

Pinning his way to the championship



Carolo Pascale/The Rider News

SEE DELLAVECCHIA
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Graduate student **Jesse Dellavecchia** became the first Rider wrestler to make a national championship appearance, finishing as the runner-up in the 157 pound division.

Rider distributes CARES Act II funds

By Tatyanna Carman and Stephen Neukam

RIDER has finalized a plan to “distribute approximately \$1.8 million received under the new federal Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriation Act (CRRSAA),” according to a university email sent to eligible students on March 15.

The funds continue the university and federal government’s efforts to get direct relief to college students, most of whom were left out of past stimulus payments. To date, the university has received just over \$3.6 million to directly support students.

Vice President of Enrollment Management Drew Aromando said, “We will be distributing \$1.8 million in Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds (HEERF II) to undergraduate and graduate, full- and part-time students based primarily on the expected family contribution (EFC), which is used to analyze demonstrated financial need.”

Senior criminal justice major Destiny Waters said that she believes she is eligible for the funds because she is a part of Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) and because the pandemic has “affected my family a lot.”

Waters also said that she wished the university would “make information about this more available, such as how much funding they get in total and how they will allocate the funding.”

Aromando said that the university anticipates that just over 2,800 students will receive HEERF II funds.

“Individual HEERF II amounts will range from \$300 to \$1,000 and will depend on whether the student is full-time or part-time, undergraduate or graduate,” said Aromando.

The university is also anticipating the receipt of funds from the federal American Rescue Plan. Aromando said that the university has not received an official notification of funding levels from the U.S. Department of Education for HEERF III funds.

“So far, student eligibility requirements are very similar to HEERF II,” he said. “The U.S. Department of Education has not issued written guidance to clarify whether or not undocumented, DACA, or international students may receive these funds.”

However, Associate Vice President for University

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BRONC BOMBERS

Rider scores 24 runs and wins three of four games to open its season.

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13 WEEKS STRAIGHT

For extra COVID-19 precautions, the university has decided to eliminate spring break 2021.

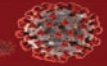
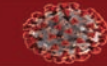
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DESSERT WARS

107.7 The Bronc’s Dessert Wars returns with a new virtual format and the same tasty treats.

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THE Rider News
COVID - 19 Counter


Confirmed Cases
Last updated: Mar. 23, 2021

96
 Cumulative total of laboratory-confirmed cases of COVID-19 at Rider University (Since January 2021)

ON CAMPUS STUDENT TESTING

Weeks	Health Center	Surveillance Testing
Week 12	11	129
Week 11	16	208
Week 10	15	143
Week 9	13	329
Week 8	20	271
Week 7	3	294
Total	98	3181

COVID - 19 case reports to Rider University by month:

Month/Year	Student Case Reports	Employee Case Reports
March 2021	49	2
February 2021	27	1

Rider University reports its testing numbers and other coronavirus statistics each Tuesday and Friday at rider.edu/dashboard

STUDENT QUARANTINE

Rider University reports quarantine numbers on a rolling basis, so there is no accurate way to keep a cumulative total of quarantined students. This week, there are:

Nine students quarantining on campus
20 students quarantining off campus

Rider and New Jersey cases continue to rise

By Austin Ferguson

AFTER a semester-high in student positive COVID-19 cases the previous week, Rider matched that high with 19 positive student cases from March 15 to 21, the university’s online dashboard reported on March 23.

Of the 19 positive cases reported for the week ending on March 21, 16 were attributed to on-campus students, eclipsing the highest single-week total of on-campus student positives by three cases set the week prior.

Rider’s dashboard also reported new

semester highs in quarantine and isolation numbers, with as many as 35 students in quarantine and 23 students in isolation as of March 19.

Of those numbers, the dashboard indicated that student quarantine numbers were weighted toward students doing so off-campus, with 23 students quarantined outside of campus, while the split between on-and-off campus isolations was more balanced, with 13 and 10 students isolated on-and-off campus respectively.

According to Vice President for Strategic

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Arianna Marino/The Rider News

SECURITY BRIEFS

BY SARAH SIOCK

No Guests Allowed

COVID-19 rule breaker. On Sunday, March 21 at 2:50 a.m., Public Safety received a phone call from a community assistant in Olson Hall who observed an individual breaking COVID-19 safety guidelines by being in the building as a nonresident. Public Safety tracked down the individual and referred them to the Office of Community Standards.

Towed Away

Check your tires. On Thursday, March 17 at 1:45 a.m., Public Safety observed a car being towed in the commuter parking lot. A tow report revealed the owner's insurance company towed the car due to a flat tire. Public Safety attempted to call the owner of the vehicle, but the owner did not answer.

Quarantine Breaker

Stay inside. On Wednesday, March 17 at 5:25 p.m., Public Safety was on a routine Park, Walk and Talk when an individual carrying a platter was seen walking into quarantine housing. It was discovered that the individual was completing a quarantine and violated the Student Code of Social Conduct by leaving the building. The individual was referred to the Office of Community Standards.

— Information provided by Public Safety Capt. Matthew Babcock

CLARIFICATION

A March 17 article of The Rider News about ongoing investigations into faculty at Rider's School of Fine and Performing Arts suggested that Rider's Chapter of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) provides direct legal representation to individual faculty members. Instead, according to AAUP Contract Administrator and Chief Grievance Officer Jeff Halpern: "The AAUP has an attorney who provides legal advise [sic] to the union."

University anticipates around \$9.5 million from the American Rescue Plan

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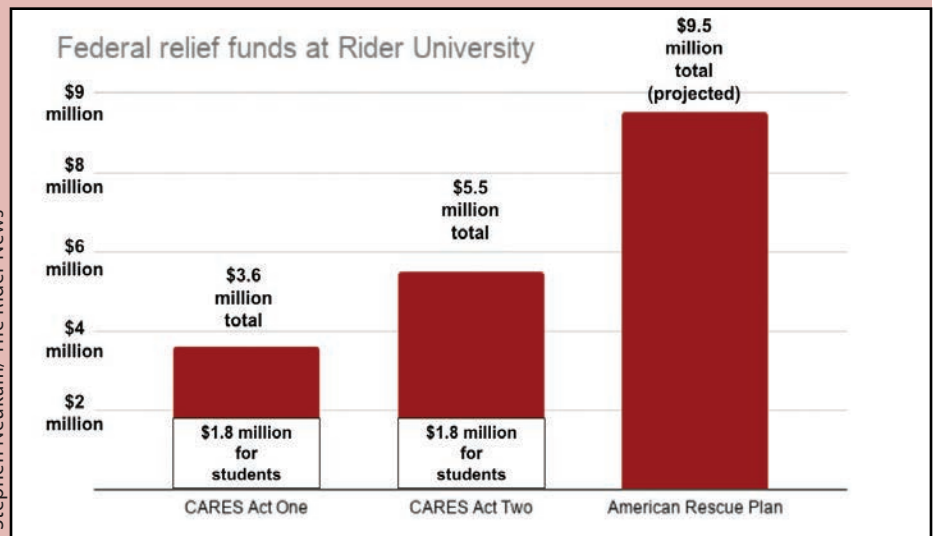
Marketing and Communications Kristine Brown said that Rider has received different estimates for the amount it will be allocated from the most recent funds Congress, with the most recent estimate being around \$9.5 million. According to Brown, the expectation is that half of that money will be used for student support.

The American Rescue Plan is the largest relief package yet — a much more aggressive and expansive approach from the President Joe Biden administration. Between the three pools of funding, the university could receive a total as high as \$18.6 million.

College students who were claimed as a dependent were also included in the \$1,400 stimulus payments that were sent out in the American Rescue Plan, with parents receiving payments for the dependents.

Aromando also explained how the CARES II Act and American Rescue Plan funds impact the Rider community.

"The impact of COVID-19 can be felt in so many ways beyond the virus itself," he said. "We are extremely grateful for HEERF I, II and III funds, which provide a great benefit to many of our students and families that have been financially impacted during this pandemic."



