

Police charge male trespasser in Gee Hall

By Amethyst Martinez

A MALE unaffiliated with Rider was arrested on campus and charged with trespassing Friday after being told he was banned from the university on multiple occasions, according to the Lawrence Police Department and Public Safety.

Isaiah Sparks, 23, was charged with trespassing after a report of a suspicious person inside the lounge in Gee Residence Hall on Sept. 15. Police were called, and Sparks was arrested.

Lawrence Police declined to release his photograph, and would not say where he was from without a public records request.

Public Safety confirmed that Sparks was connected to an incident on Sept. 5 where an individual was found sleeping in a lounge at

Kroner Residence Hall, and advised by Lawrence Police and Public Safety not to return to campus, subsequently banning him from Rider.

However, while on patrol at 7:06 p.m. on Friday, Public Safety found Sparks near Daly Dining Hall, and approached him.

Sparks fled campus and Lawrence Police were called for assistance. The community assistant of Gee Residence Hall was informed of Sparks and his description by Public Safety. Approximately two and a half hours later, the CA reported a suspicious person in the lounge. Police and Public Safety entered the lounge, and Sparks was inside, according to Public Safety.

Sparks was placed under arrest for criminal

trespassing, and transported to Lawrence Township Police Headquarters, where he was processed and released for summons, according to Public Safety.

At 11:31 p.m. Friday, Public Safety sent out an email informing the campus community of Sparks' arrest.

Sparks was given another persona non grata letter from the university, notifying him again of his ban on campus.

Public Safety urged the community to not open doors for unknown individuals or prop open doors in residence halls.

Suspicious persons can be reported to Public Safety at 609-896-5029.

New student enrollment suggests stability

By Kaitlyn McCormick

AFTER announcing the Path Forward plan over the summer to get the university back on track to financial stability, Rider's enrollment and retention numbers are nearing and even surpassing targeted goals, much to the pleasure of the enrollment and admissions teams.

2023 enrollment

Rider's Vice President for Enrollment Management Drew Aromando reported that as of Sept. 18, the fall semester is boasting 3,736 full-time equivalent enrolled students, achieving 101% of the Path Forward's benchmark.

Total residential students, not including Mercer County Community College residents, falls at 1,685, again exceeding the university's pre-set benchmark and landing at 101%.

Rider's enrollment — and related room and board — is vital to stabilize the university's finances.

Aromando explained that, because Rider doesn't have a large endowment, tuition, room and board are heavy players on Rider's fiscal bench.

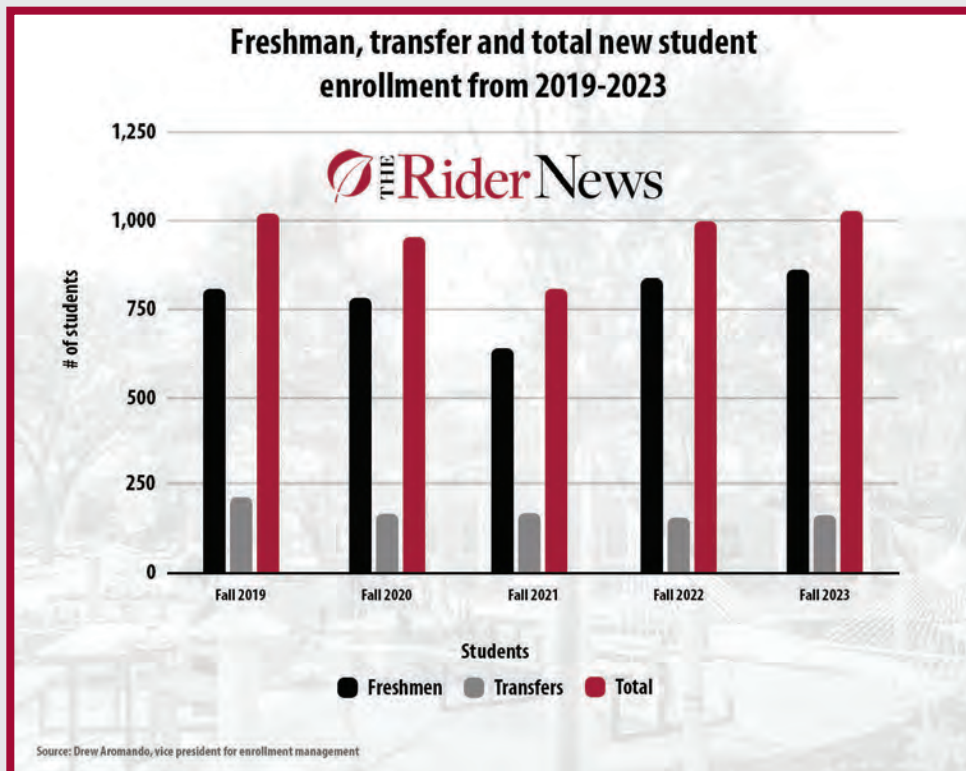
According to Chief Financial Officer James Hartman, that amount sits at 92% of the school's operating budget.

This fall, the university is bringing on 806 freshmen and 215 transfer students, reaching 98% and 105% of Rider's self-imposed benchmark, respectively, as of Sept. 18 and totaling 1,021 new students for the university.

Based on statistics from Aromando, this fall's new student value has increased from 952 students by this time in 2022 and 808 in 2021.

While this fall's statistics don't yet compete with that of 2019's 1030 students, Aromando said Rider's prior stats are larger due to a dip in high school graduation demographics and the COVID-19 impact period.

Many in admissions, however, are still



Eric Buckwalter/The Rider News

Freshman and transfer enrollment data, date-to-date as of Sept. 18.

celebrating the year-to-year uptick.

Susan Makowski, executive director of undergraduate, transfer, international and Westminster Choir College admissions, described the rising enrollment numbers as a sort of "springboard" that keeps the positive energy flowing moving into a new semester.

"It just energizes you even more, because you've watched all of that hard work come to fruition in the last year," Makowski said.

The first of four fall open houses will take place on Sept. 30, and Makowski said that the registration numbers for the event are already trending well, nearing the 500 mark by the evening of Sept. 19 and expected to keep growing.

Rallying for retention

One phrase that those unfamiliar with admissions jargon may hear tossed around is retention rate. But what is it, and why is it so

important?

As explained by Aromando, Rider's retention rate is based on the amount of fall freshmen that have returned as sophomores to the university on a year-to-year scale.

In short, a higher retention rate helps solidify Rider's place and market value in comparison to other universities.

As of Sept. 18, Rider's fall-to-fall retention rate was 80.6%, which Aromando says not only surpasses the university's Path Forward goal of 80.1%, but is the highest Rider's retention rate has ever been.

The university has recently put into effect a variety of new measures to better retention and market value, like its deregistration policy and 2.5 GPA threshold for admittance.

"When you arrive on campus, you shouldn't have to worry about anything other than being a student," Aromando said.

While the deregistration policy helps to prevent students from acquiring multiple semesters worth of financial hardship, the policy also helps retention rates by taking proactive measures to avoid premature drops.

Preparing for the future market

Enrollment strategies, however, don't just exist within the academic year they're servicing.

