SUNNY FORECAST

Softball ready to attack MAAC rivals

By Mike Caputo
Sports Editor

It may have been raining all week in the Northeast, but the bad weather has not put a damper on the softball team’s championship aspirations.

Although three non-league doubleheaders against Towson, Delaware and Rutgers were postponed because of the inclement weather this week, it is business as usual for the Broncs (19-10, 3-1 MAAC).

“It is difficult to keep a mindset [with the postponements],” said freshman shortstop Ashley Boulden. “But we continue to look forward to all of the games coming up.”

The fearsome Rider lineup throughout the 2004 season has proved to possess the ability to barrage its competition with a showering of hits and runs scored. At other times however, it appears to be a showering of the scattering kind.

An example of this inconsistency began to reveal itself in full last week when Rider won the first game of its doubleheader against St. Joseph’s 7-0, but dropped the second game 8-0.

The inconsistency continued with an unimpressive 8-1 non-conference loss at Temple on Friday. Finally, on Saturday, the Broncs put across five runs to defeat Manhattan 5-1 in the first game, but were unable to score in the nightcap in a 1-0 loss.

“I think a reason for the inconsistent hitting is because when one hitter is struggling, it is contagious,” said Boulden.

In game one of the Manhattan doubleheader, junior leftfielder Maddy Boulden hit a three run homer in the second inning to put Rider ahead 3-0. Sophomore first baseman Jamie Farley added her team’s high fifth home run in the fifth inning for an insurance run as the Broncs defeated the Jaspers 5-1. Sophomore ace Heather Beintema eased through yet another complete game victory by allowing only one run on three hits. She earned her tenth win of the season, but gave up her first earned run in a streak that lasted 45 innings. Along with her three run homer, Maddy Boulden achieved the milestone of 100 hits as a Bronc by singling to centerfield in the fourth inning.

In game two, the offense sputtered in a 1-0 loss. Yet another outstanding performance came from the hands of the durable Beintema, but she was out-dueled by Jillian Medea of Manhattan.

In her second start of the day, Beintema went five innings and only gave up one run on two hits and nine strikeouts. The only run of the game came on a solo home run in the fifth inning by Manhattan’s Marina Ysaac.

The final leg of the season is approaching Rider. The team plans to repeat its conference championship season of 2003 and its run to the second round of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Tournament.

Along with its tough menu of non-league competition, the brunt of the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) schedule lies ahead for the Broncs. The remaining MAAC competition includes doubleheaders against Fairfield, Iona, Niagara, Canisius, Marist and Siena, followed by the conference tournament held at Marist on May 14-15.

“I am confident of our skill as a team right now,” said Ashley Boulden. “If we keep our hearts in the game, we will continue to win.”

There are high fives all around for the first place softball team. Sophomore pitcher Heather Beintema and sophomore infielder/catcher Jamie Farley celebrate after winning a recent game.

BATS AWAKENED
Baseball fixes offensive woes

By Andrew Straub
Staff Writer

April showers are hardly bringing any sign of better things to come in May for the Rider Baseball team. The Bronc’s 2004 Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) championship aspirations, and playing time, are being washed away at a rapid pace in the month of April.

The Broncs have gone 3-4 this month, with a win over LaSalle but series losses to Marist and Fairfield, to push their record to 9-16 for the season. Rider has also fallen victim to three rained-out games in the early weeks of April. The rained-out games included non-conference showdowns against Seton Hall, Temple and Monmouth.

The past week featured a three game series in Connecticut against the Fairfield Stags in which the Broncs lost two out of three.

Thursday afternoon’s series-opening slugfest proved to be the most exciting game of the three, with the game going into 11 innings before Fairfield pulled out the 11-10 win.

Rider trailed most of the game before they rolled off three runs in the top of the seventh inning on a double by sophomore first baseman Gene Crimoli to take a 6-5 lead. Their hot bats couldn’t be silenced in the ninth inning either, as they scored four runs to take a 10-5 lead. Unfortunately for the Broncs, Fairfield would respond with five runs in the bottom of the ninth inning to send the game into extra innings. The score would remain even at 10 until the Stags hit an RBI single in the bottom of the eleventh to cap their victory.

Saturday’s double-header would be split with Rider losing the first game 2-0, but winning the second 7-1. The first game featured a strong pitching performance by freshman Mike Dyszel, who settled down after...