By Eamon Ducey

Rarely are Rider sports teams recognized nationally, but, once again, coaches around the country acknowledge the wrestling team.

Rider received 26 votes in the National Wrestling Coaches Association InterMat Preseason Poll, which was not enough to be in the top 25.

“It is good to be recognized but we don’t ever want to be outside the top 25,” said Assistant Coach John Hangey. “I think we have a team good enough to be in there or even higher.”

While the team has received countrywide admiration, individuals on the team were honored as well. Three Broncs were ranked in the top 20 in their weight class. Junior Don Fisch is ranked ninth at 141 pounds, sophomore Tim Harner is ranked 17th at 133 pounds and senior Dave Miller is ranked 18th at 157 pounds. Fisch was only one victory away from becoming an All-American. “They’re all hard-nosed kids if they have a bad tournament,” Hangey said. “Experience is something that you can’t replace,” said Hangey. “Now that they have gone through the season of ups and downs, they are better wrestlers for it.”

Harner lead the team with 26 victories last season. “Tim is deceivingly fast for his height,” Hangey said. “He was one of the best kids coming out of high school.”

Hangey recognizes common threads in these wrestlers. “They’re all hard-nosed competitive kids that train hard,” Hangey said. Harner is one of six sophomores who wrestled in 10 or more matches last season. This gave them the experience and opportunity to understand what goes into wrestling during college season.

“Experience is something that you can’t replace,” said Hangey. “They know if they are not focused, they will be in the top 25. I think we have a team good enough to be in there or even higher.’”

— John Hangey, assistant coach

The Broncos have a challenging schedule once again. They face three top 15 teams in the country.

When asked which opponents on the schedule concerned him, Hangey said, “Cornell is ranked ninth, Hofstra is in the top 15 and we usually see top 10 teams in the Virginia Duals.”

Another challenge facing the team is that it does not have a home meet until Jan. 25. “That was the way it worked out,” said Hangey. “We usually try to get a top 10 team here in the fall. We will have to fix it for next year.”

Most coaches fear a schedule like that will have a negative effect on the wrestlers, especially mentally. But Hangey is confident in the team’s ability to focus.

“It is not hard to keep these top 15 kids focused,” said Hangey. “They know if they are not focused, they will be run over.”

With the mix of youth and experience, Hangey understands that he must keep the wrestlers positive.

“You have to remind these kids if they have a bad tournament, it is not the end of the world,” said Hangey. “They are competitive kids. They hate to lose.”

Wrestling with national expectations

Men’s Basketball
Home Opener
Tickets Available

Rider’s home opener is coming up against the Bucknell Bison on Friday, Nov. 18 at home. Bucknell upset #3 seed Kansas in the second round of the 2005 NCAA Tournament and had a 13-10 overall record. Tickets are going fast!

Don’t let Bucknell fans get them all!

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