

# New Mexico Seeking Redemption Tonight

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(revenge) as the way we were beaten," Alford said. "They were a physical team. I thought they outworked us. They did some things the other teams had not done to us. They were on the floor for loose balls, they had a little bit more energy to them — that's what rebounding is all about.

"... We owe ourselves one, because we didn't play Lobo

basketball."

The Aggies didn't exactly play Aggie basketball, either. At least not what they'd like to think is Aggie Hoops.

With just three minutes left in the first half, the teams were a combined 10-of-43 from the field with 19 turnovers.

It was ugly basketball.

For the Aggies, at least, it was a victory.

Obviously, (the Lobos) were a little tight and didn't shoot the ball well here," said NMSU

coach Marvin Menzies. "We've got to play better at their place than we did here. We're optimistic our guys will be up to the challenge."

Outside of Chad Toppert (7-of-10) and Jamaal Smith (6-of-8), the Lobos were 8-of-37 from the field.

"We just took some highly contested shots, some ill-advised shots we shouldn't have taken," Alford said. "None went in, and that got their transition game going."

Menzies said it wasn't as much shot selection as life on the road. He expects a different UNM bunch tonight.

"They got open looks here that didn't go down," Menzies said. "At home, I think they'll knock it down. We've got to definitely get out and challenge all the 3s."

**FAN FARE:** On the heels of the biggest Pit crowd of the season (16,720 against Texas Tech), Alford said there is some pressure to build on that

against the Aggies.

"Hopefully, that word is starting to spread and get out," Alford said. "This team plays hard. I've coached 17 teams now. This team might not be the most talented, but this team works as hard as any of them.

"... I think the fans are appreciative of that."

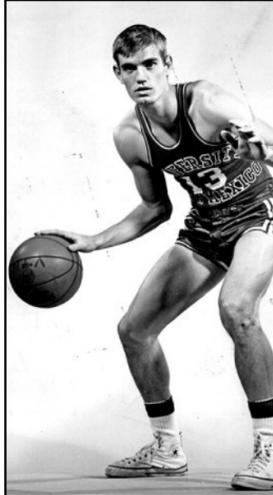
**FRESH JUNIOR:** UNM post Daniel Faris finally stayed out of foul trouble in the Lobos' 80-63 rout of Tech and played 22

minutes — tied for the third most this season.

"The goal is (to have) under two fouls in the first half, so I can help my team and stay out there as long as possible," said Faris, a 6-9 junior starter. "If I need to, I can go as long as coach needs me. My legs are real rested."

Randy Harrison contributed to this story

## LOBO-AGGIE RIVALRY THROUGH THE YEARS



**NELSON:** Suffered "terrible injustice"

### Ron Nelson

Lobo All-America guard, 1966-68

**THE GAME:** The Aggies win 62-61 in overtime in Las Cruces on Dec. 17, 1966.

"The night before, we beat (defending national champion Texas Western, at the time ranked No. 2) in El Paso. I was thinking, 'You know, it might even be possible that by the time we get back to Albuquerque, we could be ranked No. 1 in the country.'

"I remember the last sequence pretty well. We were up by one and the ball was in-bounded to Ben (Monroe). We were playing in a high-school gym, and the scoreboard had gone out and they were keeping the time over on the sidelines with a hand-held watch or something. In my recollection, there were about eight seconds left (actually four).

"It seemed like Ben dribbled forever. He dribbled and dribbled and dribbled. He thought the game was over and just kind of shot the ball at the basket, and on his follow-through (NMSU's) Ernie Turner was standing right in front of him. They called a charging foul, and then they conferred for a while and decided that (time hadn't expired before the call was made). Turner went to the foul line with no time left and made both free throws.

"I didn't even play in that game; that was early in my junior year and I really hadn't gotten much opportunity. But I just remember thinking it was a terrible injustice. We had the game won."

### Clayton Shields

Lobo forward, 1994-98

**THE GAME:** Shields' 55-foot 3-pointer at the buzzer gave UNM a 69-68 win at Las Cruces, Dec. 16, 1995.

"I remember us being undefeated, and the New Mexico State fans were doing a very good job distracting me at the free-throw line (with the Lobos trailing 67-66 with 4.4 seconds left). They had one of those pinwheels, I saw it in the background, and missed the first free throw. Royce (Olney) came up, said, 'It's all right,' then I missed the second one. All I thought was that I blew our perfect season.

"The good thing was, Kenny (Thomas) fouled the guy on the rebound immediately. He (Charles Gosa) hit the first free throw and put his finger to his mouth — kind of an arrogant gesture to me. I kept telling myself, 'If I get the rebound, I'm going to try and make it.' Dave (Gibson) and I both went for the rebound, and Dave backed off. I took a dribble or two and let it fly. I felt it was good. It banked in and my teammates piled on top of me. Charles Smith kind of shoved my head into the court two or three times like he was trying knock me out. We went crazy."



**THOMAS:** Sparked OT win despite pain

### Ron Garcia

Lobo assistant coach 1996-99.