The projected amount that Rider will receive from the federal American Rescue Plan is \$9.5 million., according to Associate Vice President for University Marketing and Communication Kristine Brown.

Rider loosens punishments for first-time marijuana offenders

By Stephen Neukam

As national and state attitudes toward marijuana change, Rider has loosened punishments for first-time offenders while attempting to balance national regulations and increasing leniency in New Jersey, a difficult juggling act as the substance increases in popularity.

The evolving legal situation has coincided with a marked increase in drug arrests at the university, with over 130 arrests between 2013 and 2019.

The dissonance between state rules and federal statutes has proved difficult for students who live in a state where marijuana is legal but go to a university where the substance is prohibited, leading to increased possession, arrests and disciplinary actions.

All about the funding

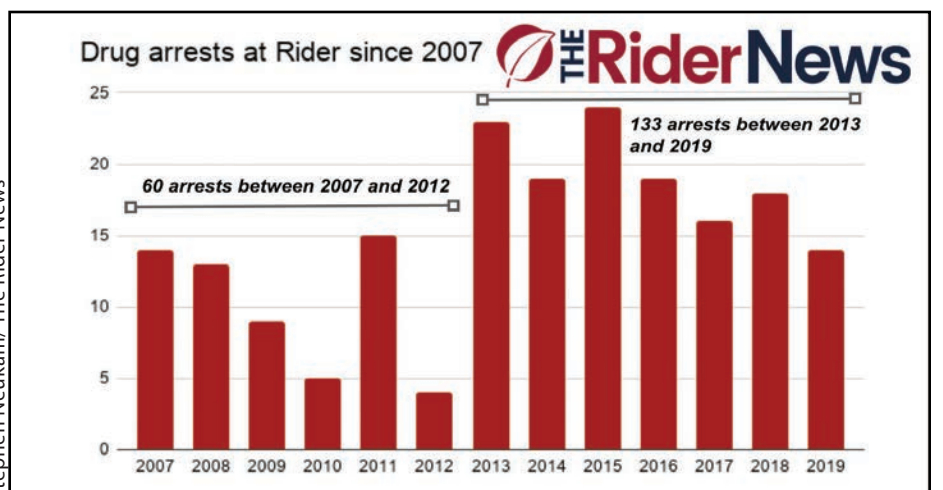
Rider is limited in what it can do to adjust to the Garden State, which legalized recreational marijuana use for adults in February. Since the university relies on federal funding, it must be following federal law, where marijuana is illegal, said Associate Vice President for University Marketing and Communications Kristine Brown.

"The recent change in New Jersey law will not change how the University enforces our drug policy in the Student Code of Social Conduct," said Brown. "Marijuana still is illegal at the federal level, and we are required to have and enforce a stated policy prohibiting marijuana on campus."

While the university has maintained a no-tolerance policy toward marijuana, it has worked to reduce the penalties for first-time offenses for students aged 21 and over. Rider's invariable punishment for possession used to be loss of housing. Two to three years ago, the university refined those rules to bring first-time offenses more in line with alcohol violations, according to Brown.

"We opened the range of consequences at that time in order to not make it mandatory for a first offense for possession/use of a small quantity of marijuana to result in a loss of housing," said Brown. "Currently, our sanctions for a student found to be in possession/using a small quantity of marijuana are consistent with sanctions for our alcohol policy." Senior musical theater major and Student Government Association President Dylan Erdelyi said he agrees with the university's decision to lessen first-time punishments for a small amount of marijuana possession.

"As a University, we have a responsibility to care for our community and make



Rider University has had 133 drug arrests between 2013 and 2019.

sure all our students are safe," said Erdelyi. "That said, I do think the lessened penalties are a positive step. Marijuana still isn't legal under the age of 21 — but I do not think that a misstep in college should lead to lifelong consequences."

Public Safety enforcement

Rider Public Safety has not been forthcoming in how the recent New Jersey legislation will affect its oversight efforts.

When asked how Public Safety is adjusting its practices to the new law and if it presents any new challenges, Director James Waldon only said, "Rider's policy on marijuana has been adopted in compliance with federal law, and the University's obligations as a recipient of federal funding."

However, the new law has changed how local law enforcement responds to calls about marijuana.

The possession of six ounces or less of marijuana is no longer considered a crime, and law enforcement is no longer allowed to search a person because of odor alone.

Waldon did not respond to questions about why arrest numbers at the university in recent years have been on the rise.

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THE MAKING OF A TWO-FRONT WAR

MONDAY, APRIL 5 | 7 TO 8:30 P.M.

Zoom - Register in Advance: rider.edu/two-front-war

A night that gives the audience a behind-the-scenes look at the making of *A Two-Front War*, a series that follows the fight for civil rights by African American World War Veterans upon their return home. A panel will be present to describe the hardships African American veterans faced during their service, as well as the difficulties in telling their stories through film. Join us for a night devoted to giving honor to the legacy of those who fought for our rights, despite theirs being denied.



A self-proclaimed lover of storytelling, **Danielle Jackson** has dedicated herself to mastering the craft through a visual medium. As a 2020-21 recipient of the Undergraduate Research Scholar Award, Danielle uses her double major in history and film to tell the stories of African American World War Veterans in the docuseries, *A Two-Front War*. She is devoted to portraying underrepresented populations on-screen as a way to generate empathy, and further understanding amidst diverse populations.

CENTER FOR
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Biology major receives first Jonathan Yavelow endowed scholarship

By **Tori Pender**

AFTER the passing of beloved biology professor Jonathan Yavelow, junior biology major George Afoakwah is the first recipient of the Jonathan Yavelow Endowed scholarship.

The Yavelow scholarship supports undergraduate science students with financial needs and was initiated by Yavelow's colleagues, alumni and friends to honor his legacy after the passing of the cherished biology professor on Oct. 29, 2020.

Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Kelly Bidle, said, "I reached out to a group of faculty who generously contributed to the scholarship from Jonathan's home department of Biology, Behavioral Neuroscience and Health Sciences to assist in the selection process. They were unanimous in their selection of George."

"I love the life sciences and I want to remain a student of the life sciences," explained Afoakwah.

The North Brunswick native intends to pursue a career in either molecular biology or cardiology. Afoakwah believes biology is the best major to get him to those career goals, and it is easier than biochemistry.

"I did an internship with [Jonathan] Karp in the summer at a hospital, I spent a lot of time in the cardiology departments and I really loved it," said Afoakwah. "I love the life sciences, I love to use my hands and my head, I love learning and teaching and I love high-intensity situations."

Afoakwah grew up in Ghana and came to America with his brother in 2016. Growing up, his mother was in academia which stimulated his curiosity.

"The culture in my home was different from the culture in my community. I was going through "Jane Eyre," "Bleak House," "Oliver Twist" and "Go Free Or Die" in 2009. A significant part of the Ghanaian culture that had a big influence on me was the emphasis on education. In my country, education is taken very seriously. Recalcitrant students are expelled or punished quite severely. Such students are not tolerated. We are taught to love and cherish our education," said Afoakwah.

"The impact this scholarship will have on my future is simply unfathomable," explained Afoakwah. "The honor is huge."



Courtesy of George Afoakwah

Junior biology major **George Afoakwah** said that former biology professor Jonathan Yavelow encouraged him to "hold steadfast in my goals of following a path very similar to his."

