Brons hope to top Jaspers at MAACs

By Jeff Frankel

A nine year winless streak at the MAAC championships will hopefully be broken today as the men’s and women’s indoor track teams battle division rivals at the Armory in New York City at 5 p.m.

Both the men’s and women’s teams have been preparing hard since late summer and have already put a lot of sweat into winning the gold medal, according to acting indoor track coach Bob Pascauriello.

“We’re right where we want to be,” said Pascauriello. “Physically, we are ready to win a championship. This is probably the most talented team we’ve had since I’ve been here. It’s just a matter of [if] whether [the team] can put it together on that day.”

Rider will be competing against several top-notch track programs including the Manhattan Jaspers.

“(Manhattan has) tremendous athletes,” he said. “They’re the defending champions, they’ve won it nine years in a row. They are definitely the favorite until someone proves otherwise. We’re hoping it will be us.”

The track team has many key athletes including senior Jasmine Fenlator who believes her team’s preparation can achieve gold.

“I think our team is well-prepared,” she said. “Every year we get stronger and stronger, hopefully we’ll have the winning [trophy] in our hands.”

Fenlator recently qualified for the ECACs during the Rider/Lafayette Winter Games.

“She’s definitely a NCAA qualifier, she’s the real deal,” said Pascauriello.

The men’s team also has talent on its side. Senior David Payne recently qualified marks, including running the 200-meter dash in 21.72 seconds, said Pascauriello.

“I was actually surprised,” said Payne, “I’m working with an injury.”

Payne also runs the mile, which he called the “hardest event in track.” Despite this, Payne is confident he will do well in his events.

“I should do fine, I’m not that worried about it,” he said. “I’ll treat it like every other meet. Hopefully I’ll come back with three gold medals.”

The freshman athletes will have the biggest obstacle in beating Manhattan because of their inexperience. Pascauriello hopes the more experienced juniors and seniors will lead by example and beat their opposition.

“I think the underclassmen know how tough Manhattan is and the level where they compete,” he said. “I think we’ve prepared them because we’ve been at pretty tough meets. Hopefully, they can pull on that experience pretty quickly.”

Senior runner Carla Wynter is optimistic about the meet despite being somewhat disappointed at last week’s event. She will try and put that behind her.

“I was a little disappointed in the 200 meter dash,” she said. “Hopefully, we can put this behind me and look forward. I’m just going to do the best I can.”

Indoor track athletes run on banked turns, called a 200 meter banked Mondo track, similar to those used by NASCAR drivers, to help maintain speed, said Pascauriello. This may be the advantage that may help propel them to victory.

To have a bank really helps to maintain the speed of the runner,” he said. “We train at Lawrenceville Prep and they have a banked track.”

Some athletes may have to run several events throughout the day, he said. This would be a strain on many of them and he is worried that it might affect their performance.

“We’re going to ask some athletes to do five events,” he said. “That’s a lot over a five hour period. That’s when their practices really comes into play.”

Even if the team may have some challenges in front of it, it is ready to go and try it best, according to Wynter.

“Everyone is psyched and [we’ll] hopefully come back with a gold medal,” she said.

Does Rider Watch the Olympics?

*Poll is not scientific

100 % YES

75 %

59 %

50 %

41 %

25 %

NO

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Rider's wrestling team did something many Rider University students, faculty members, administrators, alumni and even some athletes have always dreamed of doing to a fellow University down the road. Rider defeated Princeton.

Not only did the Broncs win, they did it in downing fashion, 46-0. Not only did the Broncs dominate but the meet was the second of a doubleheader that began at 7 p.m. following a tough wrestling matchup against Cornell that started at 5 p.m.

Unfortunately this victory isn’t the savior of wrestling’s reputation with Rider students. As The Rider News wrestling article entitled “Wrestling team back on path of destruction” that ran two weeks ago pointed out, “Of all the (successful) sports teams at Rider, the one that receives the least recognition is the wrestling team. Ironically, it has been one of the more stable and outstanding teams to compete, and this year has been no different.”

Rider’s wrestling program has had much more impressive wins than Saturday’s against Princeton, including victories against Maryland and Lehigh. What’s even more impressive is year after year Rider sends wrestlers to the NCAA tournament.

I know watching wrestling matches doesn't exactly match the electricity at the Broncs’ Zone during a basketball game. But there isn’t any sport, even on the professional level, that can really match the excitement offered by a college basketball game. However, it would be easier to get excited at wrestling meets if students knew what was at stake. Nothing matters more in sports than a team near the top of their division going against quality opponents.

A concentrated effort from the P.R. department and other organizations should put a bigger emphasis on our