Enrollment professionals like Aromando are already tracking market predictions for years to come and anticipating a drop in high school graduates, which could mean a drop in applicants.

The university is already working to prepare for this tricky spot in the future market, through measures such as the GPA threshold, deregistration policy and introduction of new and trending majors.

"All of those things are preparing us to be relevant and successful for when we reach this cliff," Aromando said.

INSIDE

BRONCS UNDEFEATED IN MAAC PLAY

Men's soccer kicked off MAAC play with a 1-0 win over Siena.

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NO MORE EMAILS

The editorial board adds a new rule when conducting interviews.

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R FACTOR AUDITIONS: SEASON 14

On Sept. 15, students competed for eight coveted finale spots.

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SECURITY BRIEFS

BY AMETHYST MARTINEZ

Disappearing auto act

Missing cars. On Sept. 12, at 11:37 a.m., Public Safety was dispatched to the Commuter and Resident Lot for the report of a missing vehicle. Public Safety arrived and spoke with the student who could not locate their vehicle and believed it may have been stolen. After a brief search of the parking lots on campus, the student's vehicle was located. It was secure and in good condition.

Sparks fly

Burning by Beckett. On Sept. 15, at 2:03 p.m., Public Safety received a call from students near Beckett Village who had reported hearing several loud bangs and could smell something burning. Public Safety had responded to the area and discovered that a tree had fallen near Ben Cohen Field, knocking down power lines and a utility pole. Wires were sparking and ignited a small brush fire in the area. The fire department and utility company were contacted and responded to the area. Once the power was turned off, the fire department extinguished the fire. The utility company then began to repair damaged electrical lines and a utility pole.

- Information provided by Public Safety Capt. Matthew Babcock

Former mathematics professor dies

By Jake Tiger

CIPRIAN Borcea, 69, a professor emeritus of mathematics at Rider University, died Sept. 8, the university announced via email Sept. 14. Borcea taught at Rider from 1990-2022, serving as the chair of the department of mathematics from 2011-14.

Borcea earned his Ph.D from the University of Bucharest in Romania, before immigrating to the United States in 1989.

For his work, Borcea received grants from the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health.

Borcea was also a fellow at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University.

According to Professor Anthony Bahri, who currently teaches mathematics at Rider and worked with Borcea for his entire 32-year tenure, a celebration of Borcea's life and career will be held in the near future, but a date was not yet determined.

A private funeral was held for Borcea on Sept. 11, Bahri said.



Photo courtesy of Rider University

Professor emeritus of mathematics **Ciprian Borcea** passes away at 69.

THE Rider News

CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE!



New scholarships created to raise student retention

By Jay Roberson

RIDER is attempting to increase student retention by finding new strategies to award scholarships to prospective students and current. The hope is that students will receive the financial support they need to continue their education and can avoid other scenarios like dropping out or transferring due to monetary struggles.

President Gregory Dell'Omo spoke about ways the university is attempting to financially support Rider students, including fundraisers, in a summer webinar.

"We will continue to aggressively promote the campaign, meet with donors and raise funds to ensure that Rider can continue enhancing the lives of students both now and well into the future," said Dell'Omo.

Drew Aromando, vice president for enrollment management, went into detail about the different ways that scholarships support students at Rider.

"It [scholarships] breaks into 242 different combinations that you can fall into as a recruiting student," said Aromando. "There's a lot of play in how we approach the student body and we try to do it in a way where we know what kind of applicant pool is coming out of a pandemic, a lot of people had tough times with inflation. Money's tight for a lot of people."

Associate Vice President of Marketing and Communications Kristine Brown spoke with The Rider News about a new initiative to bring in more education majors.

"One of the things we're working towards this year is to increase the number of education majors because of the shortage of teachers in the state. We

are going to have a new scholarship for incoming education students to help combat the teacher shortage," said Brown.

This new scholarship will award incoming education students amounting \$2,000-5,000 per year, and is renewable annually as long as they're enrolled in 12 credits and maintain a 3.0 GPA.

Aromando spoke about additional partnerships that the university has formed in order to create more opportunities for scholarships. These collaborations can benefit students in specific majors as they are given extra financial support and earlier opportunities to network with partners.

"We've also partnered with Capital Health this year to sponsor a student from Trenton High School who wouldn't have been able to be here," Aromando said. "Not only are we doing that to help the student, but the student wants to be in health care and science. It's a perfect introduction into potential career opportunities and a network."

Dell'Omo spoke about the importance of government funding to support Rider students and different programming.

"Another area we are increasingly focusing on is government support. Unlike public institutions, independent universities like Rider do not receive significant state funding," said Dell'Omo. "While Rider has received limited funding this year for specific programs related to important areas such as [diversity, equity and inclusion] programs, mental health counseling and student scholarships, we're working hard at receiving additional operating support specifically related to assisting us in our path forward plan"

The university has worked to create a proposal to receive more funding from the government,

according to Aromando.

Aromando said, "Micah Rasmussen, [director of the Rebovich Institute for New Jersey politics], President Dell'Omo and I partnered on a proposal to the state to get support, which wasn't that much. It was \$200,000, but it helps to try and close the gap on that high talent population."

The university hopes it can support students with new scholarship offers and find more opportunities to award financial support in the future.

"We want to help students across a level of academic talent and financial need. And while it's not a perfect science, the goal is to really help every family as equitably as possible regardless of race, gender, and religious background," Aromando said.



Kaitlyn D'Alessio/The Rider News

Rider is using new scholarship awarding strategies to avoid the potential of students dropping out or transferring.

COVID-19 joins back-to-school sickness list

By Amethyst Martinez

ALTHOUGH the coronavirus has fallen off of many people's radars as vaccines and new scientific research come forward, the virus has seemingly had a hotbed moment at the university, with rehearsal cancellations and students falling ill across campus.

The university, however, said it will continue to treat COVID-19 just as any other respiratory illness, such as a common cold or flu, due to its low mortality rates amongst young adults.

Debbie Stasolla, a cabinet member who was in charge of COVID-19 protocols at the university during the height of the pandemic, said that, although Rider was monitoring the situation closely, there was no plan in action that was working toward steps like mandatory masking or extra booster requirements – a stark contrast from the guidelines during the pandemic.

"We're trying to get everyone to think in terms of, 'Treat this like any other illness,'" said Stasolla. "Because right now, it's not particularly life threatening for younger adults."

The university has also stopped tracking cases, meaning those who test positive no longer are mandated to notify Rider officials, as they were at the beginning of the pandemic.

According to the university's website, "As of the 2022-23 academic year, Rider University is no longer facilitating COVID-19 contact tracing or case management."

Although the university is not keeping an eye on COVID-19 any longer, the student body has noticed an uptick in cases with the start of the new semester.

In one instance, rehearsals for a Rider show entitled "The Prom" were halted last week due to an outbreak in the virus among participating students.

Nicole Duffy, a senior musical theater major who is part of the production, said multiple rehearsals were canceled so that everyone could participate in the first performance in October.

"We'd really like everyone to be healthy, so that everybody can be a part of the production," said Duffy. "And nobody has to miss out because COVID is going around."

