

Photo courtesy of Rider University



Jason Vodicka will now serve as the inaugural dean for the Westminster College of Media and Performing Arts.

Provost appoints Jason Vodicka as dean of WCMPA

By Samantha Clark

Jason Vodicka has been selected as Westminster College of Media and Performing Arts' inaugural dean, according to a Sept. 15 universitywide email from Provost and Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs Kelly Bidle.

An associate professor of music education for the Westminster Choir College and the interim WCMPA dean for the past several months, Vodicka has "demonstrated his commitment to academic administration, arts leadership and student success," Bidle said.

Before the merge, Vodicka served as the College of Arts & Sciences' senior associate dean and associate dean for the past four years, where he helped to maintain Westminster Choir College's programs and traditions after it transitioned to the Lawrenceville campus.

In his eight years working at Rider, he has built the toolbelt to effectively get things done and made connections in different offices, which will allow him to immediately start progressing the new college's efforts and plans.

Moreso, Vodicka earned both a bachelor's and master's degree in music education from WCC, further allowing its longstanding historic nature to be preserved and showcased as it merges with the WCMPA.

Vodicka was inducted into the Westminster Music Education Hall of Fame in 2017 to recognize his contributions to both the college and the study of music education as a whole.

Daniel Loges, a junior arts & entertainment industries management major and a member of the

dean selection's student committee, said that Vodicka's experience at the university was a major contributing factor to his appointment.

"[Vodicka] spent time here as the former dean already, so he has that experience," Loges said. "You want someone that knows the school, knows the environment and knows the chemistry that everyone has with each other."

In the dean-search process, Loges said that the goal was to find someone who knew how to incorporate the many moving parts of the WCMPA under one umbrella.

"You have all of these things that tie into the arts, and you can't really have one without the other," Loges said.

In addition to Vodicka's pre-existing background in music, he familiarized himself with the areas of media and communication in his time as dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and WCMPA, as well as simply conversing and collaborating with other professors in the school.

"I do have a background in performing arts, but from my colleagues in media and communication, I've really learned that what we all do together is tell stories," Vodicka said. "We all share that we're focused on the human experience and helping each other understand that. It's broadened my perspective of what it means to be a communicator."

Bidle told The Rider News that the university will conduct a national search for an associate dean for the WCMPA with a strong background in media and communication, complimenting Vodicka's expertise.

Outside of the university, Vodicka holds national

positions, as he currently serves as the President-Elect of the American Choral Directors Association of New Jersey and previously sat in multiple music-related, executive-level positions along the East Coast and conducted choirs across the country.

Vodicka's relationships in and outside of the university offer the WCMPA new connections, opening doors for new programs and provisions to existing ones.

According to Vodicka, with the strong faculty and students at the foundation of the college, a new focus on the media and arts at the university will concurrently allow for new initiatives that will further advance the student experience.

"I'm also interested in continuing to build a donor base for the college. We are having a special donor event tied in with our production of the Threepenny Opera this November," Vodicka said. "That's going to bring in supporters, as well as some industry professionals from media and performing arts, to Rider and show them what we're able to do here."

With his "combination of academic leadership, scholarship, service, artistic achievement, and deep commitment to students," according to Bidle, Vodicka became the best candidate for the inaugural dean position.

Vodicka said, "It's an exciting time to be in the arts at Rider. We certainly have a lot of support from the president, and I think this new college really signifies the importance that our university places on media and the arts. It's gonna be exciting."

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SECURITY BRIEFS
BY JENNA MUNSWAMI

Information provided by Public Safety Director Matthew Babcock

Fire Alarm Fail

Emptied building. On Sept. 9, at 7:02 p.m., Public Safety responded to the Science and Technology Center for an activated fire alarm. Upon arrival, Public Safety found the building, in full-alarm, being evacuated. Public Safety found no issues and reset the alarm, only for it to go off again. Once it was determined that the system was malfunctioning, Facilities was contacted to repair the issue.

Cannot Park There

Improper parking. On Sept. 10, at 3 p.m., Public Safety was on patrol near Poyda Hall, when they noticed a vehicle had driven up and over the parking blocks, becoming stuck. Public Safety was able to assist the driver off of the blocks and Facilities was contacted to replace them.

Struck after Sneaking

Follow the leader. On Sept. 14, at 1:08 p.m., Public Safety was on patrol when they observed a car follow another into the Memorial Staff Lot. As the second car passed through, it was struck by the gate arm. Public Safety was able to identify the driver of the second car as a student, who was not authorized to be in the lot. The facts of the incident were verified via security camera footage. The matter has been forwarded to the Office of Community Standards.

Sarah F. Griffin/The Rider News

The 25th anniversary of an American tragedy

By Cal Sutton

Students, faculty and administrators alike gathered at the entrance of Moore Library at 12 p.m. on Sept. 11 to honor the lives of those lost in the terrorist attacks that occurred on Sept. 11, 2001.

The Dr. Eugene Marsh Center for Veteran and Military Affairs and the Center for Community + Belonging organized the event, held annually to pay homage to the many lives impacted, with a portion of the lives lost being members of the Rider community.

Of those lost on 9/11, eight victims were Rider students, faculty or staff members. Lawrenceville campus victims include Kenneth Ledee of the College of Continuing Studies; Gary Lutnick, '87; Domenick "Mosh" Mircovich '83; Ferdinand "Fred" Morrone, '77; Thomas Regan, '80; Alison Wildman, '93; and Kenneth Zelman, '86.

From Princeton's campus with Westminster Choir College, the Rider community lost Mary Yolanda Dowling, '81, on 9/11.

The attacks that occurred on Sept. 11, 2001, shook the United States to its core. It was a normal morning to most, until 8:46 a.m.

Terrence Bolton, interim coordinator for community engagement + belonging, also oversees the Dr. Eugene Marsh Center for Veteran and Military Affairs. He was a part of the ceremony to commemorate the lives tragically lost for 9/11's 25th anniversary.

"The importance of remembering 9/11 is to remember those who have sacrificed themselves for the better good of others," Bolton said. "9/11 united a nation through challenges, where differences were put aside which allowed the country to become one, we must remember that in times of despair no one is greater than the other."

The 9/11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and the diverted plane in Shanksville, Pennsylvania stirred immense fear for Americans, but in that, brought people together.

The people impacted by 9/11 also go further than those who lost their lives in the three plane crashes. Regular people, who were entirely uninvolved with the cities or people whose lives were tragically lost, also felt the repercussions in the days and years after.

Micah Rasmussen, director of the Rebovich Institute for New Jersey Politics, was not any different. He was having a normal, if not, peaceful morning, until he heard the news.

"The southernmost stretch of the Garden State Parkway made for a glorious end of summer drive 25 years ago," Rasmussen said. "I was returning tables and chairs that we had borrowed for Jeff Van Drew's



Abby Ray/The Rider News

Terrence Bolton, interim coordinator for community engagement + belonging, helped lead the memorial ceremony.

giant yearly pig roast at his house. The radio on the dashboard brought the awful news."

The morning of 9/11 was ordinary to many, but thousands of lives were torn apart following the initial attack. Even if people were not in the target cities and did not know anyone who was killed in the attacks, the pain was felt across the United States.

"It's hard to find a town in New Jersey that wasn't profoundly impacted or lost people," Rasmussen said.

The attacks on Sept. 11, 2001, may also feel somewhat detached to college students, as many individuals enrolled in colleges are aged between 18 and 24 years old, on average. This means many students do not have any memory of the attacks, with the only knowledge they have being what they learned in school and from individuals telling their stories.

Lizbeth Ortiz, a senior human resource management major, is the student body president for Rider's Student Government Association and read out the names of Rider community members who lost their lives in the attacks.

"I feel so many different emotions," Ortiz said. "I wasn't born, and I probably wasn't a thought in 2001, but I still carry their words and memories."

25 years later, the country is united in grief and remembrance of those whose lives were lost, as well as a sense of strength that as a country, the United States is resilient through the worst of situations.

Bolton said, "9/11 is a symbol that we as a country can remember that in times of need, there is no color, gender or religion greater than humankind."

Brannagh Rattigan/The Rider News



The Student Government Association kicked off the academic year with their first Student Senate meeting.

Student Government Association amps up connections with first Student Senate meeting

By Brannagh Rattigan

Student Body President Lizbeth Ortiz and her Student Government Association executive board opened the afternoon of Sept. 10 with their first Senate meeting of the academic year.

With nearly all of the seats filled in the Rue Auditorium, located in Sweigart Hall, the SGA team each introduced themselves to the attending students and led the informal meeting with a short slideshow.

Staying true to their mission statement, which includes building long-lasting relationships and advocating for the student body, the slides contained two student-input forms; one regarding financial aid concerns, and the other providing a chance to show interest in suicide prevention training.

Though this meeting was an informal introduction to SGA for new and returning students, Ortiz is committed to making her last year at Rider the best it can be, given her position.

“I’m a senior already, so just making the most of it and having my last year end off with a bang and let the student body know that I’m really here for them and that I care for them,” Ortiz said. “It’s like a love that I feel to the student body.”

Lizbeth Ortiz is a senior human resource management major who was elected as student body president in April.

As well as her entire SGA team, Ortiz is dedicated to provide visibility for all students and to ensure that they are aware of SGA, as both a resource and a support system.

“I’m making sure that I’m visible to all these different departments, especially with our first-gen departments such as TRIO and EOP, Educational Opportunity Program, and making sure that they know we’re also a resource for them to advocate

anything that they hear from students to advocate to SGA,” Ortiz said.

Supporting words with action, Ortiz relayed that SGA is in the process of introducing campus projects to better students’ daily lives and provide more spaces for recreational activities.

“Definitely getting one or two campus projects, having more space on campus so our students can be outside more,” Ortiz said. “I believe that being outside is very important for our mental health and just taking a breath to slow down.”

Within these projects, Ortiz shared that the Zen Garden, which SGA is partnering with the Counseling Center to create, should hopefully be completed and available to students by mid-September.

SGA emphasizes connecting with students more than anything, and to honor that, they now have office hours open to anyone at any time, no appointment needed. Ortiz also stressed that her secondary Instagram account, dedicated to her SGA candidacy, is always open to students to contact her personally.

Adaeze Anene, a junior behavioral neuroscience and political science double major, serves as SGA’s vice president of student affairs. Within her position, Anene oversees two committees, equity and inclusion, as well as student organizations.

In regards to the first Senate meeting, Anene noted that future, more formal meetings will include voting and more audience participation, but the act of simply showing up and being involved already makes a difference.

“You’re just getting involved and your presence already speaks enough,” Anene said. “Senate is a way for us to work together to collaborate, and we can’t do that without the students.”

Anene’s position relies on reaching out to students and organizations on campus to establish a relationship with SGA. Overseeing equity and inclusion, she stressed the importance of hearing student’s voices.

“Just making sure no matter who you are and where you’re from, your voice is just as important and just as equally listened to as another voice,” Anene said.

As Rider enters a period of change, Anene sympathizes with students, communicating that, although frustration comes with change, it is important to maintain an understanding that everything is happening for a reason, and SGA will guarantee that the concerns of students are heard.

“We’re turning things up. We’re here to do business. We’re here to uplift,” Anene said.

Anene hopes to create positive change at Rider this upcoming academic year. Through her position, Anene intends to diversify the opinions that are advocated for, as well as promote inclusivity in club activities and collaborations.

“We’ve been working on a project to bring multicultural leaders of different organizations to come together and really share concerns, or things they may not have felt comfortable sharing before,” Anene said.

Overall, at their first meeting, the SGA team has highlighted the need to establish a connection with the student body. Anene stressed this through a brief sentiment, saying, “Sometimes you might not even need a solution, you just need to be listened to, and that’s what we’re here for.”

SGA Senate meetings will continue weekly on Thursdays at 11:30 a.m. in the Rue Auditorium. Future events led by SGA include the Fall Fest in October and Midnight Breakfast for midterms.

Grace Juarez/The Rider News

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Rider rocks out again

By Teagan Rotella

As the sun set behind the trees that surround the Ben Cohen Field parking lot, the highly anticipated Rock Fest finally began.

On Sept. 11, Rider held its annual Rock Fest event, where live music, inflatables and food trucks created community for incoming and returning students.

At the start of the event, students quickly gathered around the five food trucks lined up on the right side of the parking lot.

The food trucks: Kona Ice, Yooo Cuz, Empanada Guy, Nomad Pizza and Smoke House, each handed out their own unique food options that highlight their business.

A favorite among students was Kona Ice, due to the warm weather and tasty flavor options for the shaved ice.

“When I got here, it was really hot out and this is really cooling me down,” said Jayla Wysocki, a sophomore history and secondary education major.

On the left side, near the entrance, was a backdrop and camera for photoshoots with friends, inflatable axe throwing and air-brushed tattoos.

The main attractions were the inflatable obstacle course and mechanical-bull ride, both of which students had to sign waivers for before getting on.

In the center of the lot were enlarged lawn games, such as an inflatable cornhole game and a giant, physical game of balance Tetris. There were also several white foldable tables and chairs for students to sit at while they ate food and listened to the live music.

