Tennis teams surge into spring season

By Jared Vichko

Prior to the Oct. 7 women's tennis matchup that featured Rider vs. St. Joseph's, the Hawks passed our a tennis pamphlet, the contents of which listed its recent winning streak over Rider.

After a 4-3 Rider victory, that pamphlet will need some revising. No longer dwelling at the cellar of the MAAC Conference, both the men's and women's tennis teams have enjoyed stellar seasons. The men finished 10-5, one of its best records in the past 10 years, while the women ended up at 8-3, greatly improved from last year's 4-6 fall record.

“We have a completely different team attitude and it shows when we play,” said junior Dana Previti. “We feel much more confident. That comes when you win.”

The “Sweet 16” refers to the final 16 teams in the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Tournament, where the NEC champion gets an automatic invitation to participate. Rider must first get by two quality NEC opponents over the weekend on its home field to reach such a goal. Sacred Heart and Fairfield are both schools who will be at a disadvantage on Rider’s grass field if the Broncs are to face either team. The Broncs are the team that entered the match undefeated.

“Everyone will be tired,” said Previti. “With two dominating players, it definitely helps us win. They have helped the whole team with our confidence.”

The addition of the sisters also pushed certain players, who may have been playing too high because of a lack of depth, back to their rightful spots, thus helping the entire team.

“Manny Ortez” if he wants to call his favorite Red Sox player “We had some good wins against their best duo, it felt special.”

Another team that felt special was the men’s squad, which had one of its best seasons ever. The men benefited from the addition of sophomore Ragdee Saberon, who quickly emerged as the team’s number one player. “He’s a great addition,” said junior Mike Makovec. “He makes the whole team better with the way he plays.”

The biggest victory for the men came over Drexel, a road win for Rider. “They have always beaten us in the past,” said Greenberg. “It feels nice to go into their territory and come out with the win. People are learning they have to respect Rider tennis now.”

Greenberg believes that there is more to come. “We had some good wins in the fall that we expect to extend,” he said.

“Manny Ortez” if he wants to call his favorite Red Sox player "We're looking to split the season with them because we're likely to face them in the playoffs.”

With a lot of games remaining in the season, there is plenty of time for the Broncs to kick the season into gear. Dato remains confident along with the rest of his team.

“We're going to keep up with everybody this year,” he said. “We're a young team, but don't take us lightly.”

Saying goodbye to...  

Riders lost two games of its road trip. The Broncs face Fairfield on Friday and St. Joseph’s on Saturday.

“We have two good teams coming up. Siena is always a powerhouse,” said D’Aurizio. “I think these games will be a good test of our character, especially being on the road. I feel our team is up for the challenge.”

Makovec also provides a realistic prediction for the weekend. “I'd like to say we can go 3-0 on this road trip. Siena is going to be a tough game,” said Makovec.

Looking ahead, the team agrees that their MACHA opponents are the teams to beat. Some of the better MACHA teams include defending champion Wagner College, the University of Pennsylvania and William Paterson University. Princeton will also give Rider some stiff competition.

“We'd like to take revenge against Princeton and William Paterson because they came into our house and [defeated us]. They're two games we'd like to win,” said Gery. “We're looking to split the season with them because we're likely to face them in the playoffs.”

With a lot of games remaining in the season, there is plenty of time for the Broncs to kick the season into gear. Dato remains confident along with the rest of his team.

“We’re going to keep up with everybody this year,” he said. “We’re a young team, but don’t take us lightly.”

Scheduling Bonus  

America's #1 Student Travel Operator to Jamaica, Cancun, Acapulco, Bahamas, and Florida. No lining on campus reps. Call for group discounts. Information & reservations: 1-800-408-4169 or visit www.ststravel.com

Tommorow listen to an interview with each candidate that will air a 30-minute segment at the top of the hour. The program will also give Rider some stiff competition.

“We'd like to take revenge against Princeton and William Paterson because they came into our house and [defeated us]. They're two games we'd like to win,” said Gery. “We're looking to split the season with them because we're likely to face them in the playoffs.”

With a lot of games remaining in the season, there is plenty of time for the Broncs to kick the season into gear. Dato remains confident along with the rest of his team.

“We’re going to keep up with everybody this year,” he said. “We’re a young team, but don’t take us lightly.”