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SPORTS

NCAA airballs decision on Vegas

The University of Nevada Las Vegas men's basketball team won its biggest game of the year last Thursday.

The Runnin' Rebels will be back in the NCAA Tournament come March, back to defend their national championship they have no business defending.

That was the verdict from the NCAA last week.

UNLV was placed on probation by the NCAA for rule violations committed by Coach Jerry Tarkanian at the school 13 years ago. UNLV had already served two years of probation from that in-

who does? Certainly Tarkanian won't. He will never get fired or suspended by the university because of his masterful ability to break the rules and get away with it.

The NCAA won't do anything because as they proved in the UNLV case, they are incapable of making a decision and sticking with it. And even if they make a solid decision, there is always a chance they will reverse themselves as they did here.

Two years ago Kansas was unable to defend its national championship because it was also on probation. Those players were innocent too because Coach Larry Brown was responsible for the rule violations. But when it came time for him to stand up and be held responsible for his actions, he couldn't because he was in the NBA.

So those players had to pay. They sat home come tournament time. Next year UNLV will sit home come tournament time, but it should have been this year.

What happened here was the NCAA was afraid to stand up to UNLV. The NCAA, which is supposed to be the governing body for college athletics, bowed down to one of its members. Money, prestige and clout were enough for UNLV to beat the NCAA.

Thomas Boswell, a columnist from the Washington Post, suggested the reason UNLV won was because the school and Tarkanian had better lawyers than the NCAA. That's definitely true.

With UNLV able to win the decision it wanted, what happens the next time the NCAA puts a big-time power like UNLV on probation? The school, the coach and the players will scream bloody murder and expect to receive the decision that is best for them.

UNLV did beat the NCAA, but the NCAA beat itself as well.



**From the Sidelines
by
ASHLEY CONKLIN**

cident, but Tarkanian never served the two-year suspension given to him by the NCAA.

So last week, the NCAA decided to cop a bargain that would allow the Runnin' Rebels to defend their NCAA title this year if they agreed to sit out next season. Of course the university accepted.

That the NCAA overturned a decision they had already made was a bit incredible itself. That they plea bargained with probably the biggest crook in college hoops was a little like allowing a known murderer off on a reckless endangerment charge.

Many believe the decision agreed to by UNLV and the NCAA was a fair one. After all, the players on this year's team — four starters returned from that championship squad — weren't around when Tarkanian first got into trouble with the NCAA and thus they shouldn't have to pay.

Maybe the players shouldn't have to pay. But

Ducks look to end opening slide

By Robert Weber
Emerald Sports Reporter

Dead week is anything but dead for Oregon's men's basketball team, as the Ducks host the University of Alabama-Birmingham Tuesday night at McArthur Court. The game is the first of three in a six-day span for Don Monson's squad.

The 0-2 Ducks are still looking for their first win after losing 65-58 at Missouri over the weekend, but they don't expect the Blazers to give it to them on a platter.

UAB (3-1), which plays out of the Sun Belt Conference, enters the contest on the heels of a 41-point thumping at the hands of the top-ranked Rebels

of the University of Nevada-Las Vegas, but that loss may be deceiving.

After knocking off in-state rival Auburn 71-65 on Friday night, the Blazers hopped on a plane and headed to Vancouver, B.C. for a Saturday afternoon affair with the Runnin' Rebels. Beating the Runnin' Rebels is never an easy task, but trying to beat them under those conditions is not really feasible.

In Gene Bartow, UAB has one of the nation's top coaches. Bartow has compiled a 257-131 record in the past 29 years while coaching at Illinois, UCLA, Memphis State, Valparaiso and Central Missouri State. His 257 wins is good

enough for seventh place among active NCAA Division I coaches.

Monson's team has played well in both games but seems to be lacking something to push them over the top.

Statistically, the Ducks are led by Terrell Brandon. The junior point guard is averaging 23 points, 7.5 assists, six steals and four rebounds a game. He tallied a game-high 27 points at Missouri including 18 in the first half.

After Tuesday's game, Oregon takes its act on the road for games at Utah and Portland, on Thursday and Saturday respectively, before taking a week off for finals.

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