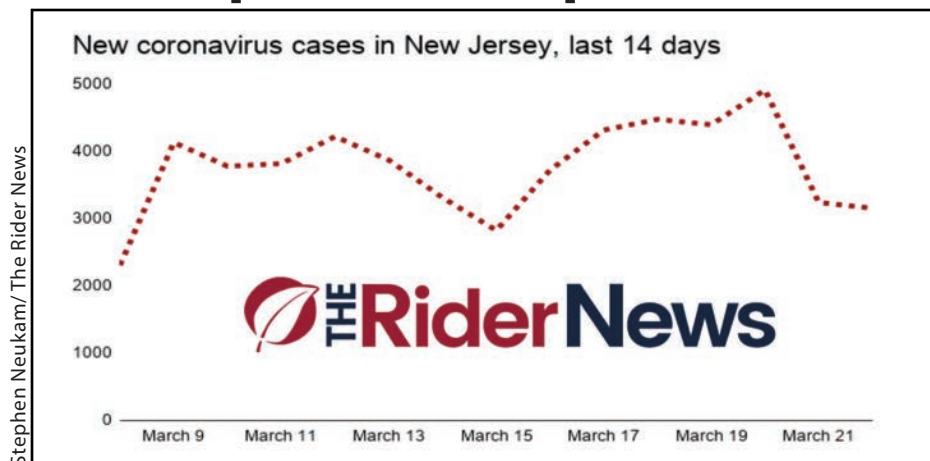
Afoakwah added, "I am extremely grateful for this. Yavelow dedicated his entire life to the life sciences and this has encouraged me to hold steadfast in my goals of following a path very similar to his."

The goal of the Yavelow scholarship is to help brilliant students with financial needs in their academic endeavors.

Bidle emphasized the importance of having scholarships and how they create a significant impact on talented students.

"When these students become successful professionals one day I hope they themselves become philanthropically minded and remember how valuable an education is at making a difference in a person's life," said Bidle. "That is truly the spirit in which I know Jonathan would have wanted these funds to be awarded."

Rider reports 19 new positive cases



Stephen Neukam/The Rider News

New Jersey's positive coronavirus cases have hit peaks and valleys over the last 14 days.

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Initiatives and Planning and Secretary to the Board Debbie Stasolla, the uptick in positive cases from March 8 to 14 was attributed to both the general student population and student-athletes but an increased focus on contact tracing within student-athlete circles led to a rise in quarantine and isolation numbers to skew toward on-campus students.

"Last week, we had tested an additional group of students in [Rider] athletics in order to see if we could find any more additional cases that we might not be aware of through contact tracing," Stasolla said. "So we [tested those students last week] and we did not feel the need to do that this week because we feel we're at the tail end of all of those close contacts that are related to some of the original positive cases."

Updated quarantine and isolation numbers from March 23 corroborated Stasolla's statement, as quarantine numbers dropped from 35 to 29, while isolation numbers went down from 23 to 17.

The university's recent spike in COVID-19 cases mirrored an overall trend in the state of New Jersey for positive cases, as the state had the highest positive cases per 100,000 residents in the United States from March 16 to March 23, according to the New York Times.

New Jersey's COVID-19 Activity Level Index (CALI), a weekly report that assesses the transmission risk in different regions of the state and a resource the university uses in assessing COVID-19 risk in the campus area, also reflected a recent transition toward a higher risk environment throughout the state.

Mercer County, along with Somerset and Hunterdon County, joined 11 other New Jersey counties in being designated as a high-risk area for COVID-19 transmission from previously being a moderate-risk area, New Jersey's CALI indicated on March 13.

According to Stasolla, the university met with a New Jersey Department of Health epidemiologist, who investigate disease outbreaks, and Lawrence Township Health officer Carol A. Chamberlain on March 22, as Rider does each week, but the epidemiologist did not indicate any changes in how the state is reacting to COVID-19 response.

Stasolla said that the university's "conservative" approach to stringently tracing close contacts to positive individuals will continue to be its best tool in curbing the spread of COVID-19 in the Rider community.

"The sooner that we can identify close contacts, then the sooner we can get people in quarantine, and perhaps the sooner that we can reduce any further transmission of the virus," Stasolla said.

Center for Diversity and Inclusion talks respectability politics

By **Olivia Nicoletti**

ASHLEY Archer, the assistant director of the Center for Diversity and Inclusion, spoke at a virtual event called "Conversation Cafe: It's The Respectability Politics for Me," on March 22 at 7 p.m to engage participants in open conversations revolving the modern day issues of how people represent themselves and why it matters. Eight people attended the virtual event.

Archer began her presentation explaining that respectability politics is the imputable societal acceptance and equal legal protection. Some people look at other values that are sent by a margin, a majority group, and try to attend to those in terms of tenses so that they can go ahead and get equal protection.

"We, as Black Americans, are told to dress a certain way or talk a certain way and use our language in order to be accepted by a dominant culture," Archer said during the event. "In turn, because of this, you're not deserving of equal rights or protection because you are not acting in a way that is deemed acceptable by society."

Sandra Bland, a Black woman who was declared to have committed suicide in a jail cell, was mentioned in accordance to this presentation. An open conversation was conducted based on whether her outcome could have been different if she acted a certain way around the police officers.

The main emphasis of this event was to draw attention to the masks that people must wear everyday in order to maintain a relationship with all the different groups they interact with.

"When we actually play into code-switching, which is really the notion of having to be something that is not authentic, in the space just to kind of achieve something you may see code-switching if folks are at work and there's a certain way that they want to maybe get ahead, they might have to act a certain way," Archer said during the event. "That may mean censoring yourself."

On the other hand, the event went

over the recent attention aimed at rap artists Cardi B and Megan Thee Stallion, when they performed at the 2021 Grammy's and decided to present the realist version of themselves.

Their performance was controversial and made some people question whether this display of provocative dancing was appropriate.

After further open conversations amongst the students and staff, everyone who wished to was able to express their feelings towards the matter.

Junior cyber security major, Dion Moore, attended the event and expressed that he has a better understanding of the double standards society holds and how it inhibits those to be their true selves.

"Respectability politics can be weaponized against women for doing something that is deemed socially not acceptable," Moore said. "It is important for anyone to be their true authentic self anywhere."

It became clear that the mention of these celebrities was to highlight the impact it specifically has on women while bringing a modern, realist example to the table. Archer was able to demonstrate how these issues still take place in the present day and how to bring more awareness to it.

"I think we should all understand the concept of respectability politics and use our platforms to help change systems that perpetuate this narrative," Archer said.

The advantage to these events is the ability for students to listen to their fellow classmates and get a deeper understanding through each other's eyes. It is important to listen to different voices and perspectives.

"I think the turnout was good," Archer said. "The smaller turnout allowed for the conversation to be a little bit more intimate and all voices were able to be heard."

Moore added to Archer's sentiment.

"Everyone in the crowd learned something new and will try to have more conversations around them," Moore said.

Mother and daughter opt to partake in clinical trial for COVID-19

By Stephen Neukam

KATY Timari labored down the steps of her home in Somerset, New Jersey. She felt nauseous, sore and weak — telltale signs of infection that had become all too alarming since the start of the coronavirus pandemic.

Thankfully, Timari, a 20-year-old sophomore health care policy major, wasn't ill with the virus. She was reeling from the effects of her participation in a clinical trial for a vaccine, just a day removed from receiving the first dose of Pfizer's two-shot remedy.

In October, Timari put her name on lists for a number of companies that were barreling forward with their vaccine trials. Just four hours later, she heard back from one of the world's wealthiest pharmaceutical companies, one that was displaying some of the most promise in developing protection against the virus. In a rush, she was involved in one of the country's most aggressive and consequential public health pushes ever.

Timari wasn't the only one in her house that entered the trial. She had been trying to convince her mother, Janet Timari, 50, to also get involved. After some research and some faith in her daughter, Janet Timari was signed up to get a shot.

Blind trial

In October, Pfizer was in stage three of its trial, the last step before the Food and Drug Administration could authorize the vaccine for emergency production. This meant the mother and daughter duo were under a blind trial, with each of them receiving shots but not knowing whether either got the vaccine or a saline placebo.

As Katy Timari hobbled down her steps, both she and her mother were convinced she had received the vaccine — possible side effects of the shot were some of the symptoms Katy Timari was showing.

"I was like, I had the vaccine, there's no way I didn't have it," said Katy Timari.

