SPORTS

RISING TO NEW HEIGHTS

Men’s soccer defies the odds by making playoffs

By Joe Haubrich

What intercollegiate team can start a season 0-8, lose five straight games late in the season, and then come in fourth place, clinching a playoff berth? Well, the Rider men’s soccer team, that’s who.

When the Broncs were written off early in the season and showing similar signs of the 2003 team, which won a mere two games last year, they regrouped and formed a closer bond while showing the Rider community that they too can be a contender for a conference championship.

The Broncs attribute their amazing turn-around to hard work, confidence and the will to win.

“The beginning of our season didn’t reflect our team’s ability,” said junior forward Brian Laurinaitis. “We (managed to save) our season thanks to hard work and some good luck.”

Sophomore goalkeeper Dan Riveros asserts that this season was a surprise for everyone on campus.

“No one expected us to be in the playoffs, especially after last year when we were considered the laughing stock of the school,” said Riveros. “We wanted to win so badly. We practiced hard and everything came together.”

The Rider men’s soccer team ended its season with a 5-13 record, but wound up with a much more crucial 5-4 mark in the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC).

“We knew that our conference games were most important to win,” Laurinaitis said. “Those were the games that decided if we would make the playoffs or not.”

The Broncs defeated Marist on Sunday in their final game of the season.

That victory enabled the team to clinch the fourth and final playoff berth in the MAAC tournament.

Laurinaitis provided a pivotal assist on the season’s first goal of the season.

“I was glad that I did so well [against Marist],” said Laurinaitis. “Everybody helped out though. It seemed that in every game, somebody else stepped up for us.”

The positive feeling was contagious throughout the soccer complex according to Rivero’s description of the game.

Sophomore forward Adam Bailey displays his aggression against the Siena defense as sophomore forward Graham Arnold looks on during Rider’s 1-0 win on Friday. The Broncs also won on Sunday by beating Marist 2-1 and clinching a spot in the playoffs.

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CLOSEST BLOWOUT IN HISTORY

Broncs loss to Richmond not reflected on scoreboard

By Mike Caputo

Being blown out by a score of 6-0 may not have been in the thoughts of Rider players entering Tuesday’s NCAA Tournament Play-In Game. It still hasn’t entered the minds of the players. That is because it was not a blowout.

“Normally being shutout and losing by six goals is a blowout. That is because it was not a blowout,” said junior Kelly Oates.

The Broncs truly got revenge over the Saints by dominating them on both sides of the ball consistently throughout the entire 90 minutes. Rider got off to a great start, as sophomore Lauren Terzyk scored a goal assisted by senior Stephanie Best. Junior Kelli Burke broke away with an unassisted goal shortly after halftime, which proved to be the game winner. Tami Coyle scored an insurance goal with four minutes left in the game, assisted by freshwater Stephanie Madden. Siena’s Susi Balisell put in Siena’s only goal of the game, assisted by freshman Melissa Torsiello.

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Running into a wall
Rider eliminated by Loyola again

By Mike Caputo

If teams earn the privilege of making the postseason, they get the opportunity to clean the slate and start fresh. The Rider women’s soccer team took this opportunity and ran with it.

“When you hear the word playoffs, you have to turn it on because this is it and there is nothing else after that,” said junior Kelly Oates. “It is do-or-die.”

After a five game span in which the Broncs only scored one goal, the team surged to a two game winning streak in its final regular season games to earn its spot in the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) Tournament hosted at Fairfield this past weekend.

The semifinals matched Rider up with a Siena team that beat the Broncs 2-1 in the first MAAC contest of the season. In that game, Rider missed out on many opportunities, outshooting the Saints 12-8 and was shutout in the second half.

“We knew we should have beat them last time,” said Oates. “We wanted to beat Siena bad.”

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“It was a good night, our spirits were high,” said Oates. “We went out there and stuck