Wrestling opens with high expectations

By Mathew J. Schreibman
Staff Writer

The wrestling team runs into the 2003-04 season with a number two ranking in the Colonial Athletic Association (CAA), 10 ranked players and the high expectations that come with both.

Rider has a high level of success in wrestling, winning 13 conference championships since 1984, but the team has won none since 2000. The titles all came when it wrestled in the East Coast Wrestling Association (ECWA) and it’s still looking for its first CAA championship.

Last season the Broncs went 12-9, 8-0 in the conference. Rider started off last season finishing second in the Keystone Classic and by winning its first two meets. In the middle of the season, the Broncs were very streaky, first losing five matches in a row then coming back to win seven straight.

Rider is returning 13 players from its 2002 roster and five starters.

“We have a good team this year,” said Head Coach Gary Taylor. “We’re a young team with a lot of talent. We’re looking forward to this year.”

If someone is looking for the key to the Broncs’ success, he or she can turn to Head Coach Taylor. Taylor has been the head coach of Rider since 1978. He is a seven time ECWA Coach of the Year. In his years at Rider, he has a record of 272-150-3 with 13 conference championships. In 1997, under Taylor, the Broncs reached an all-time high when it was ranked nationally in the top-ten.

The CAA number one ranked heavyweight senior Carmelo Marrero leads the Broncs. Marrero is also the top ranked CAA heavyweight and ranked tenth in the nation. Last year Marrero was the runner-up in the CAA Championships and qualified for the NCAA National Championships tournament. He finished the season with an 8-3 record and a 7-0 in CAA matches.

“I think he will be fine,” said Taylor. “He had a good year last year; we anticipate he will be good this year.”

Another top wrestler for the team is senior Nick Catone. Catone hasn’t wrestled since 2001-02. He won 17 matches the year before withdrawing from the CAA championships due to injury. He is ranked second in the CAA and 17th in the nation among the 184lb weight class.

“He had knee surgery last year because we wanted him to be better,” said Taylor.

Bobby Stinson comes into the season ranked fourth in the CAA 125lb weight class but has experience in the 133lb class. Last year, as a freshman, Stinson went 19-6 in the 125lb weight class and 4-3 in the 133lb weight class. His first big victory came when he won the Beast of the East Meet.

Rider’s schedule is not that easy. The Broncs open the season in the Keystone Classic, a place it had success at last year finishing second and finishing third in 2001.

In December, Rider will compete against the University of North Carolina-Greensboro and Delaware. January is when the schedule starts to get tough, as the team will face stiffer competition. It will face off against conference opponents Drexel, George Mason and Rutgers. February will prove how strong Rider is. The team will go head to head with teams in the CAA and nationally ranked CAA opponent Hofstra.

“Hofstra is the clear frontrunner,” said Taylor. “We’re ranked second. We need to work hard to keep with Drexel. One of our goals is to try to upset Hofstra.”

Rider will finish its season in March at home with CAA championships.

“We force our kids in a tough schedule to keep them working hard,” said Taylor.

‘We have a good team this year. We’re a young team with a lot of talent. We’re looking forward to this year.’

- Gary Taylor
Head Coach

Jared Vichko
Make the zoo noisy

Call me Nostradamus.
I have the ability to foresee the future, to predict events that have yet to transpire.

Take tonight, for instance. When the men’s basketball season tips off in the Alumni Gym, the place will be packed. Alumni, parents of players, cheerleaders, friends and siblings will all be there. For the past week, I have heard the same question at least twice a day. “Are you going to the game?”

The answer for the most part is a yes. No one knew when Hofstra was coming, but everyone knows when the first basketball game is.

While football dominates many colleges across the nation, here at Rider, hoops are heaven. It’s no secret that the Athletic Department knows that basketball is its bread and butter. It has done its part in promoting the game, passing out 6th man t-shirts at Daly’s. The pub will be open early at 4:30 today, and if students want to grab a free t-shirt while they’re having a beer, they are more than welcome.

So let me go back to my crystal ball. After tonight, the crowd for next game will be large as well, but maybe one hundred less. As the lights of Christmas shine bright, fan support will continue to fade further into the holidays. It’s a shame too. The most popular sport on campus is separated from the student body for almost two months. While all our cares will be forgotten on New Years’, the Broncs will be gearing up for a game on the seventh of January.

Some fans will attend games over the break, but only a select few. Aside from Ryan Reber, possibly the best fan on campus, no one else shows up. You’ll see more students in the library than at the game.

Now let me look a little harder into the ball. When we all return from Christmas break, fans again will show...