

COMING FROM BEHIND

Rider wins 4 of last 6 to climb in MAAC

By Joe Fallon

It was not an easy beginning for the men's basketball team in its 73-69 win over Canisius on Sunday. The Griffs pulled ahead early, scoring the first 12 points. It was five minutes into the game before sophomore forward Jason Thompson scored the Broncs' first bucket with a jumper for two points. The Broncs would remain behind until near the end of the first half.

Rider has had a history of slow starts this season, but they it has been able to make a comeback in previous games.

"We have a resilient group," said Head Coach Tommy Dempsey. "I think we are a little bit unfazed if we do fall behind, because we have been able to come back so many times before."

Toward the end of the first half, the Broncs finally broke through the tough defense by Canisius and pulled ahead on a three-pointer by junior guard Terrance Mouton.

"I thought Canisius did a really good job coming out in the zone [defense]," said Dempsey. "Our focus was to come out with a ton of energy and I thought we were ready to do that. But the zone kind of deflated us a little bit and made us a little bit stagnant offensively. It took us a while to get into the flow of the game but I thought we executed very good zone offense probably in the last 15 minutes of the first half."

The first half finished with a Rider lead 38-35, but Canisius took the lead

in the beginning of the second half.

"One thing I try to coach with these guys is offensive confidence," said Dempsey. "When they have open looks, I want them to shoot."

The players certainly followed their coach's lessons and advice, as the players took the shots when they had them.

"As a point guard I'm mostly looking to give the ball to my teammates, but if we're struggling to score and my shot will help the team out, I'll take it," said Mouton.

The Broncs kept it a close game throughout the second half, each team taking its share of the lead. They closed out the game with five out of seven successful foul shots to win the game 73-69.

The Broncs went up to Marist on Wednesday for the final division away game. The men managed to keep the game close all the way to the finish, 62-57, with 50 seconds left in the game. In the end they suffered a 73-62 loss.

Marist made all six of its foul shots in the last 47 seconds to close the door on another Rider comeback. Though the Broncs were hurt by their loss, the win over Canisius still left the team feeling good about the rest of the conference and the upcoming MAAC tournament.

"I have confidence in coach Dempsey and our team that eventually we're going to get it together," said senior forward Edwin Muniz. "I know that I have the utmost confidence in our team that by the time the MAAC tournament comes we're going to be one of the scariest



Photo by Matt Freedman

Senior forward Edwin Muniz shoots over Canisius forward Darnell Wilson. Muniz went on to score 12 points during Rider's 73-69 win.

teams to be playing."

Dempsey has just as much confidence in the team as the players do.

"If you look around the MAAC right now, I don't know who's won four of their last six but I can't say," said

Dempsey. "Maybe Iona and St. Peter's, and Rider, so even though we're four and nine right now, we're certainly going in the right direction."

First home meet nets a split for track and field

By Paul Mullin

In what was their first and last home meet on Sunday, the men's and women's indoor track and field teams split with at the Mercer Duals, held at Lawrenceville Preparatory School. The men's team won 92-91, while the women's team lost 98-77.

The meet served as a preparation for the upcoming MAAC Championships, which will be held on Friday, Feb. 17. According to sophomore Jeff Stead, who won the mile with a time of 4:16.81, the home crowd effect was a factor in his success.

"The crowd was a really big part of it, especially during my race," Stead said. "The entire building was standing up on their feet and cheering, so that really helped me push through."

Major contributors to the Broncs' effort included four individuals who, in addition to winning or placing in the top

three of their events, were nominated for either the Eastern College Athletic Conference (ECAC) Championships or the IC4A Championships. Junior Katie O'Connor tied the Rider record for the high jump (5'7") and qualified for the ECACs in the same event.

"Jumping 5'7" and qualifying for ECACs was a goal of mine this season," O'Connor said. "Thanks to the coaching staff and my teammates' support, I was able to achieve my goal."

Junior David Payne for the 55m and freshman Anthony Parillo for the long jump (23'3.5") each won their events and qualified for the IC4As in them, while senior Adam Kucinski placed second in both the pole vault (13'6") and the long jump (23'2.75") and qualified for the IC4As in both events.

"[At the IC4As] I feel that I will have a better chance of placing high in the long jump because I worked hard all year

and concentrated on the long jump," Kucinski said. "The results of last week's performance proves that my chances of getting a high place are attainable."

Although Parillo admitted that receiving such distinction as a freshman was a great honor, he acknowledged that it "feels much better to achieve than aspire."

"There are numerous other athletes on the team who had already qualified and, like them, I was only doing what I was brought there for," he said.

Preparation for some athletes who had already qualified for the two championship meets came Friday, Feb. 3 and Saturday, during the New Balance Collegiate Invitational, held at the Armory in New York City.

"We went to New York to compete in the New Balance Invitational, which is one of

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Photo by Matt Freedman

Junior Allyson Angelo successfully completes a pole vault on Sunday. Angelo's effort vaulted her into second place.