Women’s soccer has high goals

By Mike Caputo
Staff Writer

The final whistle blew at the 2002 MAAC championship game with the Rider Broncs on the losing side of the scoreboard. Although the defeat was heartbreaking, in fact it was a victory for the Rider women’s soccer program.

The Broncs achieved its first winning record in conference play since the program’s inception in 1997 and an upset semi-final victory over the heavily touted Fairfield Stags in the MAAC semifinals.

Senior scoring machine Sarah Arata leads a large group of talented returning players from the 2002 campaign. A few of these key members include seniors Molli Burns, Colleen Evans, and Erin Wolleion as well as juniors Tami Coyle and Casey Fagan.

“Our goal personally is to win the conference championship. That would be a great gift for us seniors,” said Arata.

The Broncs embark on the 2003 season with new head coach Kevin Long, formerly the assistant at North Carolina State University. Long insisted that nothing should change in 2003, but said, “We have a group of talented players that are setting our standards very high.”

“We want nothing less than the MAAC championship and a spot in the NCAA tournament. We want to hoist that trophy, that’s our ultimate goal,” he added.

The squad opened up its season with an impressive defensive battle against the Big East powerhouse Villanova Wildcats, but were unable to put up the offensive production as they fell by a score of 2-0.

“After a couple of weeks off from the game schedule, the hard work was demonstrated at the competitive St. Bonaventure/Indust Recycle Invitational Tournament on the weekend of Sept. 12. The Broncs won the tournament with two impressive victories over St. Bonaventure and Robert Morris. After being down 1-0 at halftime, Rider went on to score three unanswered goals against the host Bonnies thanks to goals by sensational sophomore Aileen Ascolese, Rider scoring record leader Arata, and the young freshman Kelli Burke.

The team again was unable to fully unload their offensive prowess until the second half of the tournament championship game against Robert Morris, but found themselves up 1-0 at the halftime because of a goal by junior Marianne Hanna. Excellent work by Wolleion and three goal hack trick by Coyle paved the way for the 5-1 pounding of RMU. Due to the outstanding offensive performance over the weekend, most notably against RMC, Coyle was named the MAAC offensive player of the week.

“I was very happy with my performance, but I can thank my teammates for the great passes that led to each goal,” said Coyle.

“We have been playing as a second-half team, we need to be productive offensively the entire game if we are to be successful,” Long said.

As the MAAC schedule lurks ahead at the beginning of October, the Broncs maintain a positive outlook towards the potentially competitive and rough road ahead,” she said.

The team continues its push towards their goals by participating in the Albany tournament and beginning their league schedule at home on October 3 against rival Marist.

Long wants respect for his team in the MAAC conference and he expects, “the other team to shake their heads and say, ‘wow, that was incredible.’”

Jared Vichko
Rough summer

Much of the summer was ruined by horrible, inconsistent weather. Outdoor plans were constantly up in the air, all of us at the mercy of Mother Nature. Still, we would be lucky if the only thing that reeked about the summer was the climate. The sports world was marred all summer long by scandals, controversies and knockoffs of their pedestals.

*University of Washington football Coach Rick Neuheisel was fired for betting on an NCAA basketball pool, a clear violation of NCAA regulations.
*Kebe Bryant was arrested and charged with sexual assault.
*Sammy Sosa was caught using a corted bat.
*Maurice Clarett was cut from his team for numerous violations, such as falsifying a police report and giving privileges on a test.
*Alabama Head Coach Mike Price was fired after being spotted drunk in a strip club.
*Baylor basketball player Patrick Drenny was shot to death and his body was found a month later. His friend on the team, Cameron Donston, is the main suspect.
*Sosa and Bryant, arguably two of the most popular players in their respective sports, brought about the most shock this summer. Sosa proved his weakness is not kryptonite, but cork.

Whether or not he knew what he was doing, he broke the rules, along with the hearts of many of his young admirers. But because of his personality and ability to be intimate with his fan base, forgive and forget became the theme in Wigley.

Had it been a player like Barry Bonds, who is the most dominant player in the game but hared by most outside of the Bay Area, he would have carried the label of a cheater for the rest of his days. But he already more liked than apple pie at grandma’s, finds that his