**By Eamon Ducey**

Possessing both the best record and a player with the most goals in Rider field hockey history meant absolutely nothing until Sunday. This was the day when the Broncs rose to the top of the NEC conference and earned its third title in a span of five seasons.

Rider (18-2) is a team that virtually dominated its opponents and even played well enough to win in its two losses to Lock Haven and Providence. This did not guarantee anything in the NEC Tournament over the weekend as junior Courtney Bertos labeled last week as “a brand new start.”

This theory was proven on Sunday, as the Broncos uncharacteristically had to come from behind to defeat the Fairfield Stags in the championship game by a score of 3-2. Bertos was named the most valuable player of the tournament after scoring two goals on Sunday, giving her a total of seven points for the entire weekend.

“It’s an honor to be MVP, but I wish there were 18 of them because everyone on the team deserved it,” said Bertos.

Fairfield (8-13) surged to a 1-0 lead in the first half after a goal from sophomore Carlin Quinn. The Stags held on to the lead until Bertos answered with a goal assisted by senior Maddy Boulden about nine minutes into the second half. Bertos’ goal lit a fuse, as Ang scored seven minutes later off of an assist from Bertos. Bertos sealed the victory for the Broncs by putting in her second goal with a little over ten minutes to go in the game. Sophomore goalkeeper Krysta Bearish had made two saves to shut out the Hawks.

“Winning the championship was a great accomplishment,” said Bertos. “It was a great testament to our season.”

Unfortunately, winning the NEC tournament does not give Rider an automatic bid to the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Tournament. The Broncos must first win a “play-in” game against Monmouth Hawks.

**By Mike Caputo**

The Broncs were on a tournament weekend when it concluded to the MAAC Tournament in Rider did not have a trip to Lock Haven and Providence.

Showing up at the right time
Two straight impressive victories seal up playoff spot

**By Eamon Ducey**

For the women’s soccer team, this weekend is what it played for all season. The Broncs are the only team besides 2003 Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) Champion Loyola to make the postseason in three consecutive years. Rider was able to earn the playoff bid with a solid 5-2-1 MAAC record (11-6-2).

Rider did not have a trip to the MAAC Tournament in Fairfield locked up until last weekend when it concluded the regular season. The Broncs needed to win two games to ensure a spot in the tournament.

The Broncs were on a three game losing streak going into its final home games against Canisius and Niagara. Fortunately, only one was a conference loss. During that streak the team had not scored a goal, and allowed 11 to its opponents.

Senior forward Tami Coyle came up with the solution to the team’s offensive woes.

“We need to finish shots, it’s our biggest problem right now,” she said.

Senior forward Marianne Hanna scored a goal four and a half minutes into the first half and set the tone for the game Friday against Canisius. Coyle added a goal nine minutes later to give the Broncs a two-goal lead. Lindsay Benton of Canisius then scored a goal to cut the lead to one. Coyle finally put in another goal early in the second half to put the game out of reach. Freshman goalie Kim Carter needed only two saves to seal a 3-1 victory.

On Sunday, the Broncs hosted “Senior Day” against Niagara. Coyle scored a goal ten minutes before the half to put the Broncs up by one. Coyle needs only two goals to tie the career total record at Rider. Niagara struck back with a goal five minutes into the second half. Junior defender Jen Marcella scored the game-winner at the 76-minute mark. This victory clinched a number three seed in the MAAC Tournament for the Broncs.

Field hockey is NEC champion after 3-2 win over Fairfield

Junior Angela Fuoco and sophomore Krysta Bearish embrace a group of teammates after winning the Northeast Conference championship on Sunday in front of a home crowd of 400. The championship is the third in the last five seasons for the Broncs. Rider’s next destination is the NCAA play-in game on Tuesday.

The championship is even more special after last year’s disappointing loss in the finals against Quinnipiac. The victory against the Stags came after a 4-0 crushing of the fourth seeded Montmouth Hawks on Friday. In the game, seniors Katie Conlon and Boulden each had a goal and an assist. Bertos and freshman Stephanie Walker also added goals. Bearish made two saves to shut out the Hawks.

“Winning the championship was a great accomplishment,” said Bertos. “It was a great testament to our season.”

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Senior Tami Coyle is looking to score as sophomore Lauren Terzyk looks on. Coyle helped end Rider’s scoreless streak by scoring three goals over the weekend in two home victories.