Janet Timari was fine, and they both assumed she had the placebo.

"That night [after the shot] she was feeling miserable. I was like, I bet you're the one who got vaccinated. [She's a] young college student and they were probably really excited to have that age group represented," said Janet Timari. "When it was my turn, I felt nothing ... I came home and I felt fine."

Taking control of a pandemic

Katy Timari had followed the government response to the pandemic for months. On top of her health care

policy major, she also studies political science. While she and her family took pains to protect themselves from infection, she watched as the country struggled to cope.

"The partisanship in government right now has completely almost halted the ability to get anything done in a timely manner, even when it's objectively not a partisan issue — I don't think a disease or a pandemic or any of the issues surrounding COVID [-19] are partisan issues," said Katy Timari. "Fact [and science] became a matter of debate, and it's been really unhealthy for the system."

While millions around the country lost their livelihoods because of the fallout, Janet Timari, who works in the public school system, said her family was lucky enough to not lose any employment.

However, as most other people felt, the effects of the pandemic restrictions were isolating. After being initially reluctant to enter the trials, Janet Timari found a sense of power and purpose in taking an active role in finding a solution to the disease.

"We had spent months just being afraid and in our homes," said Janet Timari. "I got on board to support [Katy], and maybe to take a little bit of control for myself. You walk around being nervous for so long that it felt good to say, 'I'm doing something to try to make it better.'"

Placebo effect

As the trial drew to a close, it was time for the company to "unblind" participants and let them know if they received the vaccine or the saline placebo.

Janet Timari got her call first. After weeks of being convinced she was not vaccinated, the voice on the other line gave her the news — she had received the vaccine. She was good to go.

Janet Timari double-checked that the company wasn't mistaking her for her daughter. Sure enough, Janet Timari was now vaccinated against COVID-19.

"They had to read me my secret code and my information to convince me because I was so certain that I was in the placebo group," said Janet Timari.

Katy Timari was still convinced she had the vaccine. When her call came, she was shocked that she was in the placebo group.

"I had completely fallen for it," said Katy Timari. "When I ended up getting the actual vaccine in February, I had symptoms, and they felt just like the placebo symptoms, which is pretty funny."

A way forward

As of February, the U.S. government has purchased 300 million doses of the Pfizer vaccine that both Katy and Janet Timari were part of the trial for. As the country attempts to distribute the vaccine as quickly as possible, Katy Timari appreciates that she was able to take part in a historic moment in public health.

"I was excited to help the results move forward pretty quickly," said Katy Timari.

Katy Timari's father, a part-time firefighter, was also able to be vaccinated since the end of the trials.

Katy Timari moved back to campus for the spring semester after spending the fall at home. While she is vaccinated, she stressed that students at the university need to continue to take the pandemic seriously and not compromise health protocols while vaccines are being distributed.

"A lot of students, now that they are back at college, are starting to take things a little bit more relaxed than they would at home," said Katy Timari. "There is still a variation that can happen with the spread and that is really worrying me, especially at college. It is really important that people take this in stride."

For Janet Timari, her experience in the trial and the pandemic has renewed her belief in the importance of health care and public policy and her daughter's future in shaping those fields.

"It is just so critical that we're aware and able to manage and control these situations," said Janet Timari. "I know [Katy] is also focused on equitable health care in this country, so I definitely think that this pandemic has raised awareness for the field that she's going in."



Courtesy of Katy Timari

Janet Timari (Left) was hesitant to enter the vaccine trials but relented and followed her daughter Katy Timari (Right) into receiving the shots.

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Summer Sessions

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**RIDER.EDU/
SUMMER**

Students virtually serve delicious treats at 107.7 The Bronc's Dessert Wars

By Sarah Siock

THREE Rider students virtually battled it out in a live bake-off, on March 19, by preparing their tastiest dessert recipes in hopes of being crowned the winner of 107.7 The Bronc's Dessert Wars.

While the annual baking competition typically takes place in-person at Daly Dining Hall, the radio station chose to keep the tradition alive despite the coronavirus pandemic and host a virtual installment of Dessert Wars.

"The one thing we wanted to do was try to give the students the experience as close [as] we can to what we used to do. I think it helps to give people a sense of normalcy. It's not perfect but it keeps students engaged whether they are at home or on campus," said John Mozes, the general manager of The Bronc.

This year's competition required participants to prepare a dessert that contained the ingredient flour. From Feb. 15 through March 12, students had the chance to submit the recipe of their dish on the radio station's website. Once the submission entry period closed, a panel of judges, that consisted of staff members from Rider's food service company Gourmet Dining, selected three students to be the Dessert War finalists.

Chosen from 22 submission entries, this year's finalists were: junior business management major Hannah Waksman, with liege waffles and wild berry cheesecake ice cream, senior marketing major David Brooks, who whipped up lighter than air doughnuts cascaded with warm glaze and Nutella filled holes and Gabrielle Orszulak, a graduate student studying business communication, who baked tropical pineapple upside-down doughnuts with toasted coconut ice cream.

From March 14 through March 19 the Rider community voted for its favorite finalist's recipe on The Bronc's website. The finalists were given one last opportunity to persuade voters with a live 10-minute baking demonstration over Zoom — as the contestants prepared their dishes, voting remained open.

While there was no other option except for the competition to be virtual, Mozes said the new format does offer some benefits that are absent from the in-person Dessert Wars.

"It does let you see the contestants' personalities. It gives you a chance to see them in a different light," said Mozes, who asked the contestants questions as they prepared their desserts over Zoom. "When you see them at Daly's [Dining Hall], for the live competition, they're exhausted because they've been on their feet for six hours making desserts samples. What I have noticed is that virtually we can engage more with them."

Ultimately, Orszulak was crowned the winner and named Rider's premiere student pastry chef. Orszulak's win was a long time coming, as she has submitted a recipe every year since 2018 when she was still completing her undergraduate degree at Rider. However, this was Orszulak's first year being named a finalist.

Orszulak said, "I definitely have a passion for both cooking and baking. I enjoy being the friend or family member who makes cupcakes or a cake for someone's birthday or even just baking cookies on a Friday night. I feel that my recipe really fits the theme of the challenge well and does a nice job in honoring this week that would've been spring



Junior business management major **Hannah Waksman** shows off her liege waffles and wild berry cheesecake ice cream during Dessert Wars.

break." Orszulak explained she found her recipe while looking through a dessert book, and she prepared the dish for her first time during the competition. Her demonstration included making the donuts from scratch.

"The recipe presented me with a fun new way to challenge myself in baking," said Orszulak.

As the winner Orszulak won several prizes including a \$300 gift card to K.K. Sweets, a bakery in Hamilton, New Jersey, and a Pepsi blue Cycle Force mountain bike. Second place went to Waksman and third place went to Brooks, with each winning a gift card to K.K. Sweets as well.

"I've wanted to be picked since my first year at Rider and I finally had that chance. I enjoy the competitive aspect, but I also just really wanted to have fun doing something I enjoy," said Orszulak.

Students discuss the obstacles faced by women in hip-hop

By Christian McCarville

FROM legends like Missy Elliott and Lauryn Hill to modern-day stars like Nicki Minaj and Cardi B, women in hip-hop have played an important role in fighting for gender equality.

"Women in hip-hop have always mentioned and advocated for gender equality," said junior accounting major Sleyker Tarifa. "In the early '90s, Queen Latifah released a song titled U.N.I.T.Y where she spoke out against disrespect towards women in our society."

Rider's Center for Diversity and Inclusion (CDI) has been orchestrating a series of events throughout March in celebration of Womxn's History Month 2021. The spelling of "womxn" is a nod to include those of all gender identities who identify as a woman.

As part of Womxn's History Month 2021, CDI held a virtual conference titled "Real Hot Girl Ish: A Discussion About Womxn in Hip-Hop Culture" on March 17 at 5 p.m. The event was designed to showcase the influence that women have had in the genre of rap and hip-hop and the obstacles that they have faced in a male-dominated environment.