**THE GAME:** New Mexico wins 84-82 in overtime, Dec. 13, 1996, in the Pit.

"Kenny (Thomas) got knocked out of the game in the first half. He took an elbow that rammed his tooth up into his gum. We got a couple of dentists out of the stands that I knew, Gary Mares and Timmy Gutierrez, and they worked on him at halftime. (Lobo) Ben Baum said it sounded like a torture chamber in that locker room, there was so much screaming and blood. That took a lot of guts for Kenny to come back, but he did in the second half and we won in overtime. We had to keep Kenny in there — we had to beat them Aggies."



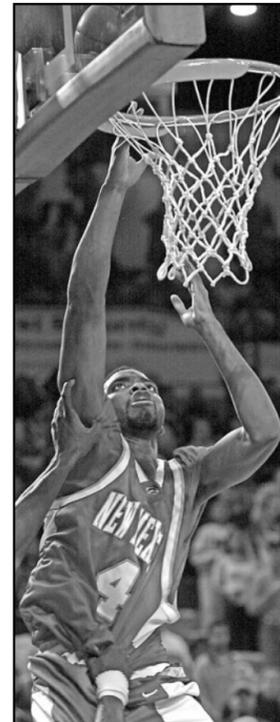
**JOHNSON:** Learned quickly about rivalry

### Marvin Johnson

Lobo forward, 1976-78

**THE GAMES:** New Mexico wins 94-87 and 106-78 during Johnson's senior season, but the two Aggies wins in December 1976 — 75-71 in Albuquerque, and 112-103 in Las Cruces — taught him about the rivalry. The Lobos trailed 42-12 on Dec. 1 at Las Cruces, battled back to lead by two with eight minutes remaining, but lost. On Dec. 22 in Albuquerque, the Lobos had leads of 23-6, 45-32 and 69-65 — the last with less than three minutes remaining. NMSU used a 10-0 run to lead for good.

"Before the season, when I was being recruited, I kept hearing all the stories and the legends — like it was the national championship. I didn't understand it at the time. It was the year after all the (players) boycotted (at UNM), we were all new and nobody could relate to what it was all about. Our first game with them was down here. We were overwhelmed by the intensity of the game and fans. It took us like 10 minutes to adjust."



**WHITE:** Buzzer-beater didn't count

### Wayland White

Lobo wing, 1999-2001

**THE GAMES:** New Mexico wins both games in overtime during the 2000-01 season, 68-65 in Albuquerque on Dec. 7 and 79-68 in Cruces on Jan. 6. Some would say the Lobos beat the Aggies three times that year.

"They cheated, I know that," White says after his athletic tip-in before the final horn in Las Cruces had given UNM an apparent 59-57 victory. "I think Marlon (Parmer) shot the ball and I tapped it back in. We all ran upstairs. I guess the refs kept looking at the replay, and they called us back on the floor. We beat them twice in one night, so that was cool. We played them a handful of times and it was something. I knew it would be intense, but I didn't realize the magnitude at first. Then I understood why."

### Mike Roberts

Longtime Lobo basketball radio broadcaster.

**MEMORABLE GAMES:** UNM's 68-66 win in the Pit, Feb. 1, 1969; UNM's 69-68 win at Las Cruces, Dec. 16, 1995.

"Wow, there are so many great games. Of course Clayton Shields' shot (1995). I remember (Aggie coach) Neil McCarthy dropping his head, and walking away right after he shot it. I don't know if he thought it was going to go in, or if he just figured the game was over either way. If he didn't make it, the Aggies were going to win.

"And of course, the Petie Gibson shot (1969). I'll always remember that one. It was like the Dairese Gary shot (about 40 feet on Saturday against Texas Tech) at halftime. But Petie's was to win the game."

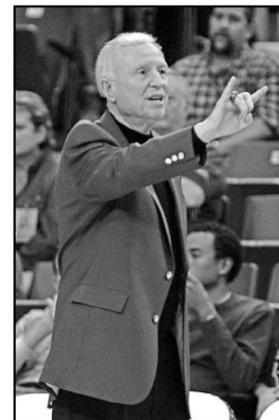
### Petie Gibson

Lobo guard, 1968-1971

**THE GAME:** The distance of Gibson's legendary shot has grown through the years, but he says it was about 20 feet. He had two points and no turnovers that night:

"It was just right of the key. We were up two, and Charlie Criss hit a jumper after they got a steal, I think from Stretch (Howard). That tied it. We called a timeout and set up a play for (Ron) Becker with five seconds left. I got the ball and was looking for Becker. But I had to get something up.

"We gained some momentum after we beat them the first time (86-66 in Las Cruces), they were like Number 6 or 8 in the nation (eighth). We beat them without (Ron) Sanford."



**HENSON:** Guided "Miracle Midgets"

### Lou Henson

The Hall of Fame coach retired in 2005 with 779 career wins, including Final Four squads at NMSU (1970) and Illinois (1989). Still, he calls his first Aggie team in 1966-67 the "Miracle Midgets" and "the most remarkable team I've ever been associated with."