She also said that, although she knew people who had the virus, it was mostly less severe symptoms mimicking a typical cold season.

Stasolla said, "We want to be smart in particular when it comes to things like rehearsals or practices ... where you can spread it a little more easily given the nature of that activity."

Stasolla also noted that the university, including the Student Health Center, follow Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines, which have loosened up as research advances on the virus.

According to the updated regulations, isolation periods for those with the virus are now required to isolate for five days after testing positive, as opposed to 14 days in 2020 when the virus had unknown characteristics.

Quarantine is also not required at the university after someone has had contact with another who has tested positive, and no contact tracing is being followed.



Kaitlyn D'Alessio/The Rider News

COVID-19 joins a list of common seasonal illnesses.

"The severity of the illness is not such right now that we feel the need to monitor as much as we did in the height of the pandemic," said Stasolla.

The Student Health Center said it did not see an increase in cases, with only six reported since the beginning of the semester.

Although the center said that it had PCR tests for all students who want to be tested, limited rapid tests were available, and saved for those with symptoms who qualified.

Rider opens residence halls to MCCC students

By Jay Roberson

ATTENDING community college is an easy way for students to save money by getting their associate degree before transferring for their bachelor's degree. However, most community college students do not get to experience life on campus the same way those at four-year institutions do. Luckily for Mercer County Community College students, Rider now offers them housing at a reduced rate.

Mike Reca, vice president for facilities and university operations, stated that this idea was in the works since before the COVID-19 pandemic, but needed additional time for approval as a more solid plan was created.

"Post- pandemic, the leadership of MCCC changed and Dr. [Deborah] Preston became president. Her and President [Gregory] Dell'Omo had a conversation and said, 'Can we approve this again in a more formal way?'" Reca said.

MCCC students are given two choices for housing: a standard double for \$4,250 per semester or a double as a single for \$5,000 per semester. With this, they can request a roommate and add on an optional meal plan, which is recommended by Rider.

"It gives MCCC students a taste of what it's like to live on campus," said Reca. "So there's a lot of benefits that come out of being a part of a community having a shared community with MCCC."

Erica Oliver, executive director of communications and marketing at MCCC, explained that this new partnership regarding housing would benefit students who do not live close to the college.

"We have some unique programs at MCCC and there's degree programs that aren't necessarily offered around the state for two-year programs," said Oliver. "For example, our aviation site technology program, which is the only two-year AABI [Aviation Accreditation Board International] accredited aviation degree program in the nation."

These unique programs draw in students from all over the country, but leave them with no options for housing. Collaboration with Rider gives these students the opportunity to attend college without worrying about their housing situation.

Some additional benefits that MCCC students gain from housing at Rider include access to campus resources, such as the Moore Library and Daly Dining Hall and reduced housing rates if the student decides to transfer to Rider.

Many students attend MCCC for its athletics programs, and Rider Athletics can benefit from these students transferring after their two years at the college.

"We have some really great athletic programs," said Oliver. "We have nine

sports programs including soccer, softball, lacrosse."

Since the pandemic, Rider has been trying to steadily increase its number of residents on campus. This initiative was the perfect way to increase housing revenue.

In a summer webinar, Dell'Omo stated, "We've done a number of things to try to fill more beds ... We've even started a new housing partnership, the first in the state of New Jersey, which offers Mercer County Community College students the ability to live on campus."

As higher education changes, Reca explained that collaboration between colleges is important and may become the new normal.

"We're getting some additional revenue from dining plans and filling some beds that may not have normally been filled, getting exposure and it's a nice relationship," said Reca. "We're so close to each other with the two colleges collaborating, I think that's the way higher ed[ucation] is going."



Kaitlyn D'Alessio/The Rider News

Non-Rider students will live on campus this year.

CHECK OUT THIS WEEK'S SECTION HIGHLIGHTS

NEWS

IT'S HERE TO STAY



COVID-19 is added to Rider's roulette of back-to-school sickness.

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FEATURES

STUDY ABROAD SEPTEMBER: ENGLAND AND SCOTLAND



25 students studied education patterns and methods in the UK this past summer.

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OPINION

THE RIDER NEWS IMPLEMENTS NEW RULE ON INTERVIEWING



The editorial board has decided to add a new rule for interviews.

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SPORTS

RIDER ALUM WINS SPORTS EMMY



Rider alum Kaylee Ettinger wins Emmy after a semester-long trip to LA.

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RHA's Welcome Back Bash was a smash



Julia Train/The Rider News

An excited group of students gather around for free food ahead of R Factor auditions.



Julia Train/The Rider News

Students wait excitedly for a slice of pizza from Varsity, a Rider favorite.

By Julia Train

“Free pizza! Free cookies!” Angela Gallagher, a senior psychology major, shouted with her hands cupped around her mouth.

She was drawing attention to the three tables in front of her on the Campus Green with 23 pizza boxes, various drinks and 200 Insomnia Cookies.

When students passing by on their way from class or sports practices realized there was free food, they immediately stopped.

Gallagher, along with her fellow Residence Hall Association members, were hosting their “Welcome Back Bash” on Sept. 15 from 5-7 p.m. on the Campus Green.

This is the first time RHA has thrown the event, which was originally the spring semester’s “East Side Picnic.”

“Attendance wasn’t always the best so we turned it into this to hopefully get more people to get our name out there,” said junior psychology major and RHA President Sarah Littman.

The goal for the event was to raise awareness toward

RHA and get dorm residents more involved in their buildings. The association is currently in the process of recruiting a General Hall Council for each building. Their information sessions are Sept. 19 and 20 at 7 p.m. in Lynch Adler Hall 204.

The GHCs are subsections of RHA and their job is to plan events for their buildings.

“We will give them a budget, usually around \$200-\$300, and we work together to come up with little events that each building can do to build a community within the dorms,” said Gallagher, RHA’s social media manager.

RHA also hosts popular campus events such as “Safe Sex Bingo,” movie nights and trips.

Some on-campus events to look out for are the trip to the Eastern State Penitentiary and Fall Fest, which features pumpkin painting and s’mores on the patio of Cranberry’s.

There will also be a Thanksgiving food drive and the building that collects the most goods will win a party of their choice: pizza, ice cream, cookies and more.



Julia Train/The Rider News

Insomnia Cookies was featured at RHA’s Welcome Back Bash.



Julia Train/The Rider News

Despite the warm weather students turned out for the event.

UPCOMING EVENTS

SEPTEMBER

22

Daly Dining Hall
4:30 p.m.



OKTOBER Fest

SEPTEMBER

22

Yvonne Theater
7:30 p.m.



R FACTOR Final

SEPTEMBER

23

Yvonne Theater
7:30 p.m.



THE PRICE IS WHAT?

SEPTEMBER

29

Daly Dining Hall
11 a.m.



MID-AUTUMN FESTIVAL

Tristan E. M. Leach/The Rider News



Marques Merriweather (left) a graduate student in the business of administration program, stands with Breanna Lemerise (right), a junior musical theater major, as she receives her feedback from judges.

R Factor auditions narrow season 14 to 8 contestants

By **Tristan E. M. Leach**

If someone were to ask members of the Rider community what their favorite campus tradition is, they may get several answers. However, there is one experience that many students agree on: R Factor.

On Sept. 15, the Yvonne Theater bloomed with excited students and staff to watch auditions for season 14 of R Factor. Twenty-one eager students competed for eight spots in the finale. Unlike the finale on Sept. 22 where the winner is picked by the audience, the panel of judges pick who will remain on stage on one of the four coveted black leather couches.

The panel included returners Dani Knight, Heather Thompson and Nick Barbati with new judge Trevor Penick. Barbati, assistant vice president of student affairs, started the show after seeing what a hit “X Factor” was.

“[R Factor] got started because in 2012 we got asked in Campus Life to come up with a new program that would separate Rider from everybody else. In the moment I couldn’t think of what that program would be. And then I was in a barber chair and there was a commercial for this new show coming to America called the X Factor. [The commercial] was spotlighting everything that made X Factor different from what American Idol was ... and I thought that would be so cool to bring to Rider,” said Barbati.

Barbati’s instincts that R Factor would be a hit were correct. This year’s auditions saw several returning students including junior communications major

Michaela Smith, junior music production major Jennie Mae Sprouse and senior global supply major KC O’Brien. Several of the returning students received cheers from the audience, who were clearly happy to see that their favorite singer had not given up on being the R Factor champion.

Riley Mozes, a graduate student in the organizational leadership program and Marques Merriweather, a graduate student in the business of administration program, were this year’s hosts and invoked the excitement the audience members were feeling. Each student got an introduction from one of the two hosts. After the performances, either Mozes or Merriweather asked the judges for their feedback and if the contestant was getting a seat.

Throughout the night, the iconic black couches saw many changes as the judges made decisions that were not always a hit with the audience. However, with a smile on their faces and a hug or high-five, the students congratulated each other on their performance and earning a place on the stage.

In the end, four lucky students were in the seats. Each student was randomly assigned one of the four judges as their coach for the upcoming finale. Junior musical theater major Breanna Lemerise was paired with Thompson, O’Brien with Penick, Sprouse with Barbati and freshman English major Kamanay Blecher with Knight. After the four students found out who their coaches would be, each judge picked a wild card from the remaining contestants to compete

in this week’s finale. Penick chose junior music production major Chuck “The Prophet” Wilmore, Knight chose returner to the competition senior arts and entertainment industries management major Ida DeMarco, Barbati chose sophomore Rosalyn Tiangco, another AEIM major, and Thompson chose returner Sela McMullen, a sophomore voice performance major.

There were cheers from the audience and students started to file out as they congratulated their favorite finalist of the night before they met with their coaches for the first time.

Outside, in the chilly night air, students shared their opinions and their predictions for the upcoming finals.

Aileen Pujols, a junior acting major said, “R Factor this year was for sure interesting, there were a lot of characters. I think someone who really deserved a seat was [Sprouse]. She is always so talented and she is always so connected with the music.”

The finale of season 14 of R Factor is Sept. 22 at 7:30 p.m. in the Yvonne Theater. Who will be this year’s R Factor champion?

Jay Roberson is an editor for The Rider News and auditioned for season 14 of R Factor. Roberson had no part in the writing or editing of this article.

Tristan E. M. Leach/The Rider News



Judges give feedback to contestants after their performance.

Tristan E. M. Leach/The Rider News



Audience members wave along to a contestant’s performance.

Education abroad in England and Scotland



Photo courtesy of Chloe Verderber

The group waves to the camera in front of the Apple Market in England.

By **Hannah Newman**

RIDER sent 25 students on a short-term trip to England and Scotland in May, with the goal of implementing the knowledge and curiosity of foreign students into their classrooms in Lawrenceville and beyond.

On the education abroad program, students visited numerous landmarks like the Globe Theatre, the London Eye and Buckingham Palace.

Mark Percy, who was one of two professors on the trip alongside Susan Dougherty, found it remarkable how much the students appreciated visiting schools abroad and all that the experience had to offer them.

“When we have a chance to go to the other countries and have a chance to interact with the students, it’s really special for them,” said Percy.

Before the trip commenced, Percy shared with his class that he valued the foreign classroom visits and the students rolled their eyes; however, the statement rang true when students reflected on their experience.

Rider alum Chloe Verderber '23, who went on the trip as an elementary education major, said, “Just understanding their different philosophies, how they run their classrooms differently and we were able to go in and see real kids learning real stuff The students were actually our tour guide so they’re about high school level.”

Students got to visit four schools at various levels, with each having something different planned for Rider students.

“One of the most interesting and occasionally aggravating things was that some schools had events planned for us. One of the schools we visited in Scotland had tea and snacks laid out for us and some classroom visits were planned,” said Percy. “We also went to high schools where we were able to go into classes, talk with the students directly, where they answered our questions and they could ask us questions. Some schools just gave us a tour.”

While participating in school visits, Percy was

intrigued by the way Scottish schools taught their history.

“There are some similarities to the way their [England and Scotland] schools operate. But there’s some pretty distinct differences, especially in Scotland. They teach their own history and they don’t feature English history,” said Percy.

Although the trip was geared toward education majors, it appealed to a variety of different disciplines and the activities available to students allowed them to dip into the culture of the countries and take something unique away from their time abroad.

“We not only do all the fun touristy things like ... Buckingham Palace, we went to the British Museum, the National Gallery, but we’re also able to be on our own and explore, which was really important for me, just to kind of get that global exposure,” said Verderber.

In addition to being a James Bush Scholarship recipient, which offered full tuition for the trip, Verderber also received an interview for her first job while abroad.

On their first day in England, Verderber received a call for an interview as a teacher but sent it to voicemail due to the unfamiliar number. When she found out who it was, they scheduled her for a Zoom interview abroad and called her for a demo lesson that was scheduled for the day after she arrived back in the United States.

The support she received from her peers was essential in her process of getting a job, which carried into her career and became a highlight of her experience abroad.

“I landed in Newark, [New Jersey] late on Thursday night and by 6:30 in the morning on Friday, I was in school doing a demo lesson and got the job on the spot,” said Verderber. “I really think that the trip boosted my confidence to kind of just go out there and do it. I couldn’t say no. My professors and my classmates really encouraged me throughout the trip and asked for updates once I got home.”



Photo courtesy of Chloe Verderber

Rider alum **Chloe Verderber '23** poses in the Scottish Highlands.

Photo courtesy of Chloe Verderber

The group spreads their school pride in Edinburgh, Scotland.



Photo courtesy of Chloe Verderber

On their way to Loch Ness, the group takes a photo in the Scottish Highlands.

Rider News implements new rule when interviewing sources

An essential part of journalism is fair and balanced reporting that expresses the interests of each party. The Rider News strives to represent all sides of its tight-knit community, whether it be administration, staff, students or faculty, but in recent weeks, declined interview requests and a lack of urgency have limited our ability to do that.

Conducting interviews is the foundation of all reporting. However, this semester, The Rider News has dealt with uncooperative sources. They have been unwilling to speak on the phone or in person with our reporters, some even flat out denying an interview whatsoever.

Unfortunately, this poses a danger to our reporting process.

