

UNLEASHING THE ZOO

Men's basketball opens season tonight

By Laura Sass
Executive Editor

Although the men's basketball team's preseason rank is eighth out of 10 in the Metro-Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC), Head Coach Don Harnum isn't worried.

"I think the team is a little bit insulted," he said. "But I think that it will motivate them. We know we've gotten better but the league has gotten better too."

Freshman Willie Dingle said that the ranking was a motivating factor.

"It tells us what the other coaches are thinking about us," he said. "I don't know if we are going to do better, but we are going to try."

Last year, after winning the regular season, the Broncs finished seventh out of 10.

"We are a much better team, top to bottom," said Harnum. "We are more physical, older and deeper."

Junior center Steve Castleberry said that he thinks the team will do better this year.

"We have our guards back and we are definitely a better team," he said.

A problem with last year's team, according to Harnum, was its youth or, more accurately, its inexperience.

"We weren't a real physi-

cal team, but we've addressed that," he said. "The two ways to address problems are player development and recruiting. We've made them stronger, smarter and more mature. As far as recruitment goes, we've gotten older, more physical players to help us in the battles under the net."

Harnum said that the team's improvement does not guarantee easy games.

"We have a very challenging schedule ahead of us," he said. "The league is on an upswing. We've gotten better, but we have to get a lot better for it to show in our win-loss record."

Harnum also mentioned the length of the basketball season as a possible obstacle.

"We have the longest season on campus," he said. "We start in November and we go until March. Sometimes the biggest obstacle is yourself and being ready to play every day."

Harnum said that this year's team is stronger in many ways.

"Last year many of our freshmen and sophomores were forced into roles that they probably weren't ready for," he said. "That's somewhat why we struggled. But that's going to pay off for us this year. They're

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Photo by Jennifer Kuhn

Freshman Willie Dingle tries to gain position as he waits for a pass at a recent practice. Assistant Coach Joe Conefry applies some defensive pressure. The team's season begins tonight at home against Brown at 7:30. The Broncs were picked to finish eighth in the MAAC this year. Junior Jerry Johnson returns after being named preseason first-team All-MAAC.

TIME FOR TIP-OFF

Women to debut on the road

By Mike Caputo
Staff Writer

Towards the end of a player or coach's career, the goal often is to "go out with a bang."

Legendary Head Coach Eldon Price insists that there is nothing different about his outlook going into his final season at Rider.

"As always our goal is to win all our games, which is impossible in this day and age," said Price. "Our real goal is to win the conference tournament and get to the NCAA's [tournament]."

This is a feat that the Broncs have not achieved during the successful tenure of

Price, who was responsible for building Rider women's basketball into a reputable program.

Now a continued member of the highly competitive Metro-Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC), the run-and-gun offensive philosophy of the Broncs has taken a hit over the last few years. Reasons include lack of a steady defense and the absence of size.

"Quickness can only take us so far in this league," said junior Co-captain Becky Hower.

Low expectations that can be translated as disrespectful were displayed by the preseason MAAC rankings. Rider is predicted to finish ninth out of 10

teams in the conference.

Price said that it is not a measure of disrespect, but a matter of respect for the conference itself.

"In the MAAC, all ten teams are pretty darn good teams," said Price. "For instance, last year Niagara was picked to finish seventh or eighth and ended up almost winning it."

Hower views it as positive for the team's mental approach.

"We plan on coming out and surprising people," said Hower. "It gives us more of an incentive to work hard and play better."

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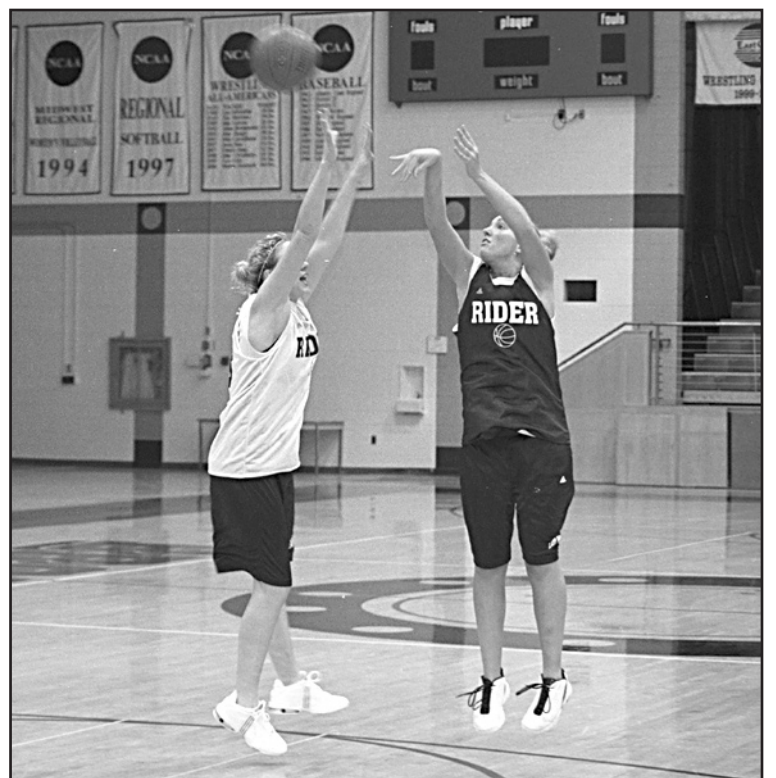


Photo by Jennifer Kuhn

Junior Katie Hall takes a shot over freshman Kate McAndrew during a recent practice. The team will open up on the road against Seton Hall. Second team All-MAAC players Hall and Becky Hower return.