utah State. Just another wacky few weeks in the Big West.

Despite the Aggies being heavy favorites to win the conference title, in reality there was just no way of predicting who was going to win. The betting boys in Vegas have probably stopped taking bets on Big West games by now — if they're smart.

Santa Barbara had just come off a loss to Nevada and it appeared they were about to hit another snag. But Saturday's contest seesawed back and forth until senior Mark Flick iced the game with two free throws in the last minute. Up until the very end, though, it was anyone's game to win.

If the Gauchos hope to get anywhere and emerge from the ocean of mediocrity they will need to have

two things happen. One is shoring up the rebounding problem that has plagued the team since the beginning of the year. Second, they will need inspired performances similar to Saturday night's game where everyone stepped up and contributed to the win.

As I conclude, there's just one more thing I have to say about the current situation of the Big West: unlike the Pac 10, where everyone pretty much knows who the teams to beat are, the Big West provides fans with a true sense of the word "competition." And Yogi Berra's famous phrase fits quite nicely for this conference: "It ain't over 'til it's over."

But who knows? As the season approaches the midway mark, maybe everything will start to clear up. Maybe one team will emerge as the dominant force. If this is the case, you can ignore the above written. But since you already read it, oh well.

Big West Men's Basketball Standings

1. Nevada 4-2
2. UCI 4-2
3. LBSU 3-2
4. Utah St. 3-2
5. UCSB 4-3
6. CSUF 4-3
7. UNLV 3-4
8. SJSU 3-4
9. UOP 3-4
10. NMSU 1-5

INVITE

Continued from p.1A
 Rogers gave the Gauchos a 13-12 lead as he tipped the ball over the net. After trading points, the Gauchos found themselves up 16-15, but after a sideout for UCLA, hitting errors by Harris and sophomore outside hitter Jeremy Damer wrapped up the match for the Bruins.

"It was a crazy game," Metzger said. "The tournament is so long and tiring. There were a lot of mental errors on both sides of the net. I think things will be a lot different the next time

we play UCSB."

"It was a long two days and our guys were tired. In the fourth game we weren't ready to play," Rogers said. "This wasn't an indication of what kind of team we are. I'd rather peak in the finals of the NCAA tournament in three or four months from now than in the UCSB tournament in January."

All-tourney selections Noonan and Brian Wells led the Bruin offense. Noonan pounded out 26 kills at a .360 hitting percentage while adding 10 digs. Wells had 18 kills at .297 and led the defense with 17 digs. Metzger also

led the block with seven block assists.

"[UCLA] is well seasoned," Preston said. "Most of them were on the second team last year and played against the national champions all year."

For the Gauchos, Harris led the offense with 29 kills at a .288 clip and along with Rogers headed up the defense with 15 digs. Treahy hammered out 21 kills at .372 while adding 12 digs and led blocking with seven including one solo. Chapman made 12 digs and five block assists, and senior middle blocker Amaury Velasco had 14 kills.

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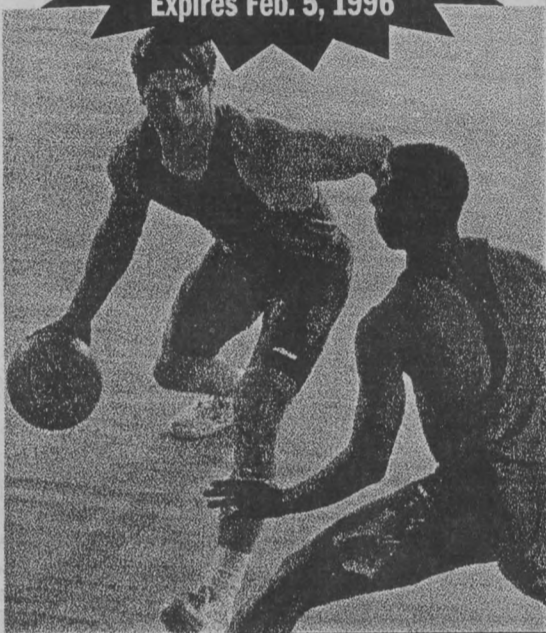
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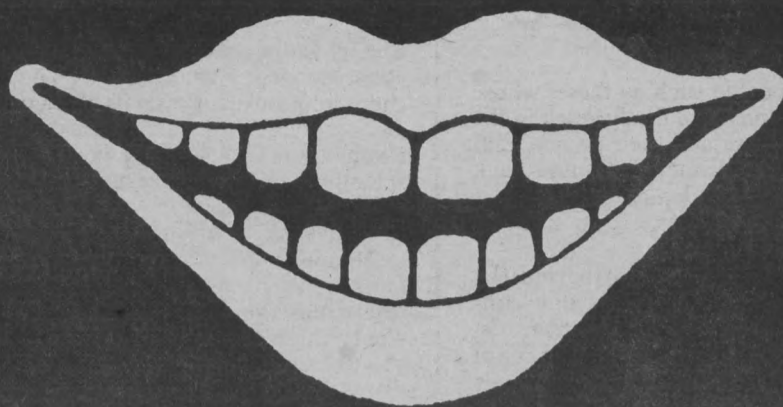
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