Baseball 1-3 after first four games

By Andrew Straub
Staff Writer

Just as it did last season, the 2004 baseball squad has gotten off to a slow start. Starting 0-4 last season, the Broncs started “spring play” with a not-so-impressive 1-3 record. These losses came at the hands of Missouri, Albany and Evansville in the Beach Bash hosted by Coastal Carolina University.

Last Friday’s game against perennial powerhouse, and often top 25 ranking, Missouri, was played under the beautiful sun in Conway, SC. The Broncs trailed early in the game until junior second baseman Jonathan Rehm hit a two-out single in the top of the third inning to tie the score at 1-1. Missouri chased out senior pitcher Eric Weiner in the fifth inning after first baseman Cody Ehlers hit a solo home run. Freshman Scott Knazek collected his first collegiate hit of the season, a hit single in the top of the ninth inning after first baseman Cody Ehlers hit a solo home run. Freshman Erik Holck pitched two scoreless innings in his college debut for the Broncs. On Saturday the Broncs played a split double-header, the first of which they won against Evansville, 13-12, and later they lost to Albany, 14-10.

Evansville mounted an astounding comeback in the bottom of the eighth inning, scoring nine runs to finally seize the lead it was chasing throughout the game. Leading, Rider’s comeback was senior outfielder Scott Rich, who led off the bottom of the eighth with a solo home run and later in the inning hit a two-run single. Unfortunately, Rider’s dramatics couldn’t continue later that same day as its comeback fell short, losing to Albany 14-10. The Broncs once again fell behind early, 4-1, in the first inning and trailed 11-5 after the sixth inning. However, in the top of the seventh Rider scored four runs to cut the lead to 11-9 and open up hope for another storybook comeback. But it wasn’t meant to be, as the Broncs only managed one more run in the final two innings.

Sophomore Mike Paolise was six for 10 at the plate in Saturday’s games. The Broncs completed the Beach Blast tourny Sunday with a loss to familiar foe Evansville, 14-9.

The game was knotted at 4-4 at the top of the fifth inning after junior second baseman Jonathan Rehm doubled and stole home as part of a double steal. Evansville responded with four more runs in the fifth inning on four hits and an error to take an 8-4 lead. It expanded their lead to 12-6 after seven innings of play. Rich hit a three-run home run in the eighth inning to cut the lead to 12-9. Once again, however, the Broncs ran out of fuel, as they gave up two unearned runs in the bottom of the eighth inning for the final score.

The Broncs travel back up to not-so-sunny New Jersey to host a three-game series against UMass, March 6-7.