

SURPRISE, SURPRISE

After 1-win season, men's soccer scores two playoff upsets

By Jared Vichko
Sports Editor

Although many people go to Florida for vacation, this week the Broncos are there for business only.

The men's soccer team, after winning only one game during the regular season, went to the Metro-Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) playoffs, which were held in Disney World, and pulled off two upset victories over seventh seed Manhattan and second seed Fairfield.

"We're playing very well as a group now," said Head Coach Russ Fager. "We had a game plan and the guys really stuck to it today."

The playoffs were open for every team in the MAAC this year, opening the door for the Broncos and its 1-14-2 regular season record.

Rider will now play on Saturday in the semi-finals against the third seed Saint Peter's. The path to the semi-finals was anything but smooth.

The Broncos' first opponent was Manhattan. After both teams finished scoreless after regulation and overtime, the game came down to penalty kicks.

After Manhattan scored the first kick, Rider senior Jason Brockman answered back to tie the game. The Jaspers made its second kick as well, and after a Rider miss, the stage was set for senior goalkeeper Brian Gill.

Gill made the biggest save of the day on Manhattan's third shot, allowing Rider freshman Adam Bailey to tie the game.

"Brian Gill had a solid game, making one point-blank save and another diving save in the second half on a shot he was screened on," said Fager.

After both teams scored on the next kicks, a Jasper miss set up the final shot of the game by Brian Laurinaitis. Laurinaitis, with ice water running through his veins, slipped the ball past the goalie to give the Broncos the win.

"Bailey and Hilinski played extremely well and when Laurinaitis' shot went in, any frustration we had during the regular season had gone," said Fager.

The Broncos had several chances to score in regulation, but couldn't find any success.

"We had 12 or 15 chances to score in regulation," said Fager. "We just couldn't find the back of the net. We had seven or eight shots that were



Photo by Hugh Tsung

Sophomore Brian Laurinaitis tries to dribble around a defender in a game earlier this season. Despite only winning one game in the regular season, the team pulled off two upsets in the playoffs. They will play the third seed, Saint Peter's, on Saturday at 12:30 p.m. in Orlando, Florida.

just a few inches wide."

In the second game, the Broncos fought against the second seed Fairfield.

After Fairfield took the 1-0 lead in the first half, Rider answered back with a goal by freshman Marc Bernstein, tying the game 1-1.

Ten minutes into the second half, Brockman scored the game-winner on a direct kick from 25 yards out, his second goal in two games.

While Brockman may have

been the hero, Fager said he realizes that it took an entire team effort.

"Our defenders were outstanding again today," said Fager. "To come back from the overtime game we had played yesterday and to play so well today is a real tribute to our guys. We were organized and got what we were after."

Gill had another great game for the Broncos, keeping the opposition in check.

"Gill was all over the place

today and had an outstanding game," said Fager.

The next team it will be after is the third seed, Saint Peter's, who the Broncos will play on Saturday at 12:30 p.m.

"Saint Peter's has a tremendous attack and will be a very tough challenge for us," said Fager.

In the heat of Florida, let us hope the sun will continue to shine on the Broncos.

SHOCKED AND AWED

Field hockey upset in playoffs

By Andrew Straub
Staff Writer

The sports gods love parody. They love to see the most talented team fall, to create a Cinderella story and to renew rivalries over and over again.

Those same sports gods showed their omnipotent power this weekend at Rider.

The 2003 field hockey team came into the Northeast Conference (NEC) Tournament with everything going its way. With a 13-4 record, including a 5-0 conference record, Rider earned the number one seed. On top of these accomplishments, Rider was the host of the NEC Tournament.

Despite these favorable

components, the Broncos were knocked out in the championship game, 2-1, by its fierce rival Quinnipiac.

The first opponent for Rider was the fourth seed Siena Saints. The Broncos out-shot the Saints 23-5 en route to a 4-0 romp. Junior Christina Ang, fresh off her crowning as 2003 NEC Field Hockey Player of the Year, notched two goals, each coming in the second half to lead Rider in scoring. Sophomore Courtney Bertos and freshman Ashley Boulden also added goals for the victorious Broncos.

Freshman goalkeeper Krysta Bearish made three saves to earn her fifth shutout of the

season.

"We came out real excited for the game," said junior Maddy Boulden. "Our goal was to play better than we did in the first game [Rider won 2-0], and I think we proved what we can do."

Advancing to the championship, Rider found itself in the title game with Quinnipiac for the fourth straight year. Earlier in the season, the highly-disciplined Broncos defeated the Bobcats 2-1 in an exciting overtime match up.

Unfortunately, the championship game was a far

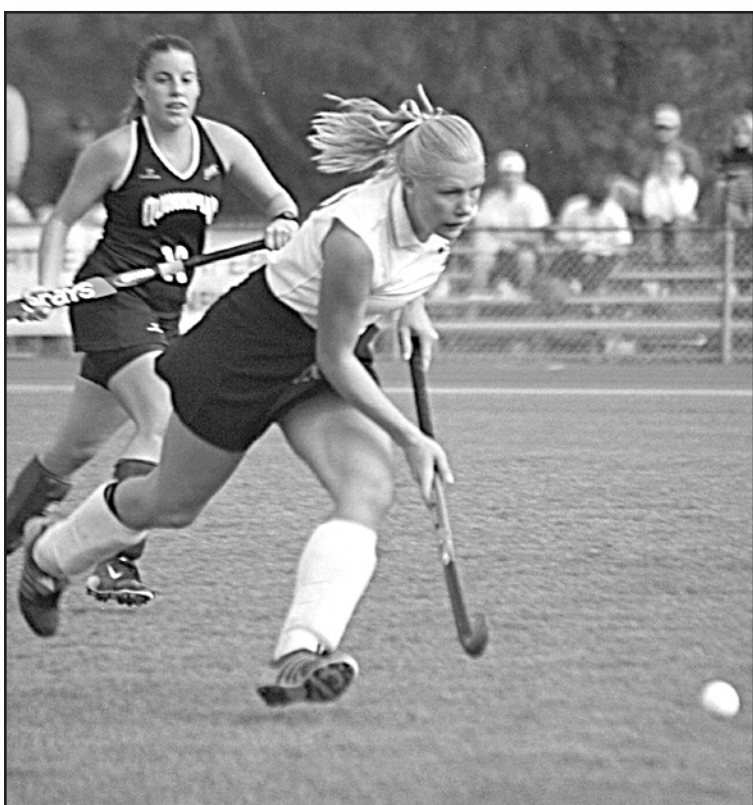


Photo by Jennifer Kuhn

Junior Katie Sebastian advances the ball during Sunday's 2-1 loss to Quinnipiac in the NEC Championship Game. This marks the fifth time Rider has met the Bobcats in the NEC title game, with Quinnipiac winning three.

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