Brons defeat defending champs on road

By Jared Vichko

For the field hockey team, its first hurdle on the road to the NEC Championship was cleared last weekend.

After defeating Fairfield 1-0 on Friday, the Broncs traveled north to take on their rival, Quinnipiac. With revenge on its mind, the Broncs handed Quinnipiac a 2-1 defeat, while improving the team’s record to 10-1. The win also snapped Quinnipiac’s 16-game home winning streak.

“Getting wins is always exciting, but it means more when it comes against good competition,” said senior midfielder Katie Conlon. “We have never won on Quinnipiac’s field so it feels great. Our team really stepped up when they had to.”

On Friday against Fairfield, Rider relied on its speedster, junior forward Courtney Bertos, to get off the offense started. Just two minutes into the second half, Bertos took a pass from Conlon and found the net for the game-winning goal. For Bertos, it was her sixth goal of the season, which also earned her the NEC Player of the Week honor.

“She’s done a great job of getting the ball in the cage all season,” said Conlon. “She’s doing well and she capitalizes in big situations.”

After the victory, the Broncs stayed in Connecticut to take on Quinnipiac, the reigning NEC champ, who also ended Rider’s season last year in the conference title game. Bertos continued her heroics against the Bobcats, as she got her squad on the board with just 40 seconds remaining in the first half. Conlon, who handles all the corners for Rider, found Bertos, who then found the net to put her team up 1-0.

“It was exciting to score first,” said Conlon. “It lifts us up even more and it also intiminates the other team.”

As the game moved into the second half, the Broncs increased their lead on goal by defender Stephanie Corradino. The senior capitalized on a penalty stroke and managed to slip past the goalie, giving her team a 2-0 lead.

[Stephanie] is always our go-to person on penalty strokes,” said Conlon. “She put 103 Rider 2 Quinnipiac 1

Running away from past disappointment

Men’s and women’s cross country looking to improve in 2004 season

By Mike Caputo

A characteristic that is required in cross country is endurance. Unfortunately, in the past, Rider men’s and women’s cross country has had to endure long seasons that had frustrating endings at the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) Championships.

However, the 2003 season marked a year of improvement on the men’s side, as the team finished fourth. The women finished a disappointing eighth place, matching its 2002 finish, but feel that it is their time to turn things around.

“We are running much better as a team,” said junior Beth Bond. “Since we have a small team, we have been working much better together.”

While the women’s team boasts plenty of experience, the men’s side is quite the contrary. The men’s roster lists only two upperclassmen next to 11 freshmen. Senior Matthew Cannella and junior Matthew Ciociola represent the veteran leadership on the men’s squad.

“Matt and Matt have done a great job breaking all of us in,” said freshman Joe Lucchio.

Veteran leadership is important, especially on the men’s side, but freshman John Smith has stolen the spotlight so far this season. He finished in fourth place out of 69 in the Broncs Invitational on Sept. 18 and 78th out of 163 in the Paul Short Invitational on Sept. 25.

Another notable young achiever is freshman Paul Matuszak, who placed fifth in the Broncs Invitational.

On the women’s side, the veterans have provided all of the highlights. In the Broncs Invitational, Bond finished in ninth out of 44 and sophomore Laura Carpenter was 23rd. Bond was also the top Rider finisher at the Paul Short Invitational with a position of 151 out of 175 other Division I competitors.

The teams have had only two true tests so far this fall. The first exam was in the form of the Broncs Invitational. The second was in the form of the NEC title game. The Broncs Invitational was a confidence booster for Rider, who placed fifth in the Broncs Invitational on Sept. 25.

The first weekend of conference games was a mixed result of both the team coming out unprepared and displaying what they are capable of when all pistons are firing.

“I was nervous, and we did not play well so that made me feel it even more,” she said.

Carter put on a decent performance during her first conference game as a Bronc on Friday.

“Friday we came out flat,” said Coyle. “It was a reality check showing us that we must come together.”

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