"This event began with an overview of the amazing women pioneers in hip-hop music," said Tarifa. "We discussed rappers like MC Lyte, Queen Latifah, Lauren Hill, Missy Elliott and many more. Our focus in the first part of the discussion was the obstacles women faced simply because they were women."

Junior computer science major Liz O'Hara commented on the major themes of the discussion.

"This event went to prove that even though womxn may be few in numbers in the industry, when standing strong and unified together they can make an impact and be legends in their own right," said O'Hara. "Whether it be the hip-hop industry or even extended to other male-dominated spaces, these womxn inspire future generations and show that they are essential."

The event also touched on how women are excluded from the conversation when debating the top 10 rappers of all time. This is frustrating for those that know of the significant contributions that women made to the genre.

"In one of our discussions, we mentioned how using the term 'Female Rapper' tends to put women in these boxes where they aren't allowed to freely express themselves because society will look down on them," said Tarifa. "At the end of the day they are rappers. We don't call rappers like Jay-Z a 'male rapper,' we simply call him a rapper. Not only does this term exclude women from the conversation, but it's not an inclusive term. There are multiple LGBTQIA+ rappers that might

not identify with the term 'Female Rapper.'" The discussion shifted focus to hip-hop and the Latinx community, partnering with the Latin American Student Organization (LASO). They conversed about how women in hip-hop are too often used solely as "chorus girls." This is highly degrading and limits the contribution of the women featured in the song. Colorism and its impact on women was another significant topic of discussion.

The song "WAP" by Cardi B and Megan Thee Stallion was another area of conversation. Released in 2020, this song was met with backlash and controversy.

There were some that found the song to be inappropriate and disturbing. Tarifa argues that this backlash is indicative of the double standards held towards women in hip-hop.

"Within the same topic of misogyny and double standards, we led a conversation on how society tends to police women who unapologetically own their bodies," said Tarifa. "The same rappers that tend to release songs that are just as vulgar, do not receive the same criticism [as male rappers]."

Tarifa explained how this event fits into the context of the other Womxn's History Month events being held this March.

"Overall many of our events discuss women's history, achievements and experiences in their specific field," said Tarifa. "We did the same with Real Hot Girl Ish in the context of Hip-Hop Culture. It is time that we start recognizing women in hip-hop music and giving them the credit they deserve. There are so many amazing women rappers that get overlooked simply because they are women."



As part of Womxn's History Month 2021, "Real Hot Girl Ish: A Discussion About Womxn in Hip-Hop Culture" showcases women's achievements in hip-hop and the obstacles women have overcome to make an impact in a genre heavily populated with male artists.

Courtesy of The Center for Diversity and Inclusion

Gabrielle Orszulak named Rider's premiere pastry chef



Graduate student **Gabrielle Orszulak** completed tropical pineapple upside-down doughnuts with toasted coconut ice cream dessert.



Gabrielle Orszulak prepares her winning dish during the live competition.



Dessert Wars winner **Gabrielle Orszulak** fries pineapple slices for her baking demonstration.

Courtesy of 107.7 The Bronc

The Rider News/Sarah Siock

The Rider News/Sarah Siock

THE Rider News

Come to our weekly zoom meetings:
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The Rider News/Arianna Marino

Spring with no break: 13 weeks

COVID-19 this, COVID-19 that. I am starting to think that the word normal no longer has relevance to our vocabulary. This past year has been filled with abnormality under the guise of restoration.

From Zoom classes and the elimination of a pass/fail option, to removing this year's spring break — nothing has been normal. As expected, the university feared the rise in positive cases if it allowed spring break this year, rightfully so. But to suggest students grind for three months straight without any sort of disengagement is wishful thinking.

The university sent out a campus-wide email just as our Christmas break was concluding:

“Unfortunately, the uphill marathon of this pandemic continues into the spring semester. As you are well aware, we made the decision to postpone the beginning of the spring semester and cancel spring break with the hope that the spike in COVID-19 cases due to the holidays would be decreasing as well as the need to curtail travel among our students during the spring semester. As a result of this decision, classes will run 13 weeks straight with no break.”

According to NBC News, San Diego State University (SDSU) has become the latest on the list of four-year institutions across the country to cancel spring break because of COVID-19 safety concerns. Some schools, like SDSU, have gotten rid of spring break altogether, a move criticized by students who say it could have a detrimental effect on their mental health. SDSU has countered this criticism by giving students single days off over the same period, but most students said it is not enough. Other institutions that have canceled their spring breaks include Florida State University, Ohio State University, Boston University and the University of Michigan, where students will receive two one-day “well-being breaks” without any scheduled academic activities in February and March.

Rider has not implemented any well-being breaks, although some professors have administered their own wellness breaks for students, but not all.

I wanted to use this editorial space to highlight some student voices from our community about how they feel about 13 weeks straight with no break.

Senior journalism major Andriana Rice-Gilmore

Last year, I was really looking forward to spring break because my friends and I were going to Canada, we had everything paid for and we were super excited for it. Of course COVID-19 took its own course and it ended up sending us straight home without even returning back to campus. This year, I was excited to think that we were going to have a spring break because things are starting to open up again, there were new ways to protect ourselves and take on safety precautions.

I'm a senior and I wanted to do something enjoyable with my friends as a last hurrah, but now that we don't have a spring break or any break for that matter is very overwhelming. I feel like I'm drowning in my classes right now. I feel like there is always something to do and now it is being rushed. It has taken away from the enjoyment of college, especially my senior year. I feel like some professors have been kind enough to not add too much work and there are others that genuinely just don't care and expect us to still meet deadlines. I don't think they realize how much of a toll it takes on students.

Freshman English major Kate McCormick

I'm much more busy this semester than last semester, and not having a break is intimidating. It's important to be able to have a break from schoolwork. I've been feeling overwhelmed balancing school with work, and a lot of times due dates for my classes line up to be on the same days. I wish Rider had implemented something like other schools where they put in sporadic rest days, at least something to ease the mental strain of students.

Graduate and wellness coach Liz Curcio

As a health and wellness coach and recent grad of Rider, I sense that eliminating spring break is already having negative consequences on the current student body. While I understand the reason behind why Rider and many other schools have decided to eliminate spring break, I do think a few days off scattered throughout the month of March/April, would've been a good alternative. I believe that taking this valuable time away is going to lead to “burnout” in some students.

Rider students are serious about their studies and are always achieving high standards. I worry that these students are going to complete assignments that don't show their full potential or just in general- begin to have a lack of motivation. The world around us is already stressed out enough. Adding fuel to the fire isn't going to make things better.

Senior biology major Saifu Alharazim

When I first heard that we didn't have spring break I wasn't surprised. I didn't think much of it at the beginning of the semester, but as the semester progressed, I began to wish that there was a break. Having no spring break hasn't affected me in any way, it's just something that I normally look forward to. I understand why the school would decide to take away spring break, but in my opinion, I feel like we should've still had one. People are still traveling, so having no break didn't stop those who wanted to travel. A whole semester without break is long, but I understand the reason why we didn't have one.

