**SPORTS**

**SUPER SEASON**

Four Rider fall teams made conference semifinals, three made the finals and one won the championship. These four teams are field hockey (NEC champions), men’s soccer (MAAC runner-up), women’s soccer (MAAC runner-up) and volleyball (MAAC semifinalist). Teams without playoffs, like golf and tennis, had one of their best seasons ever.

**Rider teams excelled in one of the best fall seasons in history**

**By Mike Caputo**

Spring is usually known as the season of rebirth, but the fall of 2004 surely served as a renaissance for the Rider Athletics Department.

After an incredible fall season of triumph, Rider athletics finds itself in fourth place in the JetBlue Airways Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) Commissioner’s Cup. 

“It was also the first time that three teams made it to the MAAC semifinals in the fall,” said Athletic Director Curt Blake.

“Every fall team went to postseason play, that’s the first time we have ever had that,” said Sports Information Director Bud Focht.

“The chance to compete is not factor into the MAAC Commissioner’s Cup because of its participation in the Northeast Conference (NEC). Also, Rider’s absence in sports such as football and water polo have an effect on the cup standings. ‘That hurts us a little bit, but we are in good shape right now,’ said Focht.

Cup or no Cup, Rider athletics had a fall to remember. Even the teams such as golf and tennis that do not hold their traditional seasons in the fall did extremely well.

“It was nice to see because there really wasn’t any program that didn’t have some element of success to it,” said Athletic Director Bud Focht.

Blake said that the accomplishments of the fall teams reflect the goals that the athletic department sets for itself each year.

“That is what our athletic programs are about and quite honestly what we strive for,” he said. “To put all of our teams and student athletes in a position at least where they can compete and, in some cases, win a conference championship.”

The chance to compete is an understatement. Field hockey speaks for itself,” said Blake.

Men’s soccer (6-14) made a trip to the finals for the first time since 1998 despite losing all of its non-conference games during the season. The young, yet very talented, squad won enough games in the MAAC to sneak into a playoff spot as

**Wrestling forced to flip lineup**

A short roster pushes many Broncs into different weight classes

**By Eamon Ducey**

The past successes of the wrestling team this season gave the team the opportunity to schedule itself against a top five nationally ranked team in Lehigh.

Despite some morale victories through a skinny roster, the Broncs did not measure up to the now No. 6 Hawks (6-1), losing by a score of 31-9. Rider (0-1), had an opportunity to hand Lehigh the second straight loss, but the tough Hawks would not allow it as the young Broncs could only win three of the 10 bouts in the dual match opener at Alumni Gym.

The Broncs were at a major disadvantage in their match-up with the Hawks. Rider was forced to send freshman Michael Palma and junior Bobby Stinson to wrestle well out of their weight class.

“We have had injuries that caused us to move kids out of their weight class,” said head coach Gary Taylor.

John Stout of Lehigh was able to send the early message to Rider when he pulled out a decision against freshman Ryan Smith in the 125-pound weight class. Rider freshman Tim Harner highlighted by shining in his 135-pound weight class. Rider freshman Tim Harner highlighted by shining in his 133 lb. match, this saved an extra point that would have been lost automatically by forfeit.

Unfortunately, the 4-3 deficit was as close as Rider would get as the Broncs lost the next four bouts including two pin falls, one major decision, and a technical fall causing an insurmountable 25-3 deficit.

Stinson’s loss by technical fall in the 149 lb. weight class may seem like nothing in the statistics book, but was one of perseverance. He made it through the bout after suffering a knee injury right before the match, this saved an extra point that would have been lost automatically by forfeit.

Senior transfer Sean Jenkiss was able to stop the bleeding with a 7-6 victory by decision in the 174 lb. division.

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