

Down, but Nowhere Near to Being Out

Swimming and diving still looking towards MAAC championships

By Joe Haubrich

With 12 weeks left in the season, the Rider swimming and diving teams are already preparing for the championships. The men's team, which won the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) championship last year, has started the season rather slowly. However, the women's team is on the right track to repeat last season.

The men have only faced one MAAC team in competition so far, which was their loss to powerhouse Marist. The team will have to face more conference opponents to get a better judgment as to how realistic their goal is.

"Everything's going real well. Every meet could have gone either way," said sophomore Eric McFerlin. "We have

faced some great competition. I hope things continue to go well."

The men have excelled in particular categories, especially in relays, according to McFerlin.

"The rankings for the MAAC have come out and for every relay we're at the top," he said.

The team's practices have been focused solely on repeating as MAAC champions.

"Our season is geared towards winning a championship. Every dual meet and tournament is preparation for the championships," said McFerlin. "We have 12 weeks of preparation and we're beginning to see the light at the end of the tunnel."

Team captains Sam Engle, Robert DeSandre and Brad Lacey are the Broncs' top swim-

mers as they have been for the last few years.

"Our captains have stepped things up as much as ever and are our top [performers]," said McFerlin.

The women's season has followed a pattern just like last season.

"So far, we're doing about the same as last year, but I think we're much faster," said junior Julia Dunne. "The quality of our performances is as good, if not better, than last season. We swim six times a week, doubling up on Mondays and Wednesdays. We haven't altered a thing in practice and it's paying off."

The women also have only faced Marist in MAAC competition and lost.

Health has been a significant issue for the women's team this semester.

"We're still battling injuries. It would be great if everybody got healthy in time for the MAAC [championship]," Dunne said.

Briana Cohen, the women's team captain has been performing the best for the Broncs, but the team has been getting help from younger teammates as well.

"Briana has been great as always," said Dunne. "Sophomore Lauren Urbanski broke the 200 fly record. It was huge for us."

Both the men and women competed last weekend at the Princeton Invitational. Out of the 10 competing squads, Rider's men finished in fourth place and the women finished seventh.

The teams now can rest until the first week of January when competition resumes.



Mike Caputo Chase for a cup

The chase for the cup is the new term applied to goal of winning the Nextel Cup during the NASCAR season. After an amazing autumn in the athletics department, Rider finds itself chasing for a cup. This cup is the JetBlue Airways Commissioner's Cup, which goes to the overall champion of all the sports offered by the MAAC combined.

Ever since Rider's migration from the Northeast Conference (NEC) to the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) in 1997, championships have been much more difficult to attain. When looking at the schools in the NEC on paper, it does not appear that these teams are inferior to any in the MAAC, but decreased success in the Rider athletics program proves such a theory.

"We perhaps won more conference championships in the NEC, but the caliber of competition across the board isn't what I believe it is in the MAAC," said Blake.

Rider won numerous Commissioner's Cups both as a member of the NEC and back in the days when it was a prime member of the East Coast Conference. Since 1997 as a member of the MAAC though, Rider has been unable to reach the level of winning the cup.

This dry spell has nothing to do with a lack of talent. In fact, as a member of the MAAC, the recruiting process has actually improved greatly, especially for the coaches. There are other reasons that can be factored into Rider's recent lack of a cup. The first is that two of the school's best teams, field hockey and wrestling, are a part of different conferences because the MAAC does not offer these sports. Field hockey is a member of the NEC while wrestling is a member of CAA. The funny part is that when Rider was in the NEC, Rider field hockey was not even a member of the NEC!

Also, the MAAC has

well. Our attitude needed to change."

The sluggish first semester can be attributed to the many injuries. A lot of veterans, including team captains have gone down. Hynes and junior Sean Levin have been promoted to team captains until Nick D'Aurizio (knee) and Jeff Schnaars (collarbone) recuperate.

"Injuries have affected us tremendously," said sophomore forward Steve Minio. "We've needed to play more and work harder."

Minio had a goal and an assist in the game against TCNJ.

"This has been the worst year for injuries," said Bauman. "In my seven years here, I've never seen anything like this."