On the stage stood four singers and a few band members. Smoke and multi-colored lights shone on the stage behind them while they covered a wide variety

of songs, such as “Party in the U.S.A.” by Miley Cyrus, “Hot In Herre” by Nelly, “I Want You Back” by the Jackson 5 and “A Sky Full of Stars” by Coldplay. Each singer had their own chance to shine as they rotated who the vocalist was throughout the night.

Despite having a good time at the event, some students commented on the difference in location.

“It’s definitely more of a walk than last year from over in the dorms. So, a little harder to find,” said Natalie Cunningham, a sophomore music education major.

Rock Fest has not been held at the Ben Cohen Field parking lot since 2022. For the past three years, Rock Fest took place either at the Campus Green or the Student Recreation Center.

“I think that last year, when it was a little bit tighter of a space, it was a little bit better. But, I still love the environment,” said Antonio Goffredo, a sophomore accounting major.

While some students were not fans of the new location, others preferred it.

“Last year, [Rock Fest] was much closer together. I think I like this year’s [location] better,” said Jenna Augustine, a sophomore musical theater major.

“There’s more room to breathe and the music’s loud, but not too loud.”

Chris McQueen, director of campus activities, shared his reasoning for the new location of this event, which he helped coordinate and execute.

“Holding Rock Fest toward the back of campus gave students another reason to explore and experience an area they may not visit regularly,” McQueen said. “I think there is a lot of opportunity

Photo courtesy of Peter G. Borg



Rock Fest, the beloved Rider tradition, returned to campus at a different location: the Ben Cohen Field parking lot.

for us to continue thinking creatively about how we use the entire campus as programming space.”

Each student loved a different part of Rock Fest, proving how successful the event was.

“[Rock Fest] has something for everybody. There’s live music, there’s games, there’s food trucks, there’s bouncy houses. Like there’s everything here for people,” said Laytin, a junior music production major.

Reflecting on all of the effort put into the event, McQueen said, “When you spend so much time planning something behind the scenes, there is a moment when you can finally look around and see students enjoying what you’ve helped create. That’s the part that makes the work worthwhile for me.”

Welcome Back!

CROSSWORD

Across

- 2. Lake in the middle of campus.
- 4. Coffee shop in the Student Recreation Center.
- 7. ____ week started on Sept. 4 this year.
- 8. Remember to set this, so you are not late for class.
- 9. Main theater in the Fine Arts Building.

Down

- 1. Most students bring supplies to class in this.
- 3. Be sure to check this multiple times a day for updates
- from professors and the university.
- 14. Call Public ____ if you get locked out of your dorm or in case of an emergency.
- 5. The document that details all of the information for a class.
- 6. Nickname for Rider students.

By Ryan Denkovic
Designed by Grace Juarez

Find the answers here!

Play online here!

Home Away from Home: Freddy Flores Chavarria

By Sofia Santiago

Detail oriented, disciplined, positive and happy. This is how Freddy Flores Chavarria, sophomore cybersecurity major, describes himself.

Originally from the cities of San José and Heredia in Costa Rica, Flores Chavarria recounted his educational journey that eventually led to Rider.

Detail oriented

Flores Chavarria’s interest in technology and how it works started when he was young.

He attended a technical, private high school in Belén, Heredia. The application process included Spanish, English and math exams.

“When I was 10 years old, I had really good [English] professors, one of them was from California. Also the education in Costa Rica, I would say, is really good towards English,” Flores Chavarria said.

It was during high school that he was able to do an internship at Huawei, a multinational technology company, and his passion for cybersecurity grew. He was fascinated by the intricacies of how networking devices communicate information.

“If I want to send you a message, like an email, it has to do 15 hops. One from here to the Wi-Fi, from the Wi-Fi to the antenna, then 10 antennas, and then go to the Miami server and come back and do everything in just like half a second,” explained Flores Chavarria.

The company for which he interned also fascinated him.

“You don’t see that technology [in the United States]. You know that here it is banned by the U.S. government, because [Huawei is] Chinese. So it was interesting to see both positions,” Flores Chavarria said.

As soon as he graduated high school, Flores Chavarria’s mother accepted a job in the United States and he and his sister moved with her. After attending Raritan Valley Community College, Flores Chavarria transferred to Rider at the start of the spring 2026 semester.

Disciplined

Flores Chavarria is determined to make the most of his Rider experience. He holds multiple jobs on campus: at the Student Recreation Center, the Office of Information Technologies and even as a lifeguard over the summer.

“I’m currently searching for internships here as well. As an international student, I have an opportunity of doing 12 months of curricular practical training, that’s basically an internship. My plan is to do three months every summer, so I can do it before graduating,” he explained.

Duo Lu, assistant professor in the department of computer science and mathematics, commented about Flores Chavarria’s character, saying, “What impressed me most about Freddy was his initiative and active attitude toward learning and career preparation. During the summer, he reached out and met with me in August to discuss how to launch a career in cybersecurity and information technology, something students rarely do unless they are enrolled in a summer class.”



Flores Chavarria cites his mom as his role model.



Sophomore cybersecurity major **Freddy Flores Chavarria** is incredibly passionate about his studies.

Photo courtesy of Freddy Flores Chavarria

Over the summer Flores Chavarria earned CompTIA Network+ and Microsoft Azure Foundational certifications, both requiring a lot of time and effort.

“They are a little bit difficult, especially if you are not a cybersecurity major, but if you spend enough time, I think you can do all of it. There’s the option to do them in Spanish, but I always try to do everything in English,” Flores Chavarria said.

normal. It’s part of the process, and the thing that made me maybe not being shy was just talking with people and knowing that everyone is different. So I will make mistakes. Maybe they will too, even if their native language is English,” he remarked.

Playing volleyball, working out and running marathons keeps Flores Chavarria out and about. He is even able to keep in touch with his old friends through video games online.

