

# Women's hoops to sneak attack MAAC

## Optimism is brewing as Harrison takes helm after last year's 5-23 record

By Joe Haubrich

It's getting awfully cold out, and with the cold weather comes heavy jackets, gloves, snow and of course Rider women's basketball. This year, confidence is running high because of the new playbook, work ethic and discipline that new head coach Tori Harrison brings to Alumni Gym.

Coach Harrison possesses a long history of success in basketball as both a player and a coach. As a player at Louisiana Tech University, Harrison led her team twice to the NCAA Women's Basketball Final Four. Harrison first took on the role of assistant coach at Wake Forest (1987-88). She then went to Alabama (1988-89) before returning to Wake Forest (1990-91). She next assisted at Clemson (1991-92).

Harrison's only experience with head coaching was at Coppin State (1992-1997) Harrison was named the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference (MEAC) Coach of the Year in 1993 by winning 22 games with a team that won only six games the year before. After Coppin State, she had assistant coaching stints at the University of Minnesota (1997-1999) and at George Washington University (1999-2004). Harrison aided in the NCAA Tournament appearances of both George Washington and Clemson.

"Coach Harrison definitely knows what she's talking about," said senior forward

**The Harrison Comparison**

**1991 Coppin State- 6 wins**  
**1992 Coppin State (with Harrison)- 22 wins**

**2004 Rider- 5 wins**  
**2005 Rider (with Harrison)- ??**

Leanne Moore. "She's taken a team to the Final Four and you can tell by the way she conducts practices that she knows the game of basketball."

"Our new coaching staff is very positive and they have a whole new game plan," senior guard/forward Katie Hall said.

Harrison's experience and new game plan will be complemented by the play of Rider's "big three," senior players. This "big three" includes Moore, Hall and guard Becky Hower. Hall and Hower are 1,000-point scorers, and Moore was Rider's 2004 Female Athlete of the Year. A lot will be asked of these veterans this year, even though they have assumed a similar role on this team in years past.

Hower believes that the Broncs will look to improve upon last year's five-win season.

"We're going to be a lot better this year," said Hower. "We're going to surprise a lot of teams."

Hall agrees with her running partner.

"I think we're going to do a lot better than previous years,"

she said. "You're not going to turn your whole program around in one year, but I think it's going to be fun to play and fun to watch us [this season]."

The other seniors on the team include 2003 Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) Player of the Year Tami Coyle, who returns to the court after bringing her soccer team to the MAAC finals, and guard Kim Peto, who missed all of last season with a back injury.

"All the seniors have to provide leadership and keep people positive," said Hower.

Also returning for the Broncs are junior Tami Trimming and sophomores Kara Borel, Kate McAndrew, Denise Moore and Monica Welborn.

Hall spoke highly of the sophomore returnees.

"The sophomores will have a lot more playing time this year, and I think they will help us out tremendously because they [already] have experience at this level," she said.

Bronc newcomers this season include junior transfer Christine Catalanotto and freshmen Janelle Henderson,

Heather Landis and Jen Towers to complete the Rider women's squad.

"The freshmen look solid," said Moore. "[They] are really good."

The team looked good in practices and scrimmage games, but adapting to a new style of play may take some time. The players believe fan support will help with the transition.

"Fans are always a big part [of games]," said Hower. "They get the team hyped. We need a lot of fan support this year."

The difficult season starts with seven straight road games, the first of the seven being at Rutgers on Saturday, November 20.

"Our first game against Rutgers, who is ranked 17th in the nation, is a tough opener, but I think we can deal with it pretty well," said Hower.

Moore is not worried about the daunting schedule ahead.

"I don't care who we play. I'm ready to beat everybody," said Moore. "I'm not scared of anybody."

The Broncs' first home game is not until December 18, but the women are up to the challenge of a tough rebuilding season.

"We need to stay positive," said Hall. "The season's are up and down. We'll have to overcome when things are down."

The team heads into the season with a new coach, a veteran core of players and a fresh start. The way things look, there may not be many rough things to overcome at all.

attained Preseason MAAC Player of the Year Honors at Media Day.