Opinion Editor Qur'an Hansford

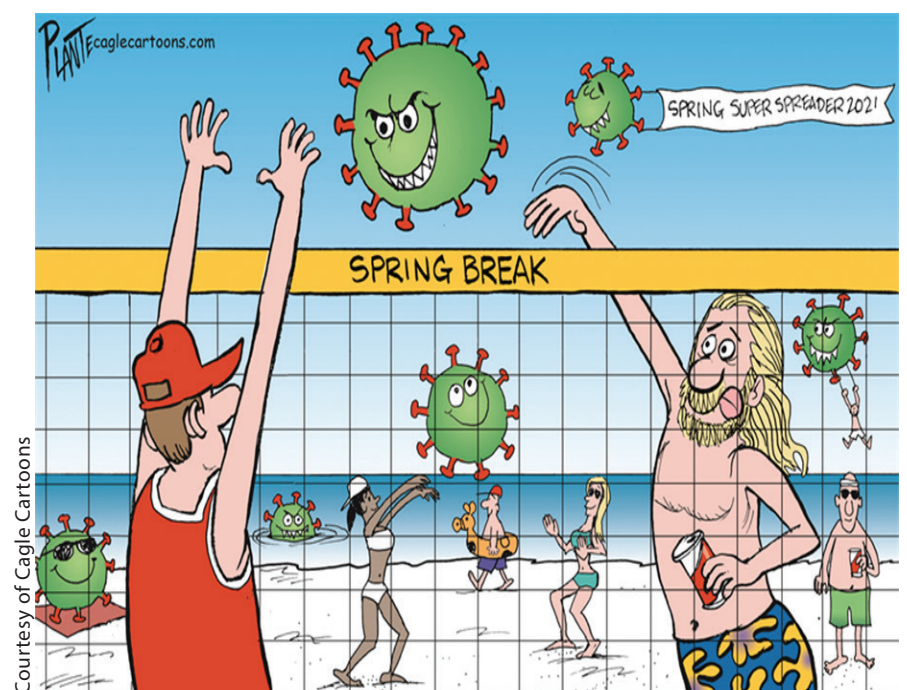
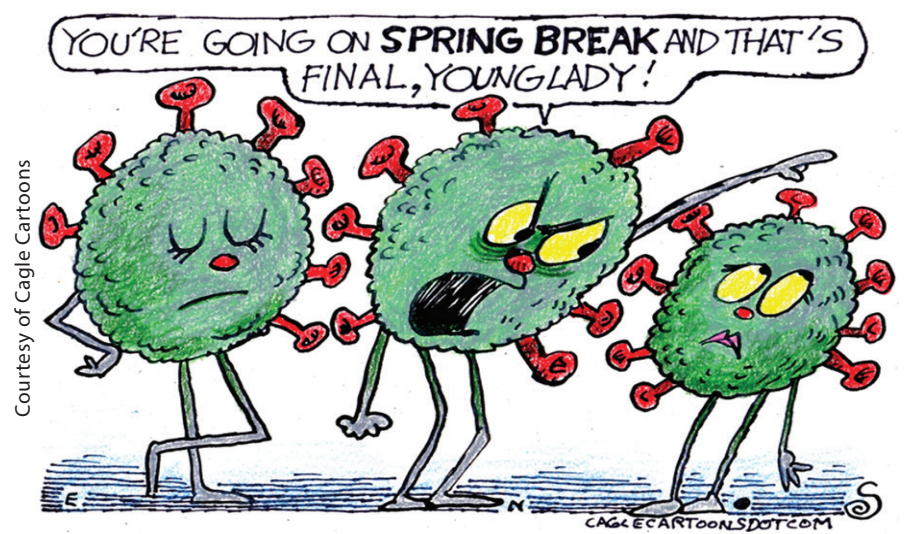
My spring break was just going to be filled with retail and rest — there was no beautiful getaway or special plans, just simply a break. I need a break from scheduled meetings, from Google Docs and from Canvas alerts. I wanted to aimlessly watch movies or online shop, now I cannot look at my laptop without thinking about school work. I cannot even sleep without feeling guilty of missing something that is not due. School has consumed every possible sector of life, influences every second of my day. I don't even know how to relax. The two days that we get at the end of each week is nothing but prep time for the week, not winding down but rather getting an early start.

With event planning for my organization, writing for the paper, working, as well as being a full-time student trying to manage a social life, finding time to myself is practically fictional. How can one possibly excel in all these areas without proper care of themselves? This cannot possibly be the environment suitable for young scholars but if it is one thing college does teach you, it is the reality of many overworked and underpaid adults in America.

If you can, find time to set aside your own break. You'll need it.

*This editorial expresses the unanimous opinion of The Rider News Editorial Board.
This week's editorial was written by Opinion Editor Qur'an Hansford*

Qur'an H



FRESHMEN FINDINGS

COVID-19 relief package: Where is the stimulus, Joe?

ON March 11, President Joe Biden signed into law a \$1.9 trillion COVID-19 relief package, which means many Americans across the country will be receiving their third stimulus check.

The first stimulus, signed in March 2020, afforded individuals up to \$1,200 and the second stimulus, passed in December 2020, distributed up to \$600 per individual, both depending on adjusted gross incomes and economic variables.

The 2021 relief package under Biden, coming in at \$1,400 stimulus checks, induced some confusion after promises for a \$2,000 check — until it was revealed that this additional payment is meant to subset the previous \$600, bringing the total up to \$2,000.

In this third bill, individuals making less than \$75,000 annually, married couples making less than \$150,000 and heads of households making less than \$112,500 in their adjusted gross income are eligible to receive the full stimulus payment. This package does, however, phase out the amount of eligible recipients faster than its predecessors. Individuals making \$80,000, married couples making \$160,000 and heads of household making \$120,000 will not be eligible for the stimulus, despite how many children they may have.

Democrats like Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY) expressed disappointment at the lack of a \$2,000 payout for the third round of stimulus, but they were able to push for more inclusive support in this third round.

Among multiple improvements, one of the most important differences in this round of stimulus is the support for adult dependents. For each adult dependent over the age of 17, families will receive

an additional \$1,400. This relief package also includes unemployment support and additional child support.

This additional support for dependents has been approved by many because it gives support to demographics not previously supported in the stimulus — people like college students, elderly relatives and dependent parents.

But while these benefits are great, there is still the issue of those who won't be receiving them — specifically the homeless population that is eligible for this round of stimuli, but will have to jump through hoops to receive it. Following trends from National Alliance to End Homelessness, over half a million people in the U.S. are living unsheltered, putting them at risk to miss out on the stimulus.

Stimulus distribution is based on tax forms and many people living with housing insecurity don't file taxes because they don't make a significant amount of income. While non-filers can receive their payment by claiming the stimulus check as a rebate on their 2020 tax return, and anyone without housing making less than \$72,000 can file for free through the IRS or utilize assistance programs, filing taxes gets difficult without a home address.

There are ways around this issue, like using shelters or worship places to hold mail, but there's no doubt that this system has made it incredibly hard to get assistance to people who may need it most. This issue is just another way that the pandemic has highlighted the failings in our country's systems.

For the average American, it's safe to say that a \$1,400 check isn't going to be turned down, but it's still important to recognize that a collective \$3,200

from the three stimulus periods, for those that even qualified for all three, is not at all conducive to supporting Americans through an entire year of this pandemic. We just shouldn't be thanking the government for doing the bare minimum, if that.

For a lot of people, this stimulus money is going to help pay off some odds and ends or short-term bills, but at such a low amount, it's not going to make any drastic changes in their way of life depending on where they are already sitting financially.

I've heard people mentioning just using the money for vacation because it wasn't enough to put toward anything long-term. This situation obviously gets worse for those who are experiencing unemployment or medical debt, where a payment so low is barely going to make a dent, again recentering the fact that while citizens are all across the board financially, this pandemic has taken an economic toll on many.

*Kate McCormick
freshman English major*

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SOFTBALL

Rider starts 3-1 for first time under Ortega



Carolo Pascale/The Rider News

Sophomore infielder **Elena Gonzalez** was named MAAC Player of the Week on March 22.

By **Carolo Pascale and Dylan Manfre**

AFTER a long-awaited return to the field, Head Coach Davon Ortega and Rider University women's softball started the season 3-1 for the first time in Ortega's tenure, after putting up 30 runs throughout back-to-back doubleheaders vs Quinnipiac University on March 20 and March 21.

Game 1

In game one of the season, sophomore outfielder Alyssa Ansara got the Broncos going in the bottom of the first, executing a great bunt, and later scored thanks to a wild pitch, giving the Broncos a 1-0 lead.

Taking the momentum into the second, freshman second baseman Kennedy Jarrard smacked a double deep into left field in her first-career at-bat for her first hit of her young college softball career.

"Not many people go out there and get a hit their first at-bat their freshman year," said Ortega about Jarrard's first hit. "She brings a different level of excitement and energy, and everybody's surrounding her because she's just a good person and a really great teammate."

Jarrard reflected on getting her first hit as a Bronc, during her very first at-bat, in her very first college game.

"It was really exciting because I haven't played a game since last March and my first at-bat and my first college game, getting a double was pretty nice," Jarrard said. "It was just a great feeling and having my teammates in the dugout hype me up, that was the best feeling in the world."

The game was largely stagnant until the top of the fifth, when Quinnipiac scored six runs, putting the Broncos down 6-2.

Senior pitcher Debra Jones pitched a complete game regardless of that half-inning, allowing seven runs, three earned and striking out five batters.

Rider scored two runs in the bottom of the fifth to bring the score to 6-4, but the Bobcats escaped with a 7-5 victory.

Game 2

Game two of the season didn't start as good as the first one had for the Broncos.

Quinnipiac scored two runs in the bottom of the first, after two bases-loaded walks by junior pitcher

Brooklyn Trujillo-Quintana, giving Quinnipiac a 2-0 lead.

Trujillo-Quintana also pitched a complete game for Rider, allowing five runs, four of which earned.

Rider got one back in the bottom of the first off of a single from sophomore catcher Elena Gonzalez, making the score 2-1.

With the score of 3-1 in the bottom of the third inning, Rider loaded the bases as sophomore catcher Chaela Crowder came into the game to pinch-hit for Ansara. Crowder hit a double deep into the outfield, giving the Broncos a 4-3 lead.

"That was so big. And it was so big for her. And that felt so good. We kept our energy up when we needed it to be up, which is pretty big for us," Ansara said of the momentum swinging double.

Rider extended their lead to 5-3, but Quinnipiac scored two runs tying the game at 5 in the top of the fourth inning.

In the bottom of the inning, Rider pulled ahead when graduate student outfielder Marigliano scored on a wild pitch to make the score 6-5.

Rider's defense stayed strong and the Broncos hung on to win 8-5.

Ortega was pleased about both of Ansara's and Gonzalez's performances on Saturday.

"They went out and they were aggressive. Alyssa [Ansara] and her speed is what makes her really successful and she can put the ball anywhere in play," Ortega said. "As far as Elena [Gonzalez] is concerned, we knew that she could be that kind of hitter. She was focused, and she came ready to play today."

Gonzalez was named MAAC Player of the Week, went 8/13 hitting, had seven RBIs, and scored four runs of her own throughout the entire weekend.

Game 3

Sophomore hurler Jackie Cal had only made three career appearances before COVID-19 shut down her freshman season. In her return to the circle, the pitcher demonstrated a solid four innings tossing three blank frames in Rider's 8-7 win over Quinnipiac in the top half of March 21's doubleheader.

She got through the second and third inning only facing three batters. The third inning proved to be her best of the day only tossing 11 pitches and sent the

Bobcats down in the order.

In her final two innings, she gave up three runs, two of which came off a booming home run from Kayla Thomas.

The bottom of the fifth is when Rider flexed its offense scoring four runs in the inning. Infielder Elena Gonzalez, who finished the day 2-for-3 with a trio of RBIs, was responsible for one of those runs.

"I felt comfortable with the pitches today," Gonzalez said through a hoarse voice from her loud cheering. "I just felt great about being able to put the ball in play for my team."

Gonzalez added that she was extremely excited to return to the field after the pandemic canceled her freshman season.

Game 4

Extra momentum called for extra innings after a tense seventh frame that featured Rider and Quinnipiac tied at 7.

The final frame proved just as exciting for the Broncos who ended the doubleheader with a 9-8 win in eight innings.

Junior catcher Grace Stansfield came to the plate having never hit a walk-off in her Rider career. That changed March 21 with a single to left field.

The bases were loaded and it was the perfect stage for a new milestone.

"We faced this pitcher four games by the end of today so we all kind of knew what she was coming at us with," Stansfield said. "I think this was a good way to end our first opening weekend because now we can take that energy from the end of that game into the rest of our practice this week and into next week and hope that we can continue playing like we were playing today."

Stansfield finished the March 21 doubleheader 3-for-9 at the plate with two runs and an RBI.

The Broncos will play four games against the Niagara Purple Eagles in another set of doubleheaders on March 27 and 28.

BASEBALL

Broncs win three of four to begin season

By Shaun Chornobroff

OPENING day for the Rider baseball team usually involves a non-conference opponent and a feeling out process for a new team. But in the 2021 season, with the weight of a pandemic still affecting the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC), Rider was tasked with facing the Niagara Purple Eagles to open up the season on March 20 and 21.

The Broncs took the challenge in stride, winning three out of four games against the Purple Eagles, flashing elite potential at the plate and on the mound in their first matchup with Niagara since a three-game series in March of 2019.

March 20 Doubleheader

Rider sent out its ace, senior Pete Soporowski, for the opening game of its 2021 campaign. The lefthander, who was a superstar in 2020, continued to showcase his talent, with an eight-inning complete game shutout, leading the team to a 1-0 victory.

Soporowski's performance led to him being named MAAC Pitcher of the Week on March 22.

"It was definitely a great feeling to be back out there," Soporowski said. "My strategy on the mound was throwing strikes and getting ahead. I know if I can do that and they put the ball into play, my teammates are going to make the plays."

Soporowski was dominant, striking out nine batters and only allowing two hits on the day. The veteran looked untouchable for the entire game, the closest Niagara seemed to score was in the fourth inning, but a savvy play by redshirt freshman infielder Jordan Erbe, followed by a strikeout snuffed out any opportunity.

The game was at a stalemate and even went an extra inning, but the Purple Eagles fluttered in the bottom of the eighth.

After an error on a routine pop-up, a single and a walk, Rider had bases loaded and graduate transfer Sean McGeehan stepped up to the plate. The transfer from St. John marked his Rider debut with a game-ending walk, handing the Broncs a 1-0 victory.

Rider secured a sweep of the first double-header with an 11-5 victory, which was more notable for sloppy defensive play than strong hitting.

At the end of the second inning, Rider did not have a single hit, but a multitude of mistakes by the Purple Eagles gave the Broncs a 5-2 lead that they may not have earned.

Niagara cut the lead to 5-4, but a throwing error, followed by an RBI single from McGeehan, catalyzed



Photo courtesy of Rider Athletics

Senior pitcher **Pete Soporowski** has nine strikeouts in eight innings pitched this season.

a five-run fourth inning that gave the Broncs a 10-4 lead they refused to relinquish.

McGeehan's first four games already showed star potential, with the Hamilton, New Jersey, native hitting .333 with five RBIs and three runs scored.

"I remember in high school, I've heard from people locally that have seen him play a lot more than I have that he can do those things," Head Coach Barry Davis said. "If you come out and watch the games and he's out there, you're going to see that every ballgame."

March 21 Doubleheader

Frank Doelling proved that the Broncs had more than one ace in his first start, opening his junior campaign with a shutout victory, striking out eight batters and taking a no-hitter into the fifth inning in the process.

"I felt like I threw the ball well today, I felt like I got stronger as the game went on and that enabled me to get the game shutout," Doelling said of his star performance.

Unlike Soporowski's stunning performance, Doelling was handed nine runs of support in his dominating display.

Rider failed to secure the sweep after winning its first three games, falling 8-3 in the last game of the four-game set.

Niagara got runs in three of the first four innings

but didn't capitalize on any further opportunities, and the Broncs found themselves grateful to only be down 3-0 heading into the fifth inning.

"We got out of there 3-0, and it easily could have been 6, 7, 8-nothing," Davis said after the doubleheader. "They had opportunities to knock in runs and they weren't able to do it, so we feel fortunate that we made the pitches and made the plays."

