

**BY SCOTT NEWMAN**

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**LAS VEGAS** — John Robinson had what seemed like the perfect case of age discrimination.

At the age of 64, Robinson is the all-time winningest coach for the National Football League's Los Angeles Rams and the winner of a national championship at the University of Southern California.

Yet, a year after getting fired by the Trojans he could elicit interest from just two schools, the University of Hawaii and the University of Nevada-Las Vegas — football teams that between them were 0-34 in the past season and a half.

"I knew I wasn't too old to coach," Robinson said.

So far, he's right. Hired by a Runnin' Rebels program that had lost 16 straight and hadn't won a road game in four years, Robinson has UNLV at 2-0 and Las Vegas on the verge of becoming a football town.

More than 30,000 people are expected for Saturday's game against Iowa State, a crowd that would be the school's largest in four seasons. That's no small feat in the neon capital of the U.S., where the football team must compete with casinos and top entertainers.

The Rebels are even attracting the interest of a celebrity. Former "Partridge Family" star and Broadway performer David Cassidy has become one of the team's biggest backers.

"This is the biggest bandwagon town in America," said Mark Whittington, the school's assistant sports information director.