As a result, our content can sometimes suggest a bias toward the side of those that are willing to speak to the media and represent their corner of the community. In reality, it's a lack of cooperation from other sources, leaving those viewpoints unheard.

Due to these struggles, we will no longer be accepting email interviews, because they threaten our goal to provide accurate reporting. We are taught in our journalism classes, and know from personal experience, that emailed responses to reporters' questions often fail to communicate emotion and connotation. Written answers can be carefully crafted without feeling or could even be authored by someone else entirely, and the lengthy emailing process that comes with posing critical follow-up questions seeking clarification can infringe upon our tight weekly deadlines.

The editorial board unanimously agreed on this new rule that will be implemented across all four sections. This rule will increase the value of our experiences as student journalists, and greatly enhance our coverage in an effort to allow all sides of a story to have a voice. It also allows us to continue to be an award-winning newspaper for many years to come. Articles with emailed quotes simply do not meet the journalism standards that judges expect in state and regional journalism competitions.

Moving forward, phone and Zoom interviews will be accepted, but in-person meetings will always be the goal.

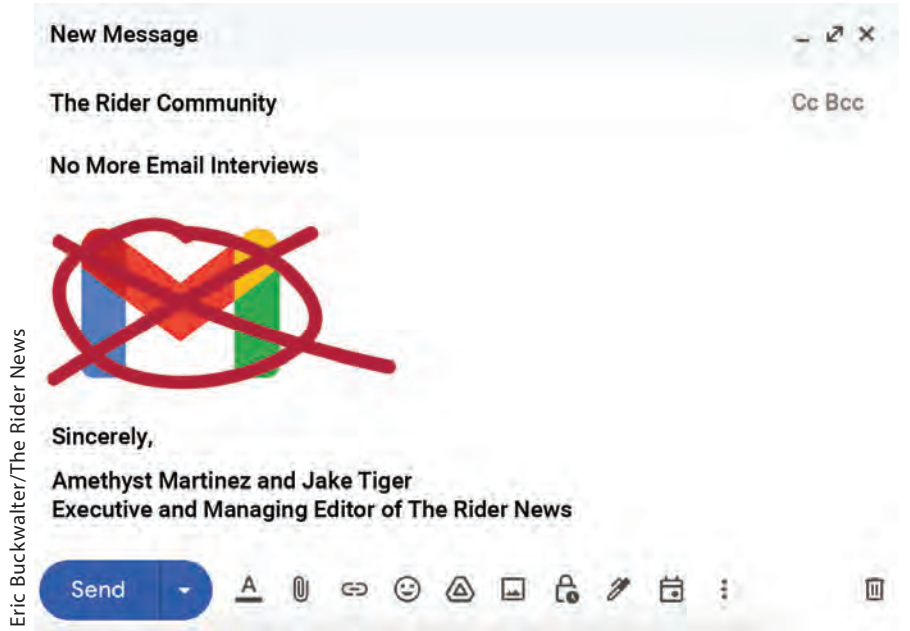
If we reach out to you for an interview, know that we care about your perspective, and want to represent your part in something that is important to the community, whether it be administrative tensions, a new club on campus or a gutsy win at Ben Cohen Field. We want to tell your story and inform the Rider community, as is our job to do so.

The Rider News continues to provide valuable, real-world experience for the university's top media students, and has helped our reporters enter some of the nation's best journalism graduate programs and newsrooms.

Not only are our award-winning reporters writing stories every week for our publication, they are also full-time students who no longer want to continuously reach out to sources that are reluctant to speak to us. We desperately want to accurately and comprehensively tell the story of Rider, but that is impossible without the cooperation of those who are creating it. We cannot do our job without you.

So, tell us your stories, and all we ask for is candidness, honesty and respect. We strive to represent all sectors of the university, and we will continue to do that in our stories every week, as we have for nearly a century. Hundreds of journalists have been through the doors of our newsroom, and that legacy will continue for future students in the years to come, as long as members of our community are willing to help us do what we love.





The Rider News' new rule will help the cover all sides of every story.



The Rider News unanimously agreed to no longer conduct email interviews.

The Rider News

Longstreet House, 2083 Lawrenceville Road, Lawrenceville, NJ 08648

©2023 General Meetings: Wednesdays at 4:30 p.m.

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Rider financial credibility questioned by Moody's

On April 5th, Moody's released a sharply critical evaluation of Rider's financial health. This report included sharp criticism of management which questioned both the administration's "credibility and track record" and noted that these factors, essentially management's honesty and their ability to execute on their strategic plan, were two of the reasons for their downgrade.

This is both a rare and stunning condemnation of management from the reporting agency and is reflective and supportive of a series of statements which Rider's faculty have sent directly to the board over the last seven years.

It is rare that an institution of Rider's size arrives at such a dire financial state. The challenges of demographic trends, price competition and a global pandemic have been endured by our peer institutions and almost all have managed to remain solvent both pre- and post-pandemic.

Contrary to Rider President Gregory Dell'Omo's frequent proclamations, the university was not in dire straits when he arrived. Fluctuations in enrollment often impact public and private universities leading to fluctuations in operating income. Rider continued to have positive cash flow throughout these fluctuations prior to Dell'Omo joining the university.

In a budget projection provided to the Board of Trustees in 2016, Dell'Omo and his chief financial officer projected revenue and expense projections through 2019. Comparing actual revenue and expenses through this time period to this budget, an exercise Moody's has no doubt performed, demonstrates the "credibility" issue. By 2018, Dell'Omo's administration had fallen short of their revenue projections by \$5 million, and by 2019, a year only partly impacted by the pandemic, they had missed their projected revenue goal by \$13 million and had overspent their expense budget by \$2 million. These significant failures laid the groundwork for deep cash losses which would occur in 2021 and 2022.

The root cause of these losses can be attributed to key strategic decisions by Dell'Omo's administration. A decision to try to sell a fully enrolled college which was generating positive cash flow and receiving generous donations was a key strategic failure which swelled expense spending and led to a dramatic loss of enrollment related revenue at the college. As this expensive failure was occurring, Dell'Omo's administration elected to borrow heavily to build, insisting that these "investments" would improve enrollment. They did not, and Rider is now struggling to repay that debt and as Moody's notes, they have a dismal track record on successful execution of any strategic plan and may very well be in default on their bond debt by 2025.

Unfortunately Rider's board has had only one source of information during Dell'Omo's tenure: Dell'Omo and his team. This is the source which Moody's cites as both lacking in credibility and as incapable of executing a strategic plan which would improve Rider's finances.

These significant failures and Rider's serious financial state are compelling reasons for Rider's board to seek out input from other sources, from other members of Rider's community. A decision by the board to allow faculty, students and alumni to present information and speak at board meetings would provide this much-needed input.