Happy

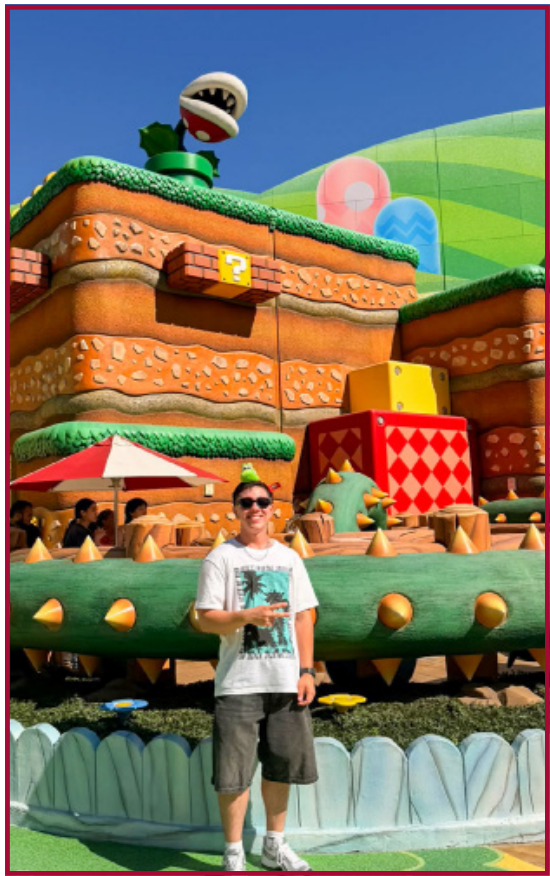
As for his immediate family, Flores Chavarria maintains a close relationship with his mom and sister.

“My mom is the main reason I’m here, because she got a job opportunity here,” Flores Chavarria continued. “She’s my main example in my life ... Before I would think that something was wrong, maybe that she spent a lot of hours working. But now I know that it was the best for us because she is a single mom with two kids in another country. How are you gonna do that just by yourself? Only by working can you do all that.”

Excited for his future, Flores Chavarria hopes to work as a security operation center analyst. Lu has even asked Flores Chavarria to speak to classes this semester about earning the CompTIA certification.

Flores Chavarria said, “Even though I don’t look happy most of the time, I am happy. It’s just that my face is weird.”

This article is part of the Home Away From Home series by The Rider News to highlight international students from the S.N.O.



Flores Chavarria’s hobbies outside of academics include volleyball, running and video games.

Photo courtesy of Freddy Flores Chavarria

Positive

Apart from his interest in learning, Flores Chavarria enjoys playing video games, sports and running. When moving to the United States, he left a close circle of friends back in Costa Rica.

“It was a little bit hard, but I also was thinking that it was a good opportunity for me because I knew I had to make this sacrifice for a better future,” he said.

As an introvert, Flores Chavarria worried that he would not be able to make those kinds of connections again. However, his attitude to try to view the positive side of situations prevailed over his doubts.

“When I came here, it helped me a lot not to be shy, that knowing that my accent is nothing wrong, knowing that I will get some words wrong. But it’s

Gail Demeraski/The Rider News



Flock off! America's newest surveillance technology

Over the past year, the American people have been subjected to one of the worst crimes ever committed against us. It is not a terrorist attack, nor mass killings or anything of the sort. It has been put upon us by our government and a privatized corporation. "Flock Safety" is a laughable name for this company, as it is euphemistically trying to hide the outright villainous agenda it, and our government, has launched.

Flock Safety, founded in 2017, started slow, but since around 2024, has put up thousands of surveillance cameras powered by artificial intelligence all across the country. Their mission statement is to survey roads, read license plates, track people and send that data to law enforcement. Some may ask themselves, "Is there anything wrong with trying to keep the community safe?" and while that question is not terribly misguided, the ways they are going about this must be understood. Flock has turned roadways into a surveillance grid, which could arguably fall under a Fourth Amendment violation, that being, unlawful searches and seizures. Compiling constant photos of cars, tracking them and using AI to predict and learn human behavior has critics arguing whether this falls under that category.

In my opinion, this absolutely violates the Constitution. Innocent people should not have to be subjected to being tracked against their will. The roads are for public use, not for the government's nefarious plot to "keep us in check." Another notion that may arise from this is, "Well, if you are not doing anything wrong, you should not have anything to worry about." To that I say, despite the intended use of these cameras simply being to catch criminals, they are being put up in rural roads and areas with little crime or need for surveillance — like parks and recreational areas. How will we know that these cameras will not be exploited in the future, and reshape what is and is not okay? We are already seeing this now, with officers improperly using these to stalk women and other law-abiding citizens for nefarious purposes. While the initial question may have some merit, it logically fails to look beyond a single statement.

This epidemic has become incredibly ironic, as well. In years past, the United States has leveraged claims against other countries, deeming them "surveillance states." This country has gone to great lengths to try and label China as such, with their state-wide closed-circuit television usage, making it seem dystopian and unlawful. While this is true, the United States has entered a sort of "pot calling the kettle black" situation, as we are no better. Flock is doing the exact same thing: monitoring the American people, collecting our data, exporting it and using it in an unconstitutional fashion.



Alfie Eville/The Rider News

Flock has quickly invaded the United States with their new cameras.

This conversation surrounding Flock Safety has eerily similar connections to the infamous novel "1984" by George Orwell, wherein people live in a world monitored by "Big Brother," an entity that restricts what people can say and do, as well as monitor everyone 24 hours a day, seven days a week. While in our world, we are still only talking about licence plate readers, how long will it take for that program

to expand? How long until private conglomerates, or even our own government, decide that surveillance must be expanded? We already lived through the Obama administration downplaying what had gone on with the National Security Agency, and their global surveillance programs on other states, as well as with American citizens. The difference right now is that current President Donald Trump has outright endorsed Flock Safety, and has acknowledged that despite the backlash, he likes them. We are far past downplaying or cover-ups; the United States is rubbing it in our faces. A new-age Edward Snowden is obsolete when all of these acts are so blatantly out in the open. The only room for an American hero is us as a collective.

While I am admittedly just a small journalist operating at a school-run newspaper, that does not diminish the fact that my viewpoints are shared by millions of Americans. I believe that now more than ever, our voices must be heard; and not only that, but our actions must be felt. Efforts are already beginning to happen, as several states, ahead of the midterms, are revoking their licenses with the company, after hearing the outcry from the public. Thousands of people are getting out and protesting, be it outside or in the courtrooms. Campaigns are being had, as masked individuals are cutting these cameras down en masse. On social media, Halloween is being dubbed "De-Flock America Day," as millions of Americans will already be masked and outside, making these efforts to damage these cameras easier.

While there is hope for the future, it is a David versus Goliath battle for the American people. The days of this country being the "land of the free" are fleeting. As a country, it becomes harder to hold a serious face when calling out other countries and their surveillance policies. Soon, the days when students will have to read "1984" will become obsolete. All they must do is step outside and look around.

Alfie Eville
sophomore history and secondary education major

Court is back in session: A "Coyote vs. Acme" review

In August 2018, Warner Bros. announced that they were making a film titled "Coyote vs. Acme," in which the "Looney Tunes" character Wile E. Coyote would be taking on the fictional Acme Corporation in a legal battle. Finally, after eight years and a myriad of controversies, the film has been released to critical and audience acclaim. The question is, does it deserve the praise?

