

EYES ON THE PRIZE



Photo by Justin Polera

Freshman swimmer Lauren Urbanski was named the co-winner of the MAAC Championship Swimming Award. The men came in first place and the women came in second at the MAAC Championships last weekend. Last season the men placed second and the women came in first.

Men take 1st, women 2nd in MAAC

By Mike Caputo
Sports Editor

Championships have been a common occurrence for Rider's swimming and diving team (RUSDT) over the last few years. What made the 2003-2004 Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) Championship stand out from past years was that it was the RUSDT men's squad that attained the championship while the women's side earned a second place finish in the competition held at Loyola College on February 21.

This championship is the first MAAC title for the men's squad and its first conference title since it won the Metropolitan Conference in 1993. The men managed to overtake the Marist Red Foxes, winner of eight straight MAAC men's titles. On the other hand, the two-time champion women's team finished in a dissatisfying second place. The Broncos were unable to follow up women's championships in 2001 and 2003.

"I don't think we were as disappointed because we were so overwhelmed and excited about how well everyone did in the races, but obviously there is still a little disappointment," said senior captain Melissa Morrissy. "We were also so excited that

they [the men] won."

Head Coach Stephen Fletcher earned the MAAC Men's Coach of the Year. Other honors included second year sophomore walk-on Chris Coles gaining the MAAC Championship Most Outstanding Diver Award and freshman Lauren Urbanski achieving co-MAAC Championship Outstanding Swimmer Award status. Coles won the 3-meter dive and finished second in the 1-meter. Urbanski won the 200 butterfly.

"The conference recognized those standouts [Coles and Urbanski], but as always, I recognize the team first," said Fletcher. "The fact that our depth swam well is the reason our men beat Marist."

It was definitely not an easy victory, as the Rider men edged out Marist by a slim total of nine points (877-868) with Loyola finishing in a distant third place with 502 points.

The final outcome came down to the freestyle relay at the end of the meet, as the Broncos had to finish in third place to become overall champions. Rider ended up with a second place finish in the relay, led by sophomore Dan Burgess, juniors Sam Engle and Bobby DeSandre and senior Brandon Pierce to secure the championship

trophy.

"The meet was extremely close all the time," said Fletcher. "We knew it was going to take one swim at a time [to be champions]."

Coles said that it was a team effort that won the title.

"There was not one event that you could put a label on," said Coles. "Every event was equally important to the whole meet."

"It was such a close meet all the way through," said freshman Jeff Dixon. "If we dropped lower than we did that would have been pivotal to the outcome."

After its accomplishments, a portion of the RUSDT headed out to the University of Pittsburgh to take part in the Eastern College Athletic Conference (ECAC) Open Swimming and Diving Championships. This meet encompassed regional teams from conferences such as Big East, Ivy League, MAAC and the Northeast Conference. Some of the competition includes Boston College, Georgetown, Seton Hall, St. John's, Pennsylvania, Columbia, New Hampshire, Marist and Binghamton.

"This is the largest team that we [took] to the ECAC," said Morrissy.

The Broncos finished in the top ten at the ECAC meet.

Broncs' Bits



Records

Men's Soccer (2-15-3)
Field Hockey (14-5)
Women's Soccer (11-7-2)
Men's Fall Tennis (4-7)
Women's Fall Tennis (4-6)
Volleyball (10-18)
Men's Swimming (7-4)
Women's Swimming (6-5)

Athletes of the Year

Nick Catone was selected to be the *Rider News* Male Athlete of the Year.

This senior on the **wrestling team** finished the season ranked 7th in the country in the 184 pound weight category on a Broncos squad that was ranked nationally in the top 25 for the majority of the season.

Catone won the Colonial Athletic Association (CAA) Championship in his weight bracket and was also impressive at the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Championships by winning an outstanding two of four bouts.

Baseball (14-21)
Softball (24-15)
Men's Spring Tennis (2-6)
Women's Spr. Tennis (1-7)
Wrestling (15-3)
Men's Basketball (17-14);
Women's Basketball (5-23)

Christina Ang was selected to be the *Rider News* Female Athlete of the Year.

A junior on the **field hockey team** that made it to the Northeast Conference Championship game for the fourth straight season. She tied her own NEC record by leading her team with 18 goals and also getting 38 points.

Ang was named the NEC Player of the Year and second team All-Region for Division I. She is in striking distance of becoming the all-time Rider leader in goals and points scored if she continues the same production as this season.

Come join the Rider News. New writers always welcome!
Meetings every Wednesday at 6 o'clock in the Ridge House.