Arthur Taylor
professor of information systems

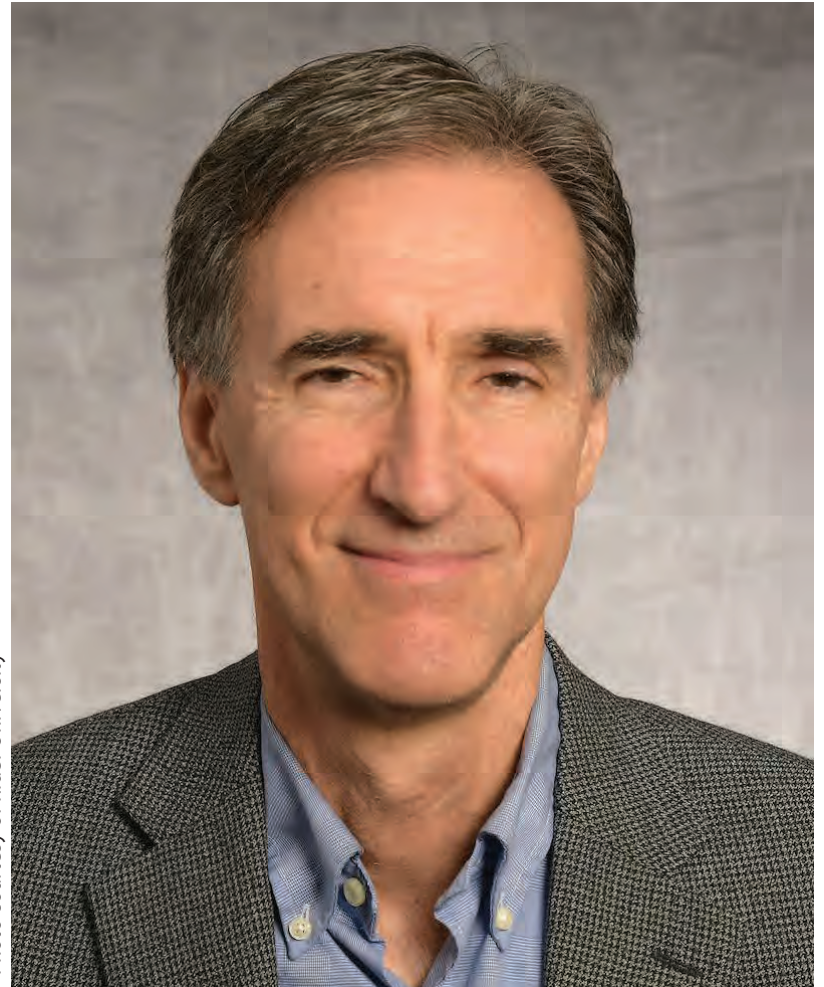


Photo courtesy of Rider University

Arthur Taylor shares concerns over Rider's financial state.

SENIOR SPOTLIGHT

Cleo Sol returns with third album 'Heaven'

THE London born singer-songwriter, Cleopatra Zvezdana Nikolic, better known as Cleo Sol, has returned with her third album, "Heaven," released on Sept. 15, produced by Info. We last heard from Cleo Sol in 2021 with the release of her sophomore album "Mother," which was a bittersweet but beautiful album detailing her experiences with adolescence, motherhood and love.

"Heaven," is a nine track, 30-minute album that starts with a song titled "Self." Lyrics in the first verse read, "Ooh, save me/Save me from myself/Ooh, be gentle/Gentle with myself." Within the first seven words of the song, we already know where Cleo's mind is. She is taking us on an introspective journey on an album that in many ways appears to be a letter to herself. On the third track of the album, titled "Go Baby," she sings "Go baby, go baby, go baby/Hope that God forgives your sins, your sins, your sins, your sins." The song's repetitive nature appears to be a mantra for the singer-songwriter.

At the halfway point of the album, with songs four and five, we get to hear "Heaven" and "Old Friends." Cleo Sol posted a snippet of the song "Heaven," on her Instagram a little less than a month before the release of the album. Some of the lyrics from the third verse read, "That was sent from Heaven/Loving yourself is free/Please never change."

As we continue through Cleo Sol's journey, in the song "Old Friends," Cleo sings, "Years have gone by, tears still stain my pillow/You played games with my emotions/Real friends don't leave their wounds open/But I'm okay to say that it's over." "Old Friends" is pivotal in terms of the themes being presented in the album.

Throughout the song, Cleo Sol expresses that change is OK despite the pain she feels, and that she has to choose herself rather than staying in a space that isn't safe. In all of her albums, Cleo Sol often voices the importance of self worth amid the pain that she has been put through. Similar sentiments can be heard in songs like "Build Me Up" and "Don't Let It Go Your Head," from her second album, or "Sure of Myself" and "Rose in the Dark" from her first.

At the end of "Heaven," we get the last two songs, "Nothing on Me," and "Love Will Lead You There." In "Nothing on Me," there is only one verse, spread across the full two minutes and 44 seconds of the song.

The first half of the lyrics read, "You got nothing on me/Love has set me free/Go if you want to leave/Nothing is worth destroying peace of mind." The penultimate song is self explanatory, is applicable and yet it fits perfectly in the sequence of the album. Finally, we hear "Love Will Lead You There," which is probably my favorite song on the album. The simple but deliberate acoustic ballad does not have to do much to get its point across.

The song's bridge reads, "A treasure, our love is/I'll always show up for you/Just tell me and I'll be there," which goes into the final chorus: "Love will lead you there/Love will lead you there/Love will lead you there/Oh, love will lead you there." Once again, Cleo Sol has crafted an album that provides something to reflect on, the importance of love, both for the self and for everyone, and it is completely worth the listen.

Asha Burtin
senior music production major



Eric Buckwalter/The Rider News

Cleo Sol's "Heaven" releases after a two-year hiatus.

VOLLEYBALL

Rider finishes MAAC roadtrip with loss and win

By Andrew Smolar

In search of some sort of spark in a rough start to their season, Rider volleyball regained some momentum with a win on Sept. 17 following a defeat by Iona the day prior. The much-needed victory against Manhattan was their second of the season.

'We fought well'

The Broncos kicked off the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference portion of their schedule with a tight match against Iona on Sept. 16 where three sets were decided by two points.

The Gaels scored the first point of the initial set and never allowed Rider to hold a lead.

A four-point surge from Iona stretched their lead to 7-2. Iona had a cushion of at least three during the majority of the set. They held a lead as large as eight thanks to a 6-2 run that made the score 20-12 before eventually winning the first set 25-18.

The second set of the day started slowly for Rider, with the Gaels scoring the first four points. The Broncos never went away, however.

After the early deficit, the Broncos went on a 8-4 run with good, methodical play to get back within one at 9-8.

The Gaels responded with a 4-1 run that stretched the lead back up to four at 16-12.

Rider finally got the set even and took the lead thanks to a 3-0 run that put them ahead 24-23, eventually winning the set 27-25 to turn a definite defeat into a win.

Head Coach Jeff Rotondo was pleased with the fight his team showed after the first set.

"We needed that to help with our mindset after set one," Rotondo said. "We escaped with that set two win, and thought we fought well at times in set three."

The third set of the day was tight with neither team gaining any separation until a three-point surge by Iona, which put them ahead 9-6. That was part of an overall 6-1 run by the Gaels that gave them a 12-7 advantage, their largest of the set.

That comfort didn't last long, however, as Rider responded with four unanswered points as part of an 8-2 run that gave Rider the lead at 15-14.

Iona responded with a 10-5 run, including five consecutive points to win the set 25-23.

The fourth set was also close. Neither team held a



Andrew Xon/The Rider News

Volleyball brings the cold streak to a halt with a win over the Manhattan Jaspers.

lead of more than two until the Broncos went on a 4-1 run that opened up a 14-11 edge.

Despite the Gaels going on a 7-4 run to even the set at 18, Rider immediately answered with three points in a row to grab the lead back. It held a lead as large as five thanks to a 6-1 run that made it 24-19, seemingly locking in the win.

Iona soon changed the whole set by scoring six unanswered points to go up 25-24. They eventually pulled away 28-26 to win the match 3-1 and avoid a fifth set.

Rotondo pointed to attitude as being the main thing his team needs to fix during the final two sets.

"When you have a 22-19 lead and then a 24-19 lead, there just needs to be a tougher attitude to close," Rotondo said.

A bounceback win

The Broncos were able to bounce back with a win on Sept. 17 against Manhattan, finishing the match 3-1.

"This is something we needed as we know what we are capable of," Rotondo said.

The set featured nine lead changes and 18 ties with no team ever establishing momentum for any lengthy period of time.

The Jaspers won the set in extras 29-27 to take the early advantage.

The Broncos were able to bounce back with a 25-16 win in the second set. They initially grabbed a lead thanks to a 4-0 run that put them up 7-4.

Another 4-0 run shortly after ensured the lead to six at 12-6.

Manhattan responded with five unanswered points to get within one. The set was tight until Rider carved out some separation with a 4-0 run, before also scoring the final five points of the set.

Rider kept the momentum going into the third set, started by scoring the first four points.

After the Jaspers responded with an 8-3 run to take the lead, the Broncos scored the set's next three points as part of an 8-1 run that put them ahead 15-9.

Rider was never threatened again as it ended the set on a 7-2 run to win in comfortable fashion 25-17.

The Broncos were able to close out the victory in the fourth set due to one big run and a strong finish.

After some back-and-forth play to start the set, Rider found themselves trailing by two at 10-8.

After some back-and-forth play to start the set, Rider found themselves trailing by two at 10-8.

The Broncos responded by scoring nine unanswered points to turn that small deficit into a big lead. That was enough to allow them to coast to the finish as they also ended the set on a 6-1 run to win in blowout fashion 25-15.

"The killer mindset was great," Rotondo said. "We were not making unforced errors, we were serving and defending well, and attacking aggressively but not recklessly."

The Broncos next game will be against Marist on Sept. 20 at 7 p.m. and can be seen on ESPN+.

WOMEN'S SOCCER

Broncs shut out Siena, pick up first MAAC win

By Terrell Munford

FOLLOWING a shutout loss at home against the Marist on Sept. 9, Rider women's soccer got one game closer to the .500 mark at Ben Cohen Field, besting Siena College 1-0 on Sept. 16 to kick off a two-game road trip.

After a scoreless first half, the Broncos struck first with graduate student forward Chloe Fisher's goal in the 48th minute that gave the Broncos the lead and the win.

"Every game is close and hard fought with the outcome often coming down to a moment of brilliance or an error," Head Coach Drayson Hounsome said. "Against Siena, we were able to have that moment with a great goal and held them off when we needed to. Against Marist, we had the error and they had a positive moment."

With the game's lone score, Fisher picked up her first goal of the 2023 season and the seventh of her Rider career. She led the Broncos in shots against Siena with four, but as a team they were outshot 20-7 despite picking up the win.

"To get a goal like that as my first goal, I felt like I was on cloud nine," Fisher said, "Momentum is everything when you play a short 10-game season like we do in the MAAC, so the quicker we reflect and push forward, tweaking the things we need to

do is major, especially as we are aiming to be MAAC champions this year."

With the win, some Rider history came along with it, as senior goalkeeper Ellie Sciancalepore moved into a tie for second all-time in career shutouts and fifth all-time in career wins. Sciancalepore also won MAAC defensive player of the week.

With Rider gaining more momentum as the season continues, Hounsome reiterated what he expects out of his soccer team moving forward as the Broncos head into an important stretch of MAAC opponents.

"We are trying to qualify for the playoffs and it is six wins to get in. ... We have three points out of six and need 15-18 points," Hounsome said. "Every game is different and each opponent causes its own problems – being able to adjust is key and the team did that very well against Siena."

With the win, the Broncos moved closer to the .500 mark at 3-4-1 on the season, and will look to reach that mark when they face off against the Fairfield Stags on Sept. 23.

The game begins at 7 p.m. and be streamed on ESPN+.



Kaitlyn D'Alessio/The Rider News

Graduate student forward **Chloe Fisher** scored on Sept. 16.

BASEBALL

New pitching coach brings youth and experience

By Benjamin Shinault

AFTER an August coaching departure left a hole in its dugout, Rider baseball announced Casey Aubin as its new pitching coach on Sept. 12 with hopes of replicating a statistically dominant season at the mound.

Perhaps the largest factor in Rider's dominant numbers last season was Pitching Coach Mike Petrowski. However, in the collegiate world of sports, when someone goes above and beyond what they are asked to do, they get other opportunities, and Petrowski was no exception as he became the new pitching coach at the University of North Florida in August.

Insert Aubin, who's coming in from Southern New Hampshire University, where he helped the school to two College World Series appearances and a national semi-finals appearance last season. Aubin also raised the Penmen's pitching numbers as a bulk of them finished in the top ten in their conference.

"The biggest thing I took away is the no-excuse mindset and to always find a way to make it happen," said Aubin of his Division II coaching experience.

As a player, Aubin was a decorated pitcher, winning the New Hampshire Gatorade player of the year award in 2015 after his senior season of high school.

He then attended UMass and accumulated an impressive 130.2 innings pitched, 125 strikeouts over four seasons and had a 1.00 ERA with five saves as a closer in 2019. Despite the notable season Aubin had, he decided to hang up the cleats and head back into the dugout as a coach.

"When I was done there, I knew I was done playing and I wanted to get right into coaching," said Aubin. "Baseball's been my whole life and I wake up every morning excited about it and I can't ask for a better job."

Before Aubin's days at SNHU, he was also a coach at Saint Peter's, a MAAC rival of the Broncos. He spoke about his prior experiences with Rider from the opponent's perspective.

"[The Broncos] are not going to beat themselves. They are a very hard team to beat and they make you play for 27 outs," Aubin said. "They make you hit the ball, they don't give out a lot of free passes and walks, they are not going to commit errors and have uncompetitive at-bats."

Aubin, 26, still feels like he is still in touch with what today's college ball players are expecting out of their coaches.

"I would like to think I'm a players coach but at the end of the day, there's got to be an atomic balance," Aubin said. You have to be empathetic and have the players back but there is a job that has to be done at the end of the day."

With Aubin joining a new team with a different brand of pitching, he intends to lean on Head Coach Barry Davis and Assistant Coach Lee Lipinski to help steer him through his first season as pitching coach.

"Coach Davis and Coach Lipinski are both going to be huge resources for me," said Aubin. "I'm going to rely on them heavily to not only get us off the starting block here in the fall, but they know what it takes to win in the MAAC and late in the season."

After such an exuberant season, Aubin is excited

to see the Broncos get back on Sonny Pittaro Field and try to match what was an unforgettable year for Rider.

"I'm excited to get to work," said Aubin. "It's an exciting time and I think it's a good time to be a player in Rider's baseball program."

The Broncos hope that Aubin can translate his past successes at SNHU to Rider this upcoming season to ultimately help hang another banner in the outfield.



Photo courtesy of Rider Athletics

The Broncos rework their coaching staff by hiring Pitching Coach Casey Aubin.

MEN'S SOCCER

Rider wins second straight advances to 4-1-2

By Logan VanDine

IN their first two home games of the season, Rider men's soccer was able to deliver for its fans winning both of its home games with a win against Siena, 1-0 on Sept. 16 followed by another impressive victory on Sept. 19, 3-1.

'This win is like a fresh start'

After back-to-back ties, the Broncos got a much-needed 1-0 win over Siena on Sept. 16 in the team's first conference match under new Head Coach Chad Duernberger.

From the start, the game was a defensive battle at Ben Cohen Field as no one was able to score in the first half, the third consecutive game this happened for the Broncos.

In the second half, the game remained scoreless for much of the way, until the 58th minute as the Broncos drew first blood thanks to sophomore midfielder Luke Kirilenko's first goal of the season, which earned the Broncos a 1-0 win to move to 3-1-2 on the young season.

"You train hard every single day and every single day when you get on this pitch, it's a blessing," said Kirilenko. "I came on and I was fortunate enough to be at the right place at the right time and used a great technique and it was amazing. It's great to score for the team."

Duernberger was asked if he had any nerves about coaching against his first MAAC opponent since he was not familiar with a team like Siena.

"[Siena's] record isn't truly what they are but I feel that a win like this is a fresh start in MAAC play for us," said Duernberger. "We wanted to get on the score sheet a little early but we got what we needed and the defenders did what they were able to do and as a whole group we were able to pitch a shutout."

'I was really pleased'

In just his second home game coaching for Rider, Duernberger and his squad picked up another huge



Kaitlyn D'Alessio/The Rider News

Sophomore midfielder Luke Kirilenko jukes a La Salle defender.

victory over La Salle on Sept. 19, 3-1.

The Broncos fell behind early in the first half as La Salle scored first in the 33rd minute to give them a quick 1-0 lead.

With two minutes left in the first half, the Broncos took some momentum into halftime as junior back Martin Chladek got the score even at one with both teams heading into the locker room.

The Broncos offense came alive in the second half as they broke the 1-1 tie with senior forward Babacar Diene scoring in the 61st minute making the game now 2-1.

The goal was followed by some much-needed insurance in the 84th minute as senior forward Justin Ruffino made a clutch shot to give Rider some breathing room making game now 3-1.

"It took us a little bit to get going tonight with the first half being a little sluggish but I think they responded well," Duernberger said. "We didn't talk much about tactics at halftime, it was more about showing more grit so I liked our energy in the second half and I was really pleased."

Ruffino also talked about his second half goal that helped the Broncos win their fourth game.

"It felt amazing, coach [Duernberger] gave me an opportunity and I took it and we gotta keep rolling for Saturday our second conference game so we gotta keep going," Ruffino said.

Rider moves to 4-1-2 on the season and will stay home when they host Fairfield on Sept. 23 at 7 p.m. for Alumni Day.

Sports

ONLINE

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FEATURE

Rider alum wins Emmy after semester in LA



Photo courtesy of Maddison Reynolds

Rider alum **Kaylee Ettinger '22** proudly holds her Emmy she won for her work with Fox Sports during the 2022 World Cup.

By Logan VanDine

STUDENTS majoring in film and television know about the semester-long trip to Los Angeles. It's a fantastic opportunity for students to learn about the field, participate in exciting activities and get internships that may eventually lead to a job. For Rider graduate Kaylee Ettinger '22, her experience led her to an Emmy.

Ettinger was awarded for her 2022 World Cup graphics in the Outstanding Technical Team Studio category.

"I was just in shock and could not believe it, and actually, it still has not fully hit me yet," she said with a grin across her face.

Originally from Staten Island, New York, Ettinger was always interested in the film and television industry and knew she wanted to get involved in it.

"In high school, I was in the media and communications program there and I became really involved in it," said Ettinger. "When I was little I would always make little videos, but I would always be behind the scenes putting on little shows."

When it came time to pick a college, Rider was not a tough decision. She had a family friend who worked for 107.7 The Bronc, so she already knew about the school, but her tour of the university offered her an early glimpse of its "Semester in Los Angeles" program.

"I always wanted to live in California and I wasn't sure if I was ready yet because I was right out of high school, but I still knew right away Rider was the place for me," Ettinger said.

Having to wait a few years until she was eligible

for the trip to LA, Ettinger got involved right away through a plethora of opportunities, including BroncVision, where she held a role in the graphics department.

"I started even a little before classes started freshman year, and I also did the Lead Camp, which is a leadership development program to meet some friends before school even started, and with the television studio too," she said.

When Ettinger was finally eligible for the Semester in LA in 2022, she had no nerves and was just excited to get out there.

Professor Barry Janes, who runs the program, talked about how great of an opportunity it is for film and television majors.

"Rider's Semester in LA is a unique and incredibly valuable Engaged Learning experience. It's one that really helped Kaylee by providing her with an opportunity to get hands-on experience in the film and television industry," said Janes via email. "Being in LA allowed Kaylee to meet with industry professionals and work directly in sports television in an industry she loved."

Before getting her first internship and job at Fox Sports, Ettinger recalled one moment she enjoyed the most while she was out there when she went to the NFL Honors awards show at SoFi Stadium in LA.

"It was really cool because we were actually watching it behind the scenes while we were in the audience," she said. "It was really cool to see a bunch of athletes and I have to say it was probably one of my favorite memories there."

Besides the outings and sightseeing that the

Semester in LA presents, students can also find some of the best internships available, just as Ettinger did when she started out with Spectrum Networks.

"I interned with Spectrum Networks with the Dodgers and Lakers as a sports content intern, and I would find some footage from games," said Ettinger. "For example, finding LeBron James' best shots from all different kinds of angles, and I would make like a 10-second package that the network would use during the broadcast."

When Ettinger was still in Los Angeles hoping to find a job in her field, Fox Sports had an opening. Although she did wind up flying home, she completed a few remote interviews with the network and was hired for a position as part of the graphics help desk.

Ettinger's first gig for Fox was the second annual "MLB at Field of Dreams game," which is played in a cornfield, emulating the 1989 film where a farmer builds a baseball field that attracts the ghosts of baseball legends in Iowa.

In 2022, Fox Sports covered the World Cup in Qatar, one of the most-watched sporting events that year.

"I was definitely learning over time," said Ettinger. "I was excited too but I was still starting out so definitely a little nervous but still a lot of fun, despite working overnight."

Janes said it was an incredible achievement for Ettinger and her team at Fox, but he wasn't surprised.

"Kaylee was a great student and a fantastic intern while in our Semester in LA program," said Janes. "I just knew Kaylee would achieve great things."



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