

March 21, 2008

Palmer out as men's basketball coach after two years

Lueken, Palmer say split was mutual

By Phil Swartzlander
Rocket Assistant Sports Editor

It was time for a change.

That is what the both sides are saying after men's basketball coach Jamal Palmer and his assistant coach, Marcus Hudson, parted ways with Slippery Rock University on March 10.

SRU Director of Athletics Paul Lueken has started a nationwide search for candidates and already has more than 50 applicants, he said. The position will remain open until April 10, and the university will interview candidates for the head coaching position during the week of April 14, Lueken said. The assistant coach will be hired after the head coach. The futures of Palmer's graduate assistant, Eric Murphy, and student assistant, John Powell, are in limbo, as the decision to either keep them or relieve them of their duties will be left to the next coach.

As for Palmer, he hopes be moving on to a new coaching position and is looking forward to a new opportunity.

"I want to stay in coaching, and there are a few options," Palmer said. "It was best for both the university and myself to go in different directions and move on."

Palmer took over the team in 2006 and posted a 12-42 record in two seasons, including a 7-20 mark in the 2007-08 campaign, the best since the 04-05 season. The team was in the hunt for a PSAC playoff berth this year until the season's final day.

Lueken praised the effort Palmer gave during his two years at the Rock.

"With his experience, he moved the program in the right direction," Lueken said. "We have better talent in the program than we did two years ago."

The new head coach will have a good nucleus to work with next season, with the only loss to graduation being Jamar Scales. Remaining players could include All-PSAC-West player Erroll Robinson and Darnell Johnson, who both averaged more than 10 points per game.

But Lueken said he expects a few players to look into transferring.

"I am sure a few will look into it, and we will help them all we can," Lueken said.



ARCHIVED PHOTO
Jamal Palmer is out as men's head basketball coach after just two years at the helm. Palmer, who guided the Rock to a 7-20 mark this season, said that the split was a mutual agreement. In his two years he compiled a 12-42 overall record. Assistant Coach Marcus Hudson also parted ways with SRU, leaving the jobs of Graduate Assistant Eric Murphy and Student Assistant John Powell in limbo.

SEE ROCK PAGE C-2

Softball batters competition in Cocoa Beach *Rhoades named PSAC West player of the week*

By Brandon Fox
Rocket Sports Editor

Slippery Rock may have been cold over spring break, but the Rock softball team was red hot.

Head Coach Vashion Johnson and his squad went 9-1, the team's best 10-game start since 2005, in its season-opening series down south.

The team opened the 2008 season in Columbia, S.C., with a double-header sweep of Benedict College by scores of 6-0 and 11-3.

PSAC West player of the week Stacey Rhoades got the win for the Rock in Game 1, allowing just two hits while striking out four.

She also went 1-3 with an RBI at the plate. Freshman Shardea Croes paced the Rock offensively in the first game, going 1-for-1 with a triple, two RBIs, two stolen bases and a walk.

The hits kept on coming for the Rock in the nightcap, as it took only five innings to get the win after the mercy rule was applied.

Alicia Dixon led the attack, going 3-for-4 with two RBIs.

Sophomore Kim Weindel recorded a pair of hits for SRU and freshman Shauna Walker got the win in relief, allowing only one run on four hits while fanning three batters in three innings.

The Rock then traveled to Florida for the remainder of its trip, going 7-1 in the Sunshine State. Once again it was the offense that led the way.

"We have a powerful lineup from top to bottom," Weindel said. "So the other team really has no one to avoid because the next batter is always a threat."

The Green & White shut out Division III opponent New England College by 4-0 and 12-0 scores in the Rock's first doubleheader in Florida.

The double donuts were highlighted by junior Lisa Getgen's no-hitter in game one.

"As a pitching staff, I think we really found ourselves down there," sophomore pitcher/first baseman Sheree Horvath said. "We know we can hit, but it is nice to know that as a rotation, we can keep up."

It was Croes who once again



ARCHIVED PHOTO
Senior Alicia Dixon is batting .364 with three RBIs and a stolen base in six games of action this season. Dixon and the rest of her Rock teammates finished their annual spring break trip with a 9-1 record, the team's best start since 2005.

set the tone out of the leadoff spot for the Rock, going 2-for-3 with an RBI and a run scored.

The second game was an offensive show for the Rock, as the team banged out 17 hits, with seven of them going

for extra bases, including two home runs.

Rhoades smacked her first of the year, a three-run blast, in

SEE RHOADES PAGE C-2



NATE DAYMUT/THE ROCKET

Jayme Timmons, a senior center, scored both goals in the Rock's 27-2 loss to nationally ranked West Chester Wednesday afternoon. Timmons has five goals on six shots this season.

Rock lacrosse continues to learn through losses

By Rocco Cremonese
Rocket Contributor

It may not yet show in the win column, but things are looking up in the young season for the Slippery Rock University lacrosse team.

The team dropped its first two games of the season over spring break in Florida to Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference opponent East Stroudsburg University by scores of 17-1 on March 9 and 20-1 on March 11.

Junior Midfielder Dana

Johnson recorded the lone Rock goal on March 9.

"On our first game on spring break, most of the girls who started had never played in a lacrosse game before," junior Caitlin O'Brien said.

"That was a new experience altogether. It was also our first game playing as a team. The second game, the score was worse, but we played a lot better."

That improvement may not have shown up on the stat sheet but was

SEE TIMMONS PAGE C-3

Rock baseball endures stormy start to spring

By Phil Swartzlander
Rocket Assistant Sports Editor

The Rock baseball team returned from its spring break trip with a good-but-not-great 8-5 overall record.

Head Coach Jeff Messer was pleased with the squad's performance, but thought the team could have pulled off a win or two more.

"I would have liked to be 11-2 or 10-3, but overall, we are happy with the spring break trip," Messer said.

The Rock faced tough competition, including the two-time defending national champion University of Tampa and a tough Northwood University

team, the two of which combined to hand the Rock three of its five losses on the trip.

"It was good to face those teams because it shows us what it takes to get to the World Series," junior outfielder Scott Bender said. "It's prepared us for PSAC play...we got our heads on and we are ready."

The trip's goal was to work out the starting lineup for conference play, Messer said.

They came back with the top four starting pitchers decided as well as a surprising head start for some of the batters.

"It was great to see some guys we

didn't expect to step up and start hot," Messer said. "We had some guys that struggled, but we know they will get there."

The Rock pitching staff received good outings from Mike DeCola, who pitched two scoreless innings in relief, and Rich Hocanson, who threw 16 innings while only giving up four earned runs.

Bender and Billy Herman lit up opposing pitching, batting .405 and .396, respectively, while combining to drive in 19 runs.

"Our new assistant coach (has) us

SEE RAINY PAGE C-2