"There are several teams in our league that can possibly win the [championship]," said Johnson.

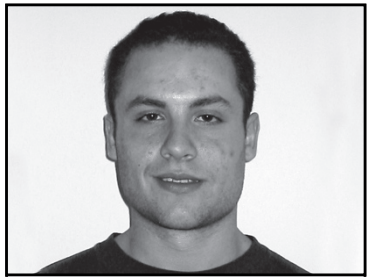
Other notable players that had significant playing time last year were senior guard Robert Taylor, senior forward Andre Pereira, junior forward Paul Johnson and sophomore guard Terrance Mouton.

Castleberry insists that the team has built itself into a championship contender that will produce come playoff time.

"We all know our role this year and we improved during the offseason," said Castleberry. "So we definitely have what it takes."

Along with Castleberry and the rest of the team, Harnum is ready for the season.

"I like our team and I am very comfortable with [it]," he said. "I can't wait to take this team into battle."



**Mike Caputo**  
**From worst to almost first**

Men's soccer has proven over the last two seasons that one should never count a team out until it is mathematically eliminated, especially in the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC). On paper, it shows that the men's soccer team has had two outstanding finishes including a semifinal appearance in 2003 and a championship appearance this year. It would be hard for someone on the outside to believe that the Broncs had won only seven games combined in these two seasons.

This does not show a weakness, or a strength for that matter. It really proves that the men's soccer team had talent all along and that it was demonstrated at the right moments, which deserves success just as much as anything else. The Broncs went 0-9 in non-conference play this season, meaning that all of their five regular season wins came from MAAC opponents, therefore providing them a good enough record (5-4) to secure a spot in the conference's postseason tournament.

The reason that the 2003 team (2-15-3 overall) was in the postseason, is because the MAAC Tournament invites all 10 teams every few years in certain sports when it is held in Orlando, Fl.

Depending on the playoff structure of the particular sport, the regular season appears to have differing degrees of relevance. When a sport has a four-team playoff, like most instances in the MAAC, the regular season has slightly more meaning. This is especially true since national polls are rarely a factor in the MAAC.

Another reason is that the percentages are much less to be one of the top four teams out of 10 in a conference, as opposed to the 100 percent chance of landing a playoff spot in sports such as MAAC basketball. This playoff disparity is evident in professional sports, such as

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throughout the season.

"They are both talented and are both going to have an impact at some point this year," he said.

In the game, Johnson had 12 points and seven assists while Castleberry dominated the paint with 10 points and five rebounds including an impressive dunking display.

Beginning tonight with the match-up against Bucknell, the Broncs embark on a very difficult schedule consisting of six or seven of what Harnum describes as "swing games."

"These games will be decided in the final two minutes of the game," he said. "Somebody will have to make plays."

Johnson also says that the schedule has a high degree of difficulty.

"There are no teams on the schedule that are not good," said Johnson. "I think everyone

## Recent MAAC Tournament exits:

**2004- Quarterfinals (fifth seed)**

**2003- First Round (seventh seed)**

**2002- Quarterfinals (first seed)**

will give us tough competition. We've got our hands full."

The schedule also includes a competitive tournament hosted at Wisconsin-Green Bay in late December.

At Media Day, Manhattan was the preseason pick for first place. The Jaspers, who made a run to the second round of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Tournament, enter this year without 2004 MAAC Player of the Year turned professional player Luis Flores.

"I was very surprised for us to be picked number one, just because of who we lost," said Manhattan head coach Bobby Gonzalez.

All teams ranked eighth and above appear to have a shot at the championship in this year's open MAAC field. Games that will be circled on Rider's calendar are the match-ups against No. 2 ranked Fairfield and No. 6 Saint Peter's.

The No. 2 Stags, who swept the season series, including when they manhandled the Broncs 65-40 at Sovereign Bank Arena last February. The team returns big center Rob Thomson.

The No. 6 Peacocks, who swept the season series from the Broncs, including the quarterfinal match-up, return one of the top scorers in the nation, Keydren Clark. Clark