

A weekend of comebacks and milestones

Team keeps postseason hopes alive; Levi achieves 1,500 career kills and digs

By Eamon Ducey

Rider's women's volleyball was an after thought in the Broncs sports universe for the last couple of years, but this year they have played exciting games, received individual honors and are still in the playoff-picture with a 4-3 conference record.

The Broncs hosted Niagara on Friday night. Rider won the first two games but lost three consecutive games to lose the match. This hurt Rider's playoff hopes, not only within its record, but also by losing a potential tiebreaker to one of the teams they are fighting for a playoff spot. One positive note from the game was senior outside hitter Jaclyn Levi, had 32 kills and 20 digs, which put her over the 1500 mark in career digs.

The Broncs dug themselves a hole Friday when they lost to Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) Niagara. They were up two games to none only one game away from taking a dominating position to enter the playoff picture.

The team felt its minds got away from what gave them the lead.

"We started to over ana-

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it to them."

The victory meant another meeting with the top seeded defending champion Loyola Greyhounds in the championship game. The Greyhounds shut out Iona 4-0 in the semifinals. The Broncs knew that it would take a lot to beat an outstanding Loyola squad. It also had memories of a disappointing MAAC semifinal exit at the hands of the Greyhounds a year before.

"We go in every year thinking this is the year that we are going to beat them," said Oates. "The Loyola game is usually what the season comes down to."

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scene after the game.

"That victory felt so good," said Rivero, who made 11 saves. "It was the best feeling when all our fans came on the field to celebrate after the game."

The playoff berth definitely did not come easy to the Broncs. Arnold says that was mostly the fault of the team itself.

"We're really happy. Marist out-shot us, but we played well," sophomore defenseman Graham Arnold said. "We could have gotten in the [tournament] sooner, but we made it a lot tougher on ourselves."



Photo courtesy of Rider Sports Information

Senior Jaclyn Levi getting one of her 1,500 career digs in a game earlier in the season. She hit the milestone on Saturday.

lyze our play and tried to be too clever," junior middle hitter Jennifer Drummond said.

The Broncs needed short-term memory when they hosted Canisius on Sunday. Rider did not come out ready to play and lost the first two games of the match. This meant the team had lost its last five straight sets in a span of two days. Fortunately for Rider, the team

was able to turn it around and win out the last three, including a dominant 15-5 performance in the fifth and deciding game. Levi, in her final home game as a Bronc, reached another milestone with 25 kills giving her 1512 career kills.

After the Broncs lost the first two games, the players talked about how they could come back from a two game

deficit.

"When we lost the second game, we huddled up and said 'Lets be like Niagara,'" Drummond said. "We can come back and win, all we had to do is focus on the point that we were playing like Niagara did to us."

1,500 kills and digs is a statement about the greatness of Levi's Rider career. Levi has experienced some of the worst years in Rider volleyball, which encompasses two seasons with no conference victories. She was able to play at a high level consistently. She deserves to set a milestone, especially on the best team of her career.

Levi claims to have not thought about her statistics, but finally admitted what the numbers meant to her.

"I did not realize I was approaching these marks," she said. "It is great to achieve them," she said. "It shows that I played equally well on offense and defense."

Nobody was happier to see Levi achieve these milestones than her teammates.

"She deserves it, she works so hard, she is our leader, and she always encourages us to get better," said Drummond.

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Loyola entered the game on a twelve game winning streak encompassing MAAC and non-conference contests. The team is currently ranked fifth in the nation in scoring and one of the best in defense allowing an average of 0.68 goals per game.

"They are a very disciplined team with a lot of good players," said Oates. "It is almost like they can be robots out there sometimes."

The Broncs displayed resilience by keeping the game scoreless going into halftime and for a long portion of the second

half. Then the Greyhounds struck like lightning. Courtney Arikian of Loyola finally broke the tie by forcing through a long shot from 18 yards into the net with about 19 minutes remaining. Only a minute later, Ali Andrezejewski of Loyola scored an insurance goal off a rebound of a save by Rider freshman goalkeeper Kim Carter.

"It was not so much that we played differently than the game against Siena," said Oates. "They were just the better team and we tried our best."

Six seniors will graduate

from Rider in the spring. These seniors include Coyle, Best, Andrea Giuliani, Leah Craig, Marianne Hanna and Casey Fagan.

"They were a big core to the team, they definitely deserved a championship," Oates said.

The returning players, including Oates believe that there is no reason to write off the Broncs next season.

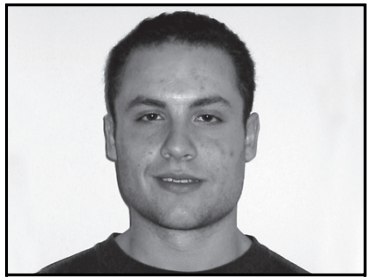
"If we play our best game, we can beat Loyola," she said. "We will go out there and keep practicing, it will eventually happen sometime."

we played them tight this year. We feel that we have a good enough team to win a championship."

Rivero claims that he and the team are satisfied with being matched up against Loyola in the first round.

"We think that our team matches up best against them, better than the other two teams," he said. "We're not worried."

While most teams would be happy enough to reach the playoffs after a shaky start to a season where expectations weren't high, the Rider's men's soccer team has no plans to quit its magic now. Fourth place is good, but it isn't satisfying enough.



Mike Caputo The song of Hussong

In the 2003-2004 academic year, it may have appeared at times that the field hockey program led by the married tandem of Lori and Dan Hussong, was not at its finest hour.

After earning the Northeast Conference (NEC) Regular Season Championship with a 14-5 overall record, the Broncs suffered a heartbreaking 2-1 loss to rival Quinnipiac at home in the conference championship game. This ended a vision of repeating a NEC Championship and another chance to participate in the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Tournament. To make things even worse, accusations were surfacing about assistant coach Dan Hussong.

During the spring, Dan Hussong went through a grueling legal dispute that dated back to a situation in 1996 during his head coaching days at West Windsor/Plainsboro high school. Jennifer Besler, a former girls basketball player for Dan Hussong at the high school accused the head coach of verbally abusing her to the point where she developed an eating disorder and "other physical ailments" according to NBC10.

Besler took her case to court and originally was awarded approximately \$1.5 million. Fortunately for Dan Hussong, the decision was overturned in his favor about a week later.

The case had an impact on coaches across the nation on every level. Coaches are now forced to cautiously watch out for what is said to their players. The news spread across the nation so much that Besler and Dan Hussong even made an appearance on ABC television's *Good Morning America*.

Although Dan Hussong got the better end of the case, it would seem that a shadow would linger with the Hussongs during the program's important months of preparation.

This was not a factor though, as the Hussongs

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