Women’s soccer falls in finals

By Nicole Santore
Staff Writer

Women’s soccer made history this past weekend by making it to the MAAC Championships. If they won, they would have been the first women’s soccer team ever to qualify for the NCAA tournament.

On Friday, Nov. 8, Rider defeated Fairfield University in the semifinals of the MAAC tournament in double overtime. This was a big win for Rider considering they lost to Fairfield a week before that.

“It showed that we had more heart and wanted it more,” said freshman Ashley Johnson.

Junior Sarah Artale scored her first goal with 30 minutes left in the second half. Fairfield tied the score later in the half and forced the game into overtime. Artale scored the winning goal with 3:25 left in the second overtime.

“The team came out ready to play,” said sophomore Tami Coyle. “We prepared all week for this game and it showed.”

Goalie Erin Wollecon had six saves. This win advanced the team to the finals.

“We played really well, we picked it up in the end for it being such a long game,” said junior Molli Burns. “It was a really good showing.”

“The championships were played on Sunday, Nov. 10, against Loyola. Loyola had won the past two consecutive MAAC titles. They were the number two seed.”

Rider was defeated in a tough game, 3-0. Wollecon made six saves and Loyola’s goalie, Erica Niemann, only made four saves for her eighth shutout.

“We were happy with our performance,” said Artale of the game. “It was tougher since we only had 24 hours to prepare.”

Artale, Burns, and sophomore Stephanie Best were named to the All-tournament team.

On Thursday, Nov. 7, both Artale and Burns were named to the first team All-MAAC Soccer Team. Coyle was named second team and freshmen Allison Spehar and Johnson named MAAC-All-Rookie Team.

Artale was second in the MAAC in goals, goals per game, points per game, shots, shots per game, and eighth in assists. Also this year, she scored 16 goals and 36 points giving her 30 goals for her career and 70 career points, all records at Rider.

“It felt good,” said Artale. “Last year I made second team so this year was pretty exciting.”

Burns, a midfielder, started 18 games with one goal and one assist.

“We had a young defense that played well with a new system that worked,” said Burns.

Coyle missed several games at the end of the season from a knee injury but still had started 15 games with four goals and three assists.

Spehar, another midfielder, played in 16 games and had five goals. Johnson started in 18 games scoring one goal and one assist.

Mariannina Hoffa was named MAAC All-Academic team for this season. She had a 3.3 GPA as an Elementary Education student. She played in 16 games and started 14 of them. She had three goals and three assists.

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