The film was originally slated for release on July 21, 2023. Seven months before that date, though, Warner

Bros. announced that it had been completed, but would not be released. Company officials stated that they would rather incur the \$30 million tax loss than release the film, sparking an uproar among film fans. Warner Bros. received immense amounts of backlash over the cancellation of the film, including one man parading outside the Warner Bros. lot dressed as the titular Coyote and holding a picket sign that read "Release Me!!" After trying and failing multiple times to find a distributing company, the film eventually was picked up and distributed by Ketchup Entertainment. Since its release, it has made more money at the box office than the tax loss that Warner Bros. took by shelving the film.

As stated before, the film follows Coyote as he and his legal team sue Acme for the damages that their "cartoon products" have caused him in his years of trying to catch the Road Runner. His legal team is from the Avery, Jones & Maltese law firm, with Will Forte and Lana Condor playing Coyote's lawyer and his intern, respectively. Over the course of the film, they attempt to win the case as it gains national attention, while simultaneously uncovering evidence of a dark secret that the Acme Corporation has been covering up for decades.

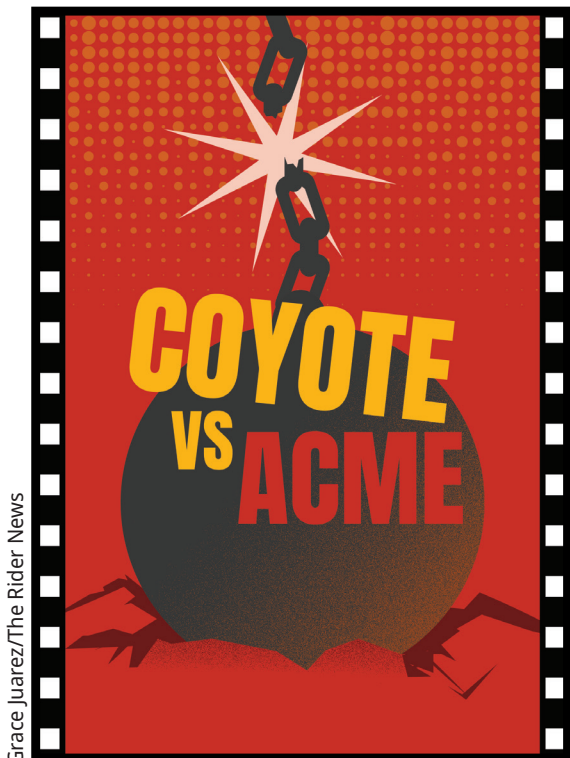
Forte plays Coyote's lawyer, Kevin Avery, and serves as the film's secondary protagonist. Forte's performance makes it very clear that Avery is nervous to take on the goliath that is the Acme Corporation, and is somewhat out of his element in the courtroom. Acme's lawyer, Buddy Crane, is played by John Cena, who gives an incredible performance, as always. Cena has more than proven he is a very capable actor in the past, playing the title character in "Peacemaker," and he gives an outstanding performance in this film, as well. He fits in perfectly with the tomfoolery happening

on screen, and is not afraid to make himself look silly in more comedic scenes.

The film gets most of its comedy from the irony of a serious legal matter that has been injected with classic "Looney Tunes" humor, and this is where the writing truly shines. On top of that, the film is a hybrid piece between live-action and animation, like "Who Framed Roger Rabbit?" and "Space Jam," and it works so incredibly well. Half the time, I forgot that the cartoon characters and objects were not actually there because of how effortlessly everything blends together. While the film takes place in the world of Bugs Bunny and Daffy Duck, it does have some intriguing, thought-provoking themes and ideas, such as discrimination and the testing of products on animals. The film also draws a parallel between the never-ending antics of the Coyote and Road Runner and the Greek myth of Sisyphus in a way that I found very interesting.

"Coyote vs. Acme" is an incredible time, and I would recommend it to casual moviegoers and film buffs alike. It is one of the best film releases of this year so far, and I even found myself crying a little on my second watch. This film is a masterpiece in every sense of the word, and I would be doing a disservice if I gave it anything less than a perfect five stars out of five. I encourage everyone to go see this phenomenal work of art at least once in theaters before it leaves the box office.

Ryan Denkovic
sophomore English major



Grace Juarez/The Rider News

After years of being shelved, "Coyote vs. Acme" has arrived.

Why be boring and bland when you can be whimsy-maxxing?

As quickly as summer break came and went, so did the season’s microtrends. I did not think much of them, as usual. I mean, butter yellow was cute, blue and brown was very Y2K and I just did not care that polka dots were everywhere.

“Microtrends” are usually fashion choices or purchases endorsed by celebrities or influencers and take over the internet rapidly, only lasting for just a few weeks at a time, until the masses move onto something new.

I found myself liking a new microtrend for the first time in a while: whimsy-maxxing. As a lover of all things sparkly, that is exactly what this trend brings. People are seen sticking rhinestones to their phone cases, lipgloss tubes and even themselves. To me, it is so much fun, and that is what fashion should be about.

What really caught my eye about whimsy-maxxing was that it seemed to be in direct opposition to the current trend cycles. It was bright, colorful and unapologetically unique, something I have not seen from the fashion world in a long time.

The weirdest part about this microtrend, though, is that it was popularized by Kylie Jenner. I say this because, a few months ago, she had the internet in a frenzy over the most basic white tank top that she was photographed wearing.

Do I feel odd liking a microtrend made by a Jenner? Yes, but I have also accepted that it is simply the impact celebrities have. Regardless, I am glad to see whimsy-maxxing rise in popularity after months of

neutrals being in the public favor. Going back to butter yellow for a moment, I was worried that would be the most fun we would get!

As much as I love the color black, I also love to see the world filled with color. The clean-girl aesthetic felt too manufactured; it was like a performance of what someone thought it meant to be ‘chic,’ instead of actually enjoying their lives and sense of personal style.

Whimsy-maxxing gave us messiness. It was loud and imperfect, which is exactly what most young adult lives are actually like. There is nothing wrong with wanting to seem put together, but we can go into adulthood with some sparkle, too.

I could just be taking plastic gems and blowing it out of proportion because I felt fashion was getting boring, but I genuinely think whimsy-maxxing is cute and I hope the fun does not die down anytime soon.

However, I cannot ignore some of the criticism that has appeared online. I genuinely liked whimsy-maxxing so much that I was a little sad to see it receive backlash. The discussion between fast fashion and trend cycles’ shortened lifespan has been ongoing. This leads to a lot of environmental concerns. As fun as whimsy-maxxing is, people are worried about the waste that is produced from it.

The most prominent aspect of whimsy-maxxing comes from the rhinestones. Instead of keeping them for future projects, the gems are thrown out after a single use. For example, there have been photos of



The latest social media trend veers from bland to bold.

people putting rhinestones on plastic coffee cups. No one typically keeps them, no matter how cute you make it, so they end up in the trash and adding more plastic waste in the process.

There are already 20 million metric tons of plastic litter per year, according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources. This waste does not even account for the possible clothing waste that is produced by consumers who want to follow the trend. No one is expecting you to use real gemstones instead of plastic ones, but be mindful of how you use and dispose of them. We should maintain our whimsical fashion, but not at the expense of our world.

Jenna Munswami
senior communication studies major

OUT ON CAMPUS

Addressing suicide prevention among queer students

This article contains mention of suicide. If you or someone you know is in crisis or needs assistance, please contact the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline by dialing 988.

The Crisis Text Line can be reached by texting “HOME” to 741-741. To use The Trevor Project’s LGBTQIA+ Hotline, text “START” to 678-678.

September is suicide prevention month, and for LGBTQIA+ individuals, there are disproportionate impacts on those with diverse identities.

According to an article about risks of suicidality in queer youth, published in the Journal of Adolescence, suicide is the fourth-leading cause of death among youth and young adults aged 15 to 29, worldwide.

They also found in a meta-analysis and review of multiple studies that individuals identifying as LGBTQIA+ were more than three times as likely to have attempted suicide than their cisgender or heterosexual counterparts.

This fact is not lost on me, either. Throughout my time being surrounded by peers with queer identities, I have witnessed, time and time again, queer youths facing aggressive mental health struggles.

The Rider News and the whole Rider community had even lost one of its own to suicide in October 2024. Suicide is a problem that heavily impacts youth, and even more, queer youth.

While there is so much more for everyone to do to help keep suicide rates as low as possible, it is imperative that, especially in college, we uplift queer individuals and queer voices as to make life comfortable and positive for them.

The Trevor Project works to prevent suicide in LGBTQIA+ youth and young adults.

There are expansive options for support from The Trevor Project, including their 24/7 crisis text line and phone call services, peer support services through Trevor Space, educational services with ally-training sessions and research to help save lives of at-risk queer youth.

Queer individuals face a large amount of struggles that their cisgender and heterosexual peers do not. There is an extra sense of societal pressure on people who identify as LGBTQIA+.

At Rider, students have the opportunity to self-report their gender identities. Though sexualities are not included in the self-reports, data gathered by Enrollment Planning show that nearly 3.5% of Rider’s student population identify with gender markers that do not align with their assigned sex at birth.

Pew Research conducted a study on gender identities in young adults, and the research found that approximately 1.6% of U.S. adults identify with a gender that does not align with their biological sex.

With that said, Rider’s population of gender-diverse students is just around, if not, a little bit higher, than the average. This means that, as a campus, it is necessary to make a place for students of different identities and backgrounds.

Those who are from diverse backgrounds are at higher risk for suicide due to the adversity they face. Some may feel alone, misunderstood, not accepted or taken less seriously.

Suicide Prevention Month is incredibly important

to draw awareness to because so many people, even non-queer individuals, face struggles they feel they cannot talk about.

The stigma must be removed from mental health, now more than ever. Suicide rates have been steadily climbing and it was the cause for 48,824 deaths in 2024, according to the National Center for Health Statistics.

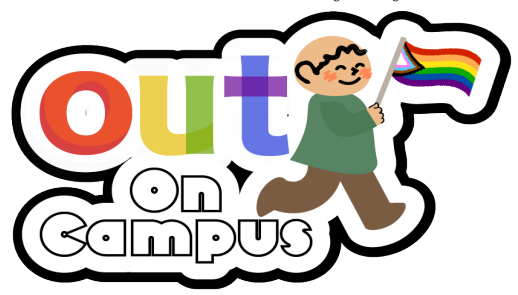
It is scary and unsettling to know how deeply suicide impacts individuals, and how many lives it takes yearly. But, we can do something about it.

Reach out to your friends. Reach out to people from your classes. Check on those you know who are having a hard time. And reach out to the ones who seem happy.

We, as students, can try to break this. Lend a helping hand to someone in need, make queer people and non-queer people alike feel safe, supported and loved.

No matter who you are, you are loved and supported here at Rider. Reach out for help if you need it. People are in your corner.

Cal Sutton
junior journalism major



Longstreet House, 2083 Lawrenceville Road, Lawrenceville, NJ 08648
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VOLLEYBALL

Rider drops three in Piscataway to finish off invitational run

By Lindsay Scarola and Jon Coiro

Rider volleyball had a challenging three-game series at the Rutgers Classic, collecting three 0-3 losses against the University of Delaware, Stony Brook University and Rutgers University.

Heartbreak sparks a sweep

The Broncos held a four-point lead on Sept. 10 before Delaware got back up to speed, evening the first set at 12 apiece.

The opening set made its way to sudden death, and a senior middle blocker Molly Rhode kill briefly put Rider back in front, 26-25.

It would be the Blue Hens that got the last laugh, thanks to a Delaware game-tying kill, along with back-to-back attack errors from senior outside hitter Rylah Robinson to drop the first set.

Dropping the opening set, the Broncos were once again put into a hole to dig out of.

Delaware's momentum boiled over into dominance during the next two sets, outscoring the Broncos by 24 points, combined.

In the second set, Rider found themselves on the wrong side of an early 7-1 run.

Unable to find the response they needed throughout the second set, the Broncos eventually lost, 25-16.

The third set saw the same issues from the prior set arise once again against Delaware.

The Blue Hens maintained a 13-9 advantage in the third set and put the nail in their coffin with a big 8-0 run, capping off a loss for the Broncos in sweeping fashion to start the Rutgers Classic.

Freshman outside hitter Maisie Nawrocki still continued to impress in her early-season tournament play, with nine kills and digs against Delaware, all while adapting to the Division I level.

"I am learning to hold myself to a higher standard every day, while also being reminded to appreciate how far I've come and how much I'm improving," Nawrocki said.

Struggles carry into weekend

In the opening set on Sept. 11, Stony Brook already held a 7-4 lead before scoring seven-straight for a bigger advantage in the match.

With the Seawolves gaining an 11-point lead and set point, Rider held them off with kills by Robinson,



Photo courtesy of Mike Tripp

Senior libero **Simone Langford** making a bump.

as well as freshman middle blocker Tori Bonacci.

The Broncos couldn't hold them off for long, as Stony Brook would get the point to secure a 25-16 set win for a 1-0 advantage.

Rider fought valiently in set two, scoring three points during the serve of senior setter Makenna Mason across the set.

Down 8-4, the Seawolves would go on a 4-0 run to tie the set. Later on, tied at 15-15, Nawrocki got a big kill, embracing her role as a selfless player en route to becoming a leader.

"I've also been challenging myself to become a more selfless player, which means understanding what the team needs and doing what it takes to contribute to our success," Nawrocki said.

An error by Stony Brook gave Rider a 17-15 lead, but the Seawolves would pull ahead on a 5-1 run to take the lead and, eventually, the set.

Up by one in the third, the Seawolves scored five straight points. Leading 9-5 later on, they became out of reach after a 9-0 run was too much to handle, sweeping Rider for the match win.

The Broncos had a 7-6 lead on Sept. 12 in the opening set against Rutgers before the Scarlet Knights took the lead with a 4-0 run.

Rider fought back during the set, getting within one four different times, but ultimately could not tie it up.

Leading 19-18, the Scarlet Knights pulled away on a 5-1 run, taking the opening set, 25-20.

Down 6-1 in set two, Rider had a 6-1 run with kills by senior right side Anja Kelly, junior outside hitter Aubrey Baker and senior middle blocker Molly Rohde to tie it up at seven apiece.

Rider tried to find a way to stop Rutgers late in the set, but the Scarlet Knights were able to add on four more on their way to taking the set from Rider.

Down 2-1 in the third, the Broncos responded with a 4-0 run, capped by back-to-back aces from Rohde.

Holding onto a 6-3 lead, the Broncos tried to stop Rutgers, but their challenge to comeback was answered with a 6-0 run from the Scarlet Knights.

Rutgers went up 13-11 forcing Rider to lose their lead midway through. An 8-1 run by Rutgers would put the final blow in the set, securing it and the match.

With one out-of-conference game left before Metro play, the Broncos have some mechanics they need to tweak.

"We will need to exhibit some more discipline defensively, and not be as frantic positionally. After that, making teams play to earn their own points," Head Coach Jeff Rotondo said.

The Broncos will travel to the University of Pennsylvania on Sept. 16 for a 7 p.m. matchup that will be streamed on ESPN+.

WOMEN'S SOCCER

Broncs unable to find the back of the net against the Saints

By Emma Geremia-Hartigan

Rider women's soccer, looking to respond after opening Metro Conference play with a 3-0 loss to Fairfield on Sept. 5, was unable to find the back of the net before the final whistle, falling 6-0 to Siena at Ben Cohen Field on Sept. 12.

Matching their level

Rider came out with more control in the opening half, keeping possession and creating opportunities against a highly-ranked Metro team.

"I thought we had a really good first half and our ball possession was the better of the two teams," Hounscome said.

The Saints found the first three chances of the match, one of which was saved by sophomore goalkeeper Ashley Moore.

On a corner kick, junior midfielder Ava DeGeorge took a chance, missing high as well.

Junior forward Tess Ferrie and senior forward Ava Ferrie took their shots midway through the opening half, with Tess Ferrie's shot being saved and Ava Ferrie's being the final of the sequence.

Near the end of the half, the Saints picked up the pressure with a shot in the 33rd minute, forcing Moore to make another save

Following substitutions, the Saints took the corner and found the back of the net in the 38th minute.

Rider recorded four shots in the first half and limited Siena to one goal heading into halftime.

Liliana R. Basile/The Rider News



Junior forward **Tess Ferrie** making a move on her defender.

Head Coach Drayson Hounscome said he was pleased with how Rider competed in the opening half.

"Disappointed to give up a goal before halftime, but really proud of how we battled and showed good passion in that first half," Hounscome said.

Game gets away

Rider continued to compete after halftime, but could not convert their opportunities into goals as the Saints' chances began to snowball.

In the first few minutes of the half, Siena added

their second goal for a 2-0 deficit for Rider.

Moving quickly after surrendering a score, senior back Bethie Morgan took a shot at the net.

A swift counterattack commenced for the Saints where they broke through once more.

Three of the Saints' goals came within the first 15 minutes, while another other two were added around halfway through the second half.

The Broncos finished with eight shots on the day, including three on goal, while Moore made seven saves on the day.

"I was really proud of how they played and competed," Hounscome said. "They won the loose balls and followed the game plan to a tee."

The Broncos had similar setups to Siena, but struggled to produce the same quality when opportunities were presented near the goal.

In the second half, the Saints held a 14-4 shot advantage over the Broncos.

Hounscome credited the quality of the Saints' in-game play throughout the match.

"Despite our drive, our passion, our effort, quality will often override that. I think it just highlights the level of quality they have," Hounscome said.

Rider was outshot 22-8 overall, with three of its eight shots reaching the Siena goalkeeper.

The Broncos will return to the road to face off against the Canisius University Golden Griffins on Sept. 19 at 1 p.m.

MEN’S SOCCER

Broncs’ strong start continues, end non-conference play 4-1-1

By Joshua Yuhas

Rider men’s soccer concluded their non-conference slate on a high note with a 3-2 victory against La Salle University, opening the season with a 4-1-1 record.

Tied where it matters

Heading into the matchup, Head Coach Chad Duernberger emphasized the mentality on handling pressure to his squad, a trait that he has been confident in since their season opener on Aug. 20 against James Madison University.

“I’ve really enjoyed how this group handles high pressure situations. They don’t get rattled, they just keep working. Going into the La Salle game, I asked them to go into the match like they did at JMU,” Duernberger said.

The Explorers blitzed the Broncs to open their Sept. 12 matchup with a pair of shots each saved by graduate student goalkeeper Marius Helias in the first minutes of the match.

On a deflected long cross a few minutes later, graduate student defender Sawyer Koza collected the ball around midfield, where he turned up the field and sent a through ball up.

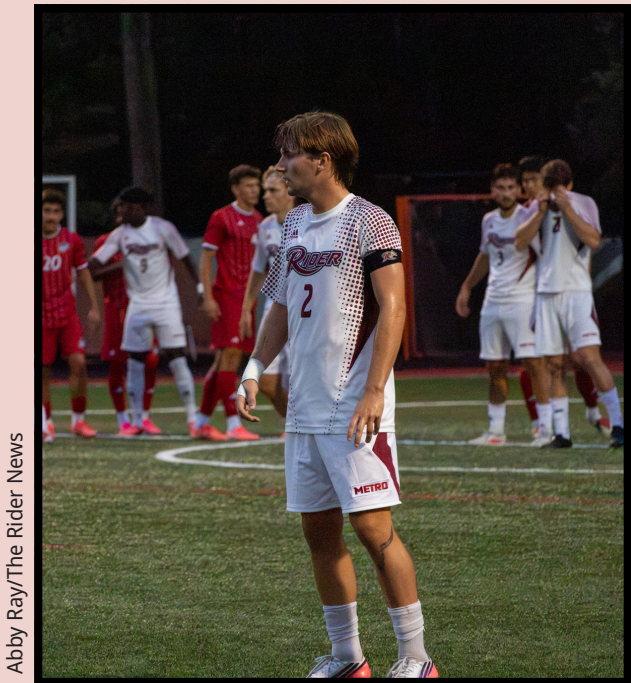
Senior forward Drew Heil collected the pass in stride on the right side of the box and struck the ball on the ground into the far left post for the opening score and a 1-0 Rider lead.

“At first I didn’t see anyone, so I took another touch forward. Then, out of the corner of my eye, I see Drew [Heil] making a run across the back line,” Koza said.

Following the goal, La Salle took control of the match, producing a pair of shots and corner kick chances before finally breaking through with the equalizer in the 11th minute.

A 14th-minute shot was saved by the Explorers’ goalkeeper before the Broncs faced the next four shots up to the 36th minute, when Heil took one of his own.

At the end of the half, Rider took a 2-1 advantage when junior forward Emmanuel Dan-Adokiene pushed down the right side, sending in a low cross to the box that pinballed off an Explorers’ defender and into the net.



Abby Ray/The Rider News

Senior defender **Ryan Vaubel** awaiting the free kick.

The Explorers responded immediately with a goal of their own, leaving both sides tied at two heading into halftime.

La Salle outshot Rider 12-3 in the first half, but also committed 10 fouls compared to the Broncs’ three in that same time period.

Under pressure

To open the second half, the Broncs went on the attack first with a burst of chances, putting pressure on the Explorers.

Shots from senior forward Patryk Rojek and Dan -Adokiene started a sequence of corner kicks, where junior defender Carter Schmitz missed a shot high.

An attempted pass from the Explorers’ goalkeeper at the end deflected off a Bronc, falling to the foot of graduate student midfielder Ryan Kuladnek, who slid down to score.

La Salle regained momentum back with back-to-back shots, one of which was saved by Helias, and a pair of corners, which did not produce

a shot. The Broncs launched a counter attack across the field, where Rojek’s attempt was saved by the Explorers’ goalkeeper. An exchange of chances kept the match lockstepped with a 3-2 Rider lead, but in the final minutes, La Salle turned up the heat on Rider’s defense.

Opening the 86th minute with a corner, the Explorers’ shot was saved by Helias, but the threat was not over just yet with a final-minute corner for the Broncs to defend.

The cross was sent curving into the box, landing at the head of an Explorers’ attacker. However, the header missed high, as the match came to an end.

“I thought we finished the match off under pressure with a professional mentality, making the right plays to get the clock down to zero in the second half,” Duernberger said. “We made great strides in our clock management which I was very proud of the team for.”

Despite trailing 20-9 in shots and 10-2 in corner kicks, the Broncs persevered through the late challenges, as Helias closed the night with six saves.

“We’re all so close with each other and we have no doubt in our ability that anyone we go against, any team in the country we will take them on. We don’t care who it is,” Koza said.

While Duernberger feels strongly about his squad thus far, there is not room to get complacent as the Broncs enter Metro Conference play.

“These next five games we need to take a step forward in how we play, our performance, which certainly needs to sharpen up,” Duernberger said. “Then the final phase, including post-season play, if we are fortunate enough to qualify for, we need to be playing at our highest level, clicking in all areas.”

The Broncs will return to Ben Cohen Field for their first Metro matchup of the season against Quinnipiac University on Sept. 19 at 1 p.m. The game will be streamed on ESPN+.

FIELD HOCKEY

Rider continues to slip, drops to 0-6 record on the 2026 season

By Patrick Madigan and Joey Poto

Rider field hockey continues to stumble, falling 3-0 to Lafayette University and 5-0 to Temple University, making their record 0-6 after their on-the-road start of the season.

Adding to the loss column

The Rider Broncs traveled to Pennsylvania to face off against the Lafayette Leopards on Sept. 11, where they got shutout, 3-0.

The Leopards pounced in the opening section of the game, launching six shots until they scored a penalty stroke goal midway through the first period.

Just over two minutes into the second period, the Leopards scored again and extended the lead to 2-0.

In the final minutes of the first half, freshman defender Addison McConnell made sure the Leopards could not cash in the score.

Things would go on a high note in the third quarter for Lafayette, who scored a goal on a penalty corner.

However, the Broncs’ offense never took off, giving the Leopards the blowout 3-0 win.

Strong start dwindles

The start of the Sept. 13 matchup against Temple seemed to show promise for Rider, as both teams combined for only three shots, two for the Owls and one for the Broncs.

However, Temple opened the second period with three straight shots, adding three more during the

rest before Rider could respond with their own shot.

Right after the Broncs were finally able to get a shot off, the Owls would score, and from there, things continued to unravel.

“We started off strong today. We were following the game plan, until we didn’t,” Head Coach Gina Carey-Smith said.

The third period is where Temple caught fire, scoring three times on nine shots during the period, while the Broncs were only able to put up two shots.

The fourth period did not aid in the fall either, as Temple added on another goal to finish the game with another Bronc loss, 5-0.

The Broncs were outshot 28-4, marking their fourth-straight game without scoring a goal.

The only shot on goal for Rider came from senior midfielder Ang Borisow, while Temple had nine players with at least one shot on goal.

Junior goalkeeper Jade Regnart, despite allowing the five goals, saved several shots throughout the game that gave Rider multiple chances to get back into the game.

“From my side, I’ve been reminding the team in our huddles about the small steps forward we’re making and continuing to climb that ladder,” Regnart said. “At the end of the day, it’s about focusing on what we can control, taking the positives from each game, learning from the negatives and bringing that mindset into the next one.”



Photo courtesy of Peter G. Borg

Senior midfielder **Ang Borisow** taking a shot.

Carey-Smith expressed the mindset needed for her squad heading into Northeast-Conference play. “We need to play as a team, not as individuals.

We are hoping these first six games prepared us to compete in the NEC,” Carey-Smith said.

Rider will head on the road to face Long Island University in their first NEC game on Sept. 18 at 1 p.m. The Broncs will then return home to Ben Cohen Field to face off against Georgetown University on Sept. 20 at 12 p.m. The game against Georgetown will be streamed on ESPN+.