Heavy rains caused widespread cancellations in athletic events across the state, but Rider’s cross country teams trekked through the mud during the Invitational held at the Lawrenceville campus on Saturday, Oct. 8.

Going into the meet, the cross country course was “fast and dry,” according to acting head coach Rob Pasquariello, but the teams in the Bronc Invitational had a rude awakening on Saturday morning as rain continued to pummel the region from the night before. “Once we woke up, we saw the weather and it was a washout,” said Pasquariello. “Not one of our kids complained about the weather. And some athletes are mudders, especially (Andrea) Campbell.”

Campbell, a freshman, shined in the soggy conditions for the women’s team, which defeated Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) foes Siena and Saint Peter’s in the three-team meet, by being the overall first place finisher with a time of 21:03:90. “She claimed that she liked running in the mud,” said assistant coach Bob Hamer.

The men finished second in a four-team field that included Princeton, Siena and Saint Peter’s, Sophomore John Noon had the Bronc’s second place finisher, with a time of 27:03:10. Hamer finished behind Princeton’s Jeff Byrne, who led his first-place team with a time of 27:01:00.

“The mud] had a bad effect as far as times because of the soggy terrain,” said Hamer. “But as far as the competition, it showed that we had tough kids.”

The women’s first place finish in the meet was extra special because Siena was one of the top four teams in the MAAC last season. According to Pasquariello, young talent on the Broncs (MAAC) foes Siena and Saint Peter’s is the reason for the recent success on both the men’s and women’s sides. “They have made great strides with women’s recruiting,” said Pasquariello.

Saint Peter’s was fourth last year and our goal is to be in the top four.”

The Broncs continue the season with the Lafayette Invitational tomorrow at 10 a.m. in Easton, Pa. Hamer said some runners will be held out to ensure readiness for the upcoming MAAC meets. Instead, the younger runners will get an opportunity to demonstrate their abilities and Hamer is confident that they will show their true colors. “We have a group of freshmen runners who don’t back down from anyone,” he said. “[They know] that you have to earn the right to wear that Rider uniform.”

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### Volleyball will rely on returning players

**By Paul Szanilawski**

Rider Volleyball is back on all cylinders as it gears up for its first official Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) matchup. Saturday the 7-12 women’s volleyball team conference rival Loyola at home.

"It’s very exciting," said senior Kristine Dormer, who mentioned there’s a deeper incentive besides beating a MAAC rival. "Loyola is one of the teams we always lost to since freshman year; going out as a senior, the other seniors and I want to beat them." Head coach Emily Abshire has been stressing to the team all week that Loyola is the team most similar to Rider’s, according to Smith. She predicted the match would be a "dog fight to the end," but there are keys to winning including playing in front of a Rider crowd.

"We just have to play a fast offense and use our fans to our advantage and home court," Dormer said. "Loyola is one of those teams that when you travel there they have some of the meanest and toughest fans we’ve seen."

Another difference-maker in this game is something the team, and have in its loss in the FAU Invitational because they were thin on players to call upon as substitutes.

"Nastaja is an impact player, and we need one very important role on the team. She is the core of our offense and serve receive," said Smith. "I think having her back is going to be substantial as far as team chemistry."

With Loyola being a very similar team with well-round ed players, the game will be tough. Therefore the team isn’t too concerned at the moment with playing Big East school Providence on Sunday.

Dormer said the MAAC match is more important than Providence because Rider needs to finish in the top four to be in MAAC championship. Even though Providence is a Big East team, it’s not very good, said the senior. "That means all eyes are on the MAAC game."

### 'Coaching' Continued from p. 12

big role in coaching them. I think they’re very comfortable with me.”

Even though the team does not begin practicing under its new head coach until the conclusion of Midnight MAACness, players are familiar with Dempsey’s coaching style and know what to expect once they get on the court against opponents. "It’s not much of a difference because both coaches are so similar," said senior guard Anna Avarmovic. "We’re going to take things one game at a time. Coach is more aggressive, so we’re definitely going to run and press more."

Though Hamrung’s office isn’t a far walk from Dempsey’s, and though Hamrung will return to the head coach position next season, he will try to stay out of Dempsey’s way and let him coach the team without major influence.

"This year, it’s my team," said Dempsey. "I’m Coach Hamrung and I are good friends, first and foremost. But as far as the day-by-day running of the program, he has pretty much left me in charge and given me my space."

With Dempsey solely responsible for the team, players are more assured of where the leadership is coming from. "We know who’s in charge," said Muntz. "It would be hard for a player to know [who’s running things] if Coach Hamrung was more involved. Now we know who our leader is and who to turn to for guidance."

Dempsey is a different coach than Hamrung, but he shares many of the same thoughts and values. He takes a lot of pride in the program and has little reason to abandon the things established by those before him. "You always put the school first," he said. "I was asked to fill in. I’m going to take that opportunity and run with it. It’s not about me, it’s about Rider." One of the team’s mottos is “no steps backwards.” Dempsey wishes to leave the team right where Hamrung left it last season: poised to win a MAAC championship and earn a bid in the national tournament.

"We’ve come up with the philosophy that if things are not broken, then don’t fix them," said Dempsey. "Thenuts and bolts of the program are in place. I’m just going to use what was established before me and try to make the most of it."

So what can fans expect from the team under a new head coach? Dempsey’s main goal is the same as the program has each and every year. That goal is to win it all. "We’ll be very competitive," Dempsey said. "My focus this year is to develop the younger players, but I’m smart enough to know that the veterans and players are the ones who will take us to where we want to go."

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