**Wrestling battles to second place finish**

By Eamon Ducey

Rider’s wrestling team knew what they had on the team but wanted to show everybody else at Colonial Athletic Association Wrestling Championships at Boston University. Rider was able to cement their place in the conference with a second place finish.

No. 1 Hofstra (No. 11 in the nation) scored a school record 136 points, Rider put across a total of 84.5 to take second and Drexel came in third with 69 points. The Broncs won one weight class, had three wrestlers in the finals and four that finished in third.

Most impressive Bronc was sophomore Don Fisch who won his weight class; he was the No. 2 seed in the 141 pound weight class.

"Don got hot at the right time," said assistant coach John Hanges. "He beat a kid that was ranked No. 7 in the country, [which] was good for him." Junior Dave Miller, ranked No. 11 in the country in his class, was the top seed in the 157 pound division. Unfortunately for Miller, he was defeated when he lost a close decision in the finals by a score of 3-0.

In the 174 pound division, the No. 2 seed senior Sean Jenkins finished second when an injury forced him to forfeit in the finals. The team held him out due to a nagging кино injury.

"[Head coach Gary Taylor] decided to protect Sean and have him sit out the match so that he would be healthy for the NCAA’s," said Hanges.

Rider was able to see its bright future when it showed off four freshmen and a sophomore weight class when he lost in a competitive 8-6 decision during the consolation final.

Fisch, Miller, Jenkins Harner and Morrison will head to the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) National Championship tournament held in St. Louis on March 17-19.

The team is focused on the opportunity to give the program more prestige.

"The guys get to start brand new and all have a chance to do well," said Hanges.

The team knows that the only thing left to do is win some matches.

"We have a great chance to bring home some hardware," said Hanges.

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**Fan trip saved at last second**

By Eamon Ducey

For the first time in Rider’s history with the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC), it had a share of the men’s basketball regular season title. But that was not enough for this team or its loyal fans; they wanted to win the MAAC tournament to secure a guaranteed bid to the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) tournament.

Rider had its first game of the tournament on Saturday, and a group of students wanted to be there to support the Broncs. The Office of Campus Life (OCL) sponsored the trip to Buffalo, N.Y., and had a deadline of 3 p.m. last Friday to sell 30 spots for the trip at only $40 each which included hotel, bus and game-tickets.

Three professors, Dr. Frederick Turner, Dr. Thomas Simonet and Dr. E. Graham McKinley wanted the students to be able to make the trip in order to support the team. The professors apparently act too late, and the students were sent a voicemail that said Turner.

"Simeon, McKinley and I were frustrated over the plan to cancel the bus, so we decided to buy the last three tickets," said Turner.

The students headed on a seven-hour trip to Buffalo on Saturday as they watched Rider win its quarterfinal game against Canisius.

On Sunday, Rider won its semifinal game against Fairfield. The students were no longer concerned about classes on Monday and wanted to stay in Buffalo for another night to encourage the team in the title game when they would take on Niagara, a local favorite. The administration was able to come up with a plan for students to stay mostly put together with Dean Anthony Campbell, associate vice president Student Affairs who planned to write a letter to professors explaining the students’ absence on Monday.

"We knew we needed to take the opportunity to show fan support for the basketball team after a great season," Turner said.

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**Buffalo**

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Stayed after watching their team win its semifinal game. But the Rider fans made sure that it was the undisputed home team that atmosphere. The Broncos led throughout most of the game, but was threatened during the final stage of the game. Rider pulled through with a 76-74 victory over Fairfield and now had a date with destiny. But Niagara stood in the way.

The conference championship game on Monday night was a media frenzy that was uncharacteristic of a MAAC event. It was televised nationally on ESPN2 and Niagara made sure that it transported as many students as possible to the game (the campus is only 20 minutes away from HSBC Arena). The largely outnumbered Rider fans were welcomed with jeers, taunts and obscene remarks.

"Niagara fans were intimidating because they outnumbered us greatly," said Goldstein. "It was every one of us against 10,000." Unfortunately, the Broncos did not have anything left in them as the noticeably fresher Purple Eagles expanded upon their lead in the second half and never looked back. Something to keep in mind is that Niagara did not have to play on Saturday by virtue of the tiebreaker it had over Rider for the No. 1 seed.

The optimism and heart that this handful of Rider faithful had probably was equal to the 7,000 Niagara supporters that showed up on Monday night’s championship game. Other than in the stands though, that heart and resolve was expressed on the court by the team that the fans were the lead that a student.

Rider season is not over yet. The team’s 19-11 record, its share of the regular season championship and its appearance in the championship game may earn a spot in the National Invitation Tournament (NIT). The NIT is once the premier tournament and at one point had more clout than the NCAA Tournament. Now it serves as a consolation tournament for those teams who are not good, but just miss a spot in the NCAA Tournament. Rider has made an appearance in the NIT since 1997, head coach Don Hurnay’s first year as head coach. The final rounds take place at Madison Square Garden in New York.