Senior point guard Jerry Johnson lays the ball in on a fast break during Rider's 75-46 thrashing of the defending conference champion Manhattan Jaspers. After stifling Siena's offense on Saturday in a 67-47 victory, the Broncos find themselves in first place in the MAAC.

**First-place Broncos on TV tomorrow**

By Joe Haubrich

The Broncos are headed into their most thrilling week of the season, beginning tomorrow when Rider hosts in-state Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) rival Saint Peter's in the first nationally televised game on ESPN2 at Alumni Gym in 10 years.

After completing their longest road stretch of the season, the Broncos returned home to make short work of defending conference champion Manhattan and struggling Siena. Rider overpowered Manhattan by a score of 75-46 in a game where senior guard Jerry Johnson scored 21 points and had three steals. Next up was Siena, who left Alumni Gym beaten 67-47. Against Siena, junior guard Christine Muniz and Johnson both totaled 15 points.

The Broncos had a lot of success on the road this season, especially prior to this past week. For the first time in history, Rider won seven of its first 10 road games, which is a difficult feat to achieve in Division I college basketball. Head coach Don Harnum recognizes this fact.

"Looking back at that stretch, I was a little concerned even though we have a veteran group," said Harnum. "I've seen teams lose their confidence if they lose a lot on the road (and) by the time they get home, I thought our guys did a great job of winning road games consistently. It's hard to do."

Harnum said that being at home does not give his team any special advantages.

"I told our guys all along that they can't have a let down now just because we're home," he said. "You can't say that everything's in your favor now just because you're home. Not in this league."

Rider plays three of its next four games at home, including one on Monday night against Iona as part of a doubleheader with the women's team at the Sovereign Bank Arena.

The team goes into Saturday's ESPN2 match-up with a 12-7 overall record and finds itself in first place in the MAAC by the time they get to play the Gaels.

**Lightning strikes in second half**

By Mike Caputo

When Iona was leading Rider 66-51 with about seven minutes to go, an average fan would have concluded that the Broncos were soon going to suffer their 14th defeat of the season.

"We knew we were playing horribly," said senior guard Becky Hower.

Then it happened quickly, as if lightning had struck. Senior Leanne Moore scored five unanswered points and suddenly, the Broncos were only down by 11 points. Rider unbelievably within one point of the Gaels with a minute to go in the contest.

With 20 seconds to go, sophomore guard Christine Catalanotto grabbed the rebound and gave it to Hower.

Off a screen set by Moore, Hower went up strong and hit a dramatic bank shot from a few feet out with only three seconds left in the game. Hower said it was a drawn up play by head coach Tori Harrison meant to take the defense off guard.

"I like to go to my left because people don't expect me to go that way since I am right-handed," Hower said.

Other than Hower, Moore and Hall's heroics, the bench made just as much of a contribution to the comeback.

"Our bench came in and made some great plays, especially [sophomore] Tami Trimming on defense, [sophomore] Monica Welborn's key shots and [senior] Tami Coyle's overall consistency," said Hower.

Rider's magical 72-71 victory over Iona came only two