With the Broncs trailing 3-1 heading into the ninth, they needed their pitching to hold firm for one more inning, but the bullpen collapsed, allowing five runs in the top of the inning.

Niagara's offensive beatdown in the top of the ninth made the two runs Rider scored in the bottom half of the inning nothing more than a consolation prize.

"Our bullpen just kind of unraveled and the ball started finding holes and we just started throwing the ball around," Davis said. "We keep it within four to one, even five to one, you have a chance and we ended up getting a couple guys on. Five to one is one grand slam away from tying the game, eight to one is two grand slams to win and that's hard to do."

Rider will look to continue its success and make a statement against one of the MAAC's elite baseball programs when it faces Quinnipiac at Sonny Pittaro Field on March 27 and 28.

MEN'S SOCCER

Rider moves to 2-0 after shutout against Iona

By Logan VanDine

THE men's soccer team was not deterred by poor weather on March 18, beating the Iona Gaels 1-0, securing a record of 2-0 to start an unconventional spring season.

The game was scoreless until freshman Guillaume Vacter was able to break the ice off, with an assist from senior midfielder Taner Bay, and score the game's only goal on a free kick in the 54 minute.

It was enough, as Vacter, who was named Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) Co-Rookie of the Week and the rest of the Rider defense, helped the Broncs record their second consecutive shutout.

"On each free kick we were dangerous because the Iona defenders were very high on the field and there was a lot of space in their back. This week we worked on the free kicks and we all knew where Taner was supposed to put the ball," said Vacter of his first-career goal. "Taner gave a very good ball and I just ran where I saw the space and just touched the ball. The game was close without many occasions to score, so the free kicks were the good way to score."

Although the weather was unfavorable, Head Coach Charlie Inverso said sometimes the conditions play a factor.

"We always tell them the two things we don't want them to take them out of the game, the referee and the weather," Inverso said. "So yes, sometimes the teams show up adversely with the weather and the other thing was sometimes it is hard with the ball skipping a little bit, but I don't think it really impacted either team all that much."

Vacter echoed Inverso's thoughts.

"I think for a soccer player the weather doesn't mean anything. If we want to be a good team and have a good season we can't change our mind just if it's raining, so I think we played with the same energy as if it was good weather," Vacter explained.

After a tightly-contested first half, Inverso spoke about the halftime conversation and the adjustments he thought they needed to have a victory at the final whistle.

"We wanted to get guys up higher and be a little bit more daring and getting behind the defense and getting more people in the box," Inverso said. "You know it's difficult to get goals in if you don't have people in the box, so I think we made a good adjustment with that."

The shutout was the team's second-consecutive shutout to start the season, a reward for the effort that

the defenders put in for 90 minutes.

"For me, all the players on this team are on the same path and want the same thing, despite a lot of internationals we all are good friends and we want to win together," Vacter said. "We know that we have good players and with the good spirit in this team we can make a good season."

Senior goalkeeper Pablo Gatinois had three saves in the contest.

Vacter has bonded with his upperclassmen teammates during his first year in Lawrenceville.

"I mean, I don't see a lot of differences on the field between freshmen or seniors. As French, my older teammates help me with the language or help me to understand some tactics that I can't understand. But the older teammates are very important to communicate and lead the team," Vacter said.

The Broncs will now hit the road for the first time this season as they head to West Long Branch, New Jersey, to take on Monmouth on March 25.

Sports

ONLINE

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL SEASON REVIEW
Sports Editor Dylan Manfre reviews the Rider women's basketball season.
 FIND THE STORY ONLINE AT THERIDERNEWS.COM

WRESTLING

Dellavecchia reaches national title match



Larry Slater/Rider Athletics

Graduate student **Jesse Dellavecchia** became the first Rider wrestler to reach a national title match, competing in the 157 pound weight class.

By **Mike Ricchione**

As millions around the world watched college basketball to find the next great feel-good story within the sport, the Cinderella story of college wrestling came through Lawrenceville.

On March 19, graduate student Jesse Dellavecchia ended Ryan Deakin of Northwestern's 30-match winning streak by a pin to get to where no other Rider Bronc has been before: the finals of the NCAA Championship.

Dellavecchia's performance headlined the wrestling team's performance at the NCAA Championships March 18-20.

Scoreless after the first period, the top-seeded Deakin took bottom to start the middle frame and soon regretted it.

"[The move] was a crab ride. Something that my dad taught me when I was 5 years old and it's been my best move since I was a kid," Dellavecchia said of the maneuver used. "[I'm] just very comfortable there and I fell right into it, [it] just worked out."

Dellavecchia got Deakin's shoulder blades to the mat 18 seconds into the second period. Northwestern threw a challenging brick at the end of the match, but lost the challenge.

"I was a little nervous at first because I've seen some crazy stuff happen at this tournament," Dellavecchia said about the review. "Once I realized it could get overturned, I was just trying to get focused again."

With the victory, Dellavecchia became the first Rider wrestler finalist in program history. No other wrestler had advanced past the semifinals before. Dellavecchia went on to face Iowa State's David Carr for the title at 157 pounds.

"I feel great, I felt nothing like that before it was just amazing and I just feel honored and I'm so happy to be wrestling here," Dellavecchia said after his upset

victory.

"Jesse deserves this, he has dedicated his life to the sport and has been completely devoted to our program and university from day one on campus," said Head Coach John Hangey.

Dellavecchia started his career as a 141 pound member of the wrestling team at Binghamton University.

Dellavecchia left the Bearcats and became a member of the Rider wrestling team, since then he has become arguably the school's most decorated wrestler. With his victory against Deakin, Dellavecchia rewarded the coaches who showed constant faith in him and got him to the pinnacle of collegiate wrestling.

"It's crazy," Dellavecchia said. "I have such good coaches and I'm just so happy to have them and they really have changed my career and I'm so thankful for that."

"We are all just really tough people," Dellavecchia explained. "We're just tough and we know how to have fun, it's a really good mixture and it made me love the sport again."

Before the semifinals, Dellavecchia earned a pair of decisions against North Carolina's Joshua McClure and Oregon State's Hunter Willits in the first two rounds.

Dellavecchia later earned All-American honors with his quarterfinal victory over Brady Berge of Penn State by injury default. Dellavecchia had just scored a takedown when the match was stopped for an injury.

The title period between Dellavecchia and Carr was scoreless after the opening frame. Carr escaped from starting down in the second period before taking Dellavecchia down for a 3-0 advantage.

From the takedown, no other positions were wrestled as Carr kept applying pressure on top from

the takedown and riding Dellavecchia out in the third period for the full two minutes.

Riding time made the final score 4-0 in Carr's favor.

Senior heavyweight Ethan Laird was seeded inside the top eight but failed to achieve All-American status.

Laird won his first two matches with decisions over Buffalo's Sam Schuyler and North Carolina State's Deonte Wilson before losing to eventual finalist Mason Parris of Michigan in the quarterfinals.

Laird had one more chance to make the podium in the blood round but lost to Ohio State's Tate Orndorff, 7-2.

Redshirt senior Jonathan Tropea, redshirt sophomore Richie Koehler, freshman McKenzie Bell and redshirt sophomore Jake Silverstein didn't fare well in the tournament, going a combined 0-8 at 125, 133, 141 and 165 pounds respectively.

With 22 points, the Broncs finished 20th as a team, second-highest mark by a Mid-American Conference (MAC) team behind Missouri and second-most by a mid-major school, trailing Northern Iowa by 2.5 points.

Rider ended the season qualifying six wrestlers for the NCAA tournament with one finalist and one wrestler making it to the blood round, which is in the consolation bracket where the winners are All-Americans.

Dellavecchia, Tropea and graduate student Matt Correnti were celebrated during senior night against Drexel on Feb. 11, but their futures are still in the air because this season was a free year because of the extra year of eligibility received from the NCAA.

After a historic finish to their season, whichever Broncs remain on the team will try to capitalize on this momentum and bring another strong season of wrestling to Lawrenceville in the 2021-22 season.