

So FAR, So GOOD

Men's hoops off to 3-1 start

By Mike Caputo
Staff Writer

While the majority of the Rider community was headed home for the extended weekend for Thanksgiving, the men's basketball team was boarding a plane to a destination that would serve as the launching pad for the 2003-2004 season: Hawaii. Hawaii is a place known for its beautiful scenery and great surfing, but last weekend it was the site for the three day Hawaii-Hilo Shootout that included Rider, Quinnipiac, Dartmouth and host Hawaii-Hilo.

The tournament had much more meaning to the players than just a tune-up for the MAAC schedule.

"[We had] three games in such a short amount of time, just like the MAAC tournament," said junior center Steve Castleberry.

After coming off an impressive 69-53 victory over Brown University in front of a lively crowd at Alumni Gym a week earlier, the Broncos went into its game against the Quinnipiac Bobcats in Hilo with high hopes, but also uncertainties.

"When you take your team on the road so early in the season, you don't know how they will respond," said Head Coach Don Harnum.

Respond is what the players did.



Photo by Hugh Tsung

Junior Jerry Johnson looks to pass the ball in the post to fellow junior Andre Periera. Rider won its home opener and two out of three games in Hawaii. The Broncos return home tonight, opening the conference schedule against Iona at 7:30.

The Broncos breezed to an 89-70 win over the Bobcats with an outstanding showing by sophomore Edwin Muniz (23 points, eight rebounds). Castleberry and senior captain Laurence Young both finished with 11 points apiece.

"He [Muniz] is much more ready this year," said Young. "He developed a great work-ethic this year and it is showing in his play."

On Saturday night, the Broncos suffered its first defeat to the host Hawaii-Hilo Vulcans. The game was back and forth until Hilo went on a 7-0 run to

take a four point lead with under two minutes remaining. Rider fought back and took a 56-55 lead, but Hilo senior Ryan Abrahams sank the game winning three point shot with 11 seconds left to seal the victory for the scrappy Vulcans.

"We did not establish an outside game against Hilo," said Harnum. "Our shots were just not falling."

Less than 24 hours later, Rider was matched up with the winless Dartmouth Big Green to conclude the Shootout. Most likely feeling the aftereffects of the gut-wrenching loss to Hilo the night

before, the Broncos found itself down 34-22 at halftime.

"At halftime, coach [Harnum] was questioning our team's heart and character," said Young. "As a captain, I took that personally and made sure the team got into the game."

While Young's pride was a factor in the team's second half showing, Castleberry believed that incentives also helped.

"We basically said that the plane

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photo courtesy of gobroncs.com

Junior Tami Coyle, a member of the soccer and basketball team is one of three athletes that play two sports at Rider. She led the MAAC in scoring for soccer and is a point guard on the basketball team.

A SHOOTING STAR

Coyle shines in basketball and soccer

By Jared Vichko
Sports Editor

It was a complicated game. A girl and her brother would start off playing 1-on-1 basketball. After the first person scored, the two would literally run over to the field adjacent to her house, where a soccer ball and goals were already set up. They would then immediately try to score on each other there. Once a goal was scored, they would run back to the court, with the first person to 11 points being declared the winner. It was clear at an early age that Tami Coyle was meant to be an athlete.

Coyle, a junior, is the only athlete not named Boulden to play two sports at Rider. She was a forward on the soccer team and is a point guard on the basketball team. Coyle, like many athletes, began playing both sports at an

early age.

"I started playing soccer when I was five years old and basketball when I was in third grade," said Coyle. "I never really had a favorite sport. When I was a kid I just loved going out there and having fun."

When she reached high school, "going out there and having fun" resulted in state championships in three sports: soccer, basketball and softball.

At St. John Vianney, Coyle totaled 12 varsity letters and three state championships including two her senior year. She was all-state in soccer and basketball and all-Shore Conference in softball. Her senior year she was the Athlete of the Year in the Shore Conference and Player of the Year in soccer.

College was a difficult decision because a number of schools were offer-

ing scholarships in one sport but not the other.

"When we were picking colleges my dad wanted me to play full time basketball," said Coyle. "I had offers from schools specifically for basketball, but I didn't want to give up soccer. I wanted to be able to play both. Many schools told me 'We'll see how you do after the first year.' Rider allowed me to do both."

This season, Coyle switched her soccer position to forward, allowing her to wreak havoc on opposing defenses. The change resulted in her leading the MAAC in goals with 18, giving her 27 for her career, only 14 shy of the school's all-time record, set this season by senior Sarah Artale.

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