Swimming warms up for MAAC championship

By John Schuler

As the cold temperatures begin to decimate, The Rider Swimming and Diving teams prepare for their most important meet of the year, the MAAC Championships.

The teams have been hard at work preparing both mentally and physically for the daunting task ahead of them. They trained in Florida in January with good weather as well as high hopes that they would become even stronger.

"The training has been intense," said Assistant Coach Dennis Ceppa. "After Florida training we started 4:45 a.m. workouts three times a week." Not only will it prepare them physically, but also mentally, as they must surmount the grueling demand of early and late practices along with doing schoolwork.

"Our goal is to outperform every other school out there," said Head Coach Stephen Parillo. "Their hard work will pay off." One of those schools is Marist, Rider's rival and defending MAAC Champions. However, in a dual meet earlier last November, the Rider men had the upper hand with a 127.50 to 115.00 victory over the defending champs.

"Their record was 50.0 in the MAAC and we stopped that record," said Dylan Korn. "We never beat Marist in a dual meet since we've been going against them. It was a big confidence booster. Hopefully it will help."

When the men's team faced Marist early in the season it was at full strength. Since its upset victory, the men's team has lost some athletes due to injuries and other reasons. According to Korn, the team has 11 guys ready to go for the MAAC Championship.

"We have a small team going in," said Dan Burgess. "We work hard all season so not everyone stays." However, the men's team feels the challenge will make it more competitive than ever before. The athletes do acknowledge the test they are faced with.

"It's going to be tough," said Korn. "We're going to have to really step up and win a lot of the races." Both coaches hope the pressure won't get to be too much and feel their teams are ready to represent Rider in a way that has never been done before.

"If we win, it will be a huge accomplishment because we have been through so much adversity and triumph this year," said Stephanie Cosentino.

Both Fletcher and Ceppa agree that focus and consistency are key factors in the championship. Thanks to 4:45 a.m. practices, the team's focus has definitely intensified in the past few weeks and will hopefully pay off as they begin their quest for the division championship.

"We are more confident this year," said Coach Fletcher. "We know what it takes to win, and we feel focused right now."

Additional reporting by Joe Fallon

BIRDMAN

This Sundat, Rider's basketball home games will be broadcast live on MSG (channel 45 on campus). The men's game against Siena will be on at 1 p.m. and the women's game will follow at 4 p.m. All fans are specifically asked to wear their red 6th man T-shirts.

Family looking for after-school babysitter for sports-oriented 10 yr. old in Pennington. Prefer someone who is active, fun, & can work 2-3 days/wk from 3-7/8 p.m. Girl or guy considered. Good reference from family, friends or employers. $15/hr, including travel time. Nice, casual family.

Send email to MikeHopew135@aol.com.