Despite weekend stumble, softball still playing well

By Jared Vichko
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Every person encounters bumps on the road, obstacles that must be overcome. Last weekend, the Broncs stumbled a bit, dropping two games to Saint Peter's, 3-0 and 5-1.

The losses ended Rider's seven game winning streak and ends them at 10-10, 4-2 in the MAAC. The defense played strongly against Saint Peter's but the bats fell silent as they lost two defensive struggles.

"We played well defensively," said sophomore Maddy Boulden. "We didn't have too many errors, but we just couldn't get it going on offense."

In the first game, a 3-0 loss, Rider out-hit Saint Peters 7-5 but failed to produce any runs. Boulden pitched well, striking out six and walking three. Despite the loss, the Broncs were pleased that they were able to contain Saint Peter's main hitters.

"We shut down girls that usually beat us," said Boulden. "It was the freshmen and girls we weren't really familiar with who got hits. The rest of their team stepped up."

The second game was a repeat of the first, as the Broncs played solid defense but couldn't get anything going offensively as they lost 5-1.

"We played real well," said junior Brandey Weed. "We played strong defensively, but we just weren't hitting the ball as well as usual."

Junior Mike Rakoczy shut down Marist the entire game, raising his record to 2-1 and allowing only four hits and one run in a 2-1 Rider win. Rakoczy struck out four and walked two in what Head Coach Sonny Pittaro called "the highlight of the weekend."

In game two of the double-header, Rider again took an early lead when Long drove in his fourteenth run of the season in the top of the first. Unfortunately, Marist came back in the bottom of the third to score four runs and never looked back. Rider junior Sean Whalen added two runs with a double to make the score 4-3, but the Broncs would get no closer to winning. Marist added three more runs and beat the Broncs, 7-4.

Despite only winning once over the weekend, Pittaro was still pleased with his team's performance.

"Marist is a tough team to beat," Pittaro said. "Our effort was good and we battled; we just didn't hit the ball very well. We lost two close ball games."

When asked about the weather, Pittaro explained that, "it's tough to go inside again and work. We're just trying to stay in shape and work on the basics."

Rider faces Siena this weekend in Albany in a pivotal MAAC three-game series.