**MEMORABLE GAME:** On Dec. 17, 1966, NMSU's "Miracle Midgets" defeated the visiting fifth-ranked Lobos 62-61 in overtime.

"It's what (former Lobo coach) Bob King referred to as 'The Clock Game.' We were playing at Las Cruces High. The Lobos led by one with only two seconds left and they were inbounding the ball. But what happened is the clock was broken and they had a guy with a stopwatch. Well, the Lobo who caught the inbounds pass took two dribbles and was called for charging. We hit both free throws with no time left and won.

"So Bob King just hit the roof. He said there was no way his guy could dribble the ball twice and charge without time running out. I said 'Bob, that poor guy on the stopwatch can't help it if he has slow reflexes.'"

"But when Bob was coaching, I always would remember going to the Pit and there'd be these two guys behind our bench really giving me problems. They were on me about my hair, about everything. So I'd tell Bob, and he said, 'Is it really bothering you?' I said, 'Well, yes.' He said, 'Good, that's why I put 'em there.'"

### Jimmy Collins

Three-year Aggie guard was named first-team All-American in the '70 Final Four season, when he set a scoring record of 754 points (24.3 ppg) that still stands.

**MEMORABLE GAME:** On Feb. 1, 1969, at the Pit, Lobo Petie Gibson hit a long shot at the buzzer for a 68-66 win over the No. 8 Aggies.

"We were down two at the end and we pressed them. I stole



**CRISS:** Played in remarkable 1969 game

the ball and threw it to (Charlie) Criss and he hit a shot with about six seconds on the clock. And there was Petie Gibson. He ran and hit nothing but the bottom from about two steps in front of midcourt line.

"The Pit was one of the most intimidating places that I've ever played in. I remember fans throwing down coins, and I reached down to pick up one of the coins. Apparently they'd burned it with a cigarette lighter. It burned my fingertips."

"But they were always really, really big-time struggles. Right after the Texas Western era, both coaches (Bob King, Lou Henson) branched out in terms of recruiting. We were all trying to emulate Texas Western or UTEP, especially the black kids. Both coaches were polished and knew exactly what it took to get the best out of their players."



**HILL:** Hit game-winner in 1989

### Jack Nixon

NMSU's football and basketball play-by-play announcer. Tonight's game will be his 56th in the series, covering 28 years.

**THE GAME:** On Dec. 7, 1989 at the Pit, the Aggies won 74-73 on Keith Hill's shot in the closing seconds.

"It was a signature win for Neil McCarthy's first really good Aggie team. I remember three shots in particular: Randy Brown heaved one in from half court at the end of the half to give the Aggies a lead.

"Another came in the first half. The Aggies had a 6-4 forward, James Anderson, really a pretty good jumper, and he just came inside and dunked over Luc Longley. That really got the UNM fans' attention.

"Then at the end of the game, UNM had a guy named Kurt

Miller who had an injured hand taped up. The Aggies fouled him and he missed both free throws. And then Keith Hill hit a shot with, gosh, less than 10 seconds left. He was also the guy who had the basket that beat Tark the Shark (and eventual national champion UNLV 83-82) in the Pan Am Center that year."



**CHANNING:** Lost to Lobos "twice in one night"

### Eric Channing

Four-year Aggie guard (1998-02) accepted the only Division I scholarship offer he received; he left NMSU as the school's all-time leading scorer with 1,862 points.

**MEMORABLE GAME:** On Dec. 7, 2000, Channing scored a game-high 28 points, but the Lobos won 68-65 in OT. UNM's Wayland White's apparent game-winning tip to end regulation was disallowed after a lengthy review, leading to overtime.

"Probably it's one of the strangest things happened in that rivalry. The game was over, and the teams had run up to the locker rooms, and in the old Pan Am, both locker rooms were just down the hall from each other. So we were up there starting to change, and a couple of the Lobos were drinking some sodas and had their jerseys off.

"Then the refs come up and next thing is we're running back onto the court and go and play overtime. And then we lost again. It was bad enough to lose to the Lobos, and then we lost twice in one night."

### Richard Robinson

All-Century Aggie is the school's sixth all-time leading scorer (15.6 ppg in 100 career games).

**MEMORABLE GAMES:** The 1976-77 Aggies swept the Lobos in Robinson's senior year, winning 112-103 in Las Cruces behind his game-high 28 points.

"That game at the Pan Am was one for all time. They had Michael Cooper and Marvin Johnson, and both of those guys were loads. No telling what the score would have been with the 3-point shot. And I had to go out because I had four fouls. Both teams were man-to-man and liked to run and gun. And it was so intense, I thought 'This is what playing in the Final Four feels like.'"

"I loved my home floor. I felt like I could score there with my eyes closed. Back then, we called the Pan Am 'The Stronghold' — when you came to our place, you really had to bring it."

—MARK SMITH,  
RANDY HARRISON  
AND RICK WRIGHT