UCR plays in its first-ever football game, a 40-0 loss to the University of LaVerne. The Highlanders finished with a 1-5 record in that inaugural season, their lone win a 36-7 victory over Cal Baptist. The team played its home games at Wheelock Field in Riverside.

First-year head coach Jim Whitley guides the Highlanders to their first winning season in team history, finishing with a 5-2 record.

UCR closes out the league season with a last-minute field goal to seal a 27-26 win over Cal State Northridge. The Highlanders, who finished with a 9-1 overall record, shared the California Collegiate Athletic Association championship with Cal Poly San Luis Obispo.

UCR announces the discontinuation of the football program.

UCR plays its first home game at the UCR Athletic Field.

Tight end Frank Johnson becomes the first UCR player to be drafted in the NFL, a fourth-round pick by the Los Angeles Rams, where he played linebacker. Johnson was inducted into the UCR Athletics Hall of Fame in 1993. The Rams also selected UCR defensive back Derrick Williams in the ninth round of the 1974 draft. Though he was undrafted, defensive end Michael Basinger played for the Packers in 1974.

Head coach Bob Toledo takes charge of his first game for the Highlanders. In his two years, UCR finished with a combined 15-6 record, winning the conference championship both seasons. Toledo later served as head coach at the University of the Pacific, UCLA, and Tulane.

UCR plays its first home game at the UCR Athletic Field.

The Highlanders preserve their undefeated season with a dramatic 9-6 win on the road against Ahwu College in which John Elstead ran back a kickoff for a touchdown in the closing minutes.

Former All-American UCR quarterback Pete Kettela secured his first win as the Highlanders’ head coach, a position he held until 1959. He later became the offensive coordinator at Stanford and was an assistant coach with the NFL’s Green Bay Packers. In 1983, he became head coach of the Canadian Football League’s Edmonton Eskimos, later serving as both an assistant coach and director of player personnel with the Arena Football League’s Arizona Rattlers.

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