Due to the injuries, many players, including freshmen have been asked to contribute more than usual. Freshman Mike Carlucci scored one goal, and fellow rookie Frank Daroba had an assist on Saturday.

Carlucci and his fellow freshmen receive a lot of praise from coaches and teammates. "[The freshmen] go out there and do their jobs," said Minio. "Their job really isn't to go out and score goals, just to keep the other team off the scoreboard. That's what they've been doing."

Rider finished the semester this weekend with home games against Lafayette and St. Thomas Aquinas. The game against Lafayette takes place tonight at 9:45. According to Bauman, this game is a "must win."

"This game has high stakes for the playoffs," he said.

Hockey still in the hunt

By Joe Haubrich

In order for the ice hockey team to reach its goal of 20 wins, it will have to win 14 of its last 16 games. Rider stands at 6-12-1 and still has the slightest shot of accomplishing its preseason objective.

With the inconsistent way manner in which the team has been playing and being devastated by injuries, Rider is taking a different approach for the rest of the season.

"We're trying to break the season down into three or four games at a time," said assistant coach Bob Bauman. "That, we feel, is the best plan for the short term."

Senior defenseman Ted Hynes wants to end the semester on a high note.

"We want to win the next two games before vacation," he said.

Rider's 5-3 victory last Saturday against The College of New Jersey (TCNJ) brought a four game losing streak to an end, and gave the Broncs hope that they could end the semester well.

"Obviously a win [like that] improves morale," said Bauman.

"It's good because we've lost a lot of games," said Hynes. "We want to carry the momentum into next semester."

Rider's previous losses left many players hanging their heads. The win against TCNJ may have turned things around.

"It's all about attitude," said Bauman. "If you have the wrong attitude, in any sport, then you're not going to do

Winter Sports Guide

While the majority of the student body will be home for the winter break, the athletes will still be here competing in important and must-see games. Here is a schedule of all the winter break games:

Women's Basketball

12/22- at Hartford 5 p.m.
12/29- vs. Drexel 7 p.m.
1/3- vs. Pennsylvania 7 p.m.
1/8- vs. Saint Peter's 2 p.m.
1/10- vs. Fairfield 7 p.m.
1/14- vs. Manhattan 7 p.m.
1/16- at Marist 2 p.m.
1/20- at Loyola 7 p.m.

Men's basketball

12/23- at Massachusetts 7 p.m.

12/29 and 12/30
at Wisc-Milwaukee Tournament
1/3- at Saint Peter's 7 p.m.
1/8- at Loyola-MD 2 p.m.
1/12- at Pennsylvania 7 p.m.
1/15- vs. Fairfield 3 p.m.
1/17 (at Albany) vs. Loyola 4 p.m.
1/20- at Niagara 7 p.m.

Wrestling

12/11- vs. Maryland 12 p.m.
12/17 at Delaware 9 a.m.
12/29 and 12/30
at Southern Scuffle (UNC Greensboro) 10 a.m.
1/11- vs. Drexel 7 p.m.
1/14 and 1/15
at Virginia Duals 9 a.m.
1/21 and 1/22- 7 p.m.
at CAA Duals (George Mason)

M/W Swimming and Diving

1/12 at Rutgers 5 p.m.

M/W Indoor Track and Field

1/7- at Fordham Armory Inv.
1/16- at Albany Inv.

'INJURIES'

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Sophomore T. J. Morrison continued the short-lived momentum in the next bout by winning 184-weight class by decision. Sophomore Jeff Black (197 lb.) and Tyler Rees (heavyweight) finished the day by hanging tough in matches against nationally acclaimed opponents.

The Broncs have been forced to heavily rely on the 10th ranked recruiting class in the nation, including six freshmen that are starting for the team.

"We need consistency, we are starting six freshman, they are good freshmen but they still lack experience," said Taylor.

Rider has a big weekend up ahead when it hosts Maryland on Saturday at 12 then travels to Columbia later that night. The Broncs want to earn a couple of team victories before the upcoming tournaments later this month. The Colonial Athletic Association (CAA) conference schedule begins Jan. 11 against Drexel.

"We are still positive and when we get [junior] Dave Miller back it will strengthen our team," said Taylor. "We are still ranked 23rd and we know that."