

April 27, 2007

Softball sets school record for wins with sweeps

By Rebecca Olesky
Rocket Contributor

On Tuesday, the Rock blew past Salem International on the road and set a single-season wins record.

"They were good wins," Rock Head Coach Vashion Johnson said. "We used a lot of the second string and they played well."

The Rock set in stone a school record for single-season victories when it captured wins by scores of 6-0, 9-0 in a doubleheader.

The Rock (26-18 overall, 8-8 PSAC West) has now won 12 of its last 14 games, with the past four coming by way of the shutout, which were pitched by senior pitcher Courtney Conron.

Conron who has pitched eight shutouts this season alone, now has a record of 11-7. She also pitched a one-hitter in Tuesday's first game and a two-hitter in the second game. She struck out two in the first game and five in the second, while giving up one walk in each of the games.

Junior infielder Stacey Rhoades led the Rock's game one-offensive attack with a double and two RBIs, while junior outfielder Meghan McHenry hit a solo home run.

Senior catcher Kelly Wolfe was 2-for-2 with an RBI. Sophomore infielder Lauren Saulter was also 2-for-2. Freshman catcher



NATE DAYMUT/THE ROCKET
SRU sophomore pitcher Lisa Getgen winds up during last week's game against Mercyhurst. Getgen and the team's other pitchers have kept the Rock in contention for PSAC and regional playoff spots.

Kim Weindel hit an RBI and junior utility Emily Novitsky recorded a double to the Rock effort.

Rhoades smacked a two-run home run, her 14th of the season, and Saulter added a single to the Rock's attack in game two.

Junior infielder Alicia Dixon was 2-for-4 with two RBIs, while freshman catcher/

infielder Jessica Kortz was 2-for-2 with one RBI. Sophomore utility Lisa Getgen was 2-for-4 with a double and one RBI as Wolfe recorded an RBI.

On Monday, the Rock dominated non-conference foe Ohio Valley with two wins, 14-0 and 10-0 on the road.

"It was a really exciting win," Johnson

said. "We were able to close that chapter."

Kortz hit three home runs and Conron pitched two shutouts to help lead the Rock to a sweep of Ohio Valley.

Kortz hit two home runs in the first game and then added a two hits in the second game to bring her season record to 12. She went 3-for-3 with two RBIs in the first game and finished the day out with 4-for-6 with four RBIs.

Rhoades hit a two-run homer in game one to up her school record to 13 and hit a double in each game, while sophomore infielder Kelly Conron homered in the first game.

McHenry hit a double and three RBIs and sophomore infielder Kayla Ray pounded a double in game one. McHenry was 4-for-5 with two RBIs in the second game to round out the day with a 6-for-9 effort and five RBIs.

Ray went 3-for-4 in game two and finished the day 5-for-8 and had one RBI.

Freshman infielder Courtney Vincent was 3-for-4 with two RBIs and freshman infielder Amber Phillips and senior catcher Kelly Wolfe added a double each in the second win of the day.

Conron halted Ohio Valley to three hits in game one and to six hits in game two. She

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SHIPPS AH-OY!

Rock baseball prepares for pivotal four-game series against Shippensburg this weekend



NATE DAYMUT/THE ROCKET
Rock junior first basemen Dan Hudeck tries to lay down a bunt during last week's game against Indiana (Pa.). Hudeck and the Rock will need to bring their bats against Shippensburg this weekend. SRU needs only one win against the Red Raiders to clinch a PSAC playoff spot.

By Caleb Pardick
Rocket Staff

No one would have blamed the Rock baseball team if it had overlooked its Tuesday doubleheader with West Liberty State (W.Va.) College. But it didn't.

Everyone would have been able to understand if the hardballers were more focused on their four-game showdown with Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference West Division-leading Shippensburg University this weekend.

But they weren't.

And with the twinbill sweep of West Liberty State (18-19), the Rock (28-12 overall, 11-5 PSAC) now sits in prime position for a regional playoff berth on the eve of a series that will likely determine the team's conference playoff status.

"We played the games with West Liberty like they were conference games," said Rock Head Coach Jeff Messer, whose team now needs just

one win or one Indiana (Pa.) loss to lock up a berth in next week's PSAC Playoffs. "It was difficult mentally because we knew we have a big four-game set with Shippensburg coming up, but at the same time we had to use it as a game to make our case for a regional berth, too."

With the sweep and last weekend's four-game drubbing of PSAC-West for Clarion, the Rock has now won six in a row and nine of its last 11.

A California (Pa.) loss and a sweep of Shippensburg would also give the Rock the PSAC-West crown and a higher seeding in the conference playoffs, which are two things Messer said he isn't particularly concerned with.

"We have a chance at winning the West, but really, that's just a title," Messer said. "I have no problem playing (PSAC-East leader and No. 2 nationally-ranked) Kutztown. Once you get into that

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ARCHIVED PHOTO
Wide receiver Paul Favers tries to make a move during a game last season. Favers will be a big part of the offense in 2007.

Balanced offense will be key for Rock football in 2007

By Adam Brewer
Rocket Sports Editor

Whenever a football team at any level — high school, college or professional — loses its last game of the season by a missed field goal that could have sent them to the playoffs, the team is anxiously waiting for next year.

After 14 spring practices in the cold, snowy and rainy Slippery Rock weather, the Rock football team will end its spring practice schedule with the annual Green & White game today at N. Kerr Thompson Stadium at 7 p.m.

The game is open to the public and is free of charge. The game will consist of the normal scoring system of a game, with the first half operating on a regular game clock and the second half featuring a running clock. The Green team will have the first team offense and defense while the White team will include the second team units.

"We have had a very successful spring with the practices," said Rock all-time winningest coach George Mihalik, who

will be entering his 20th season at the helm. "There has been tremendous competition between defense and offense, and it has been very physical spring practice in terms of the amount of hitting and contact we have been doing."

"I believe this team realizes how close we came in '06 to a national playoff bid, and the hunger to achieve that goal is even greater now. When you get as close as we did, it's a burning desire to put in that extra effort to experience the conference championship and national playoff."

After the final spring scrimmage today, the Rock's 2007 season officially starts with a long summer break followed by training camp. Four of the first five games of the 2007 season for SRU will be played at home, and the season opener, set for Aug. 30, will be against Division-II Seton Hill, whose football program has been around for just four years and is a part of the West Virginia Conference.

"We are very excited to open the season at home on a Thursday night," Mihalik said. "I think it's been seven or eight years since we've opened the season at home."

Seton Hill is a team in our region, so that game will help our regional rankings. With so many home games to begin the season, it gives us the opportunity to start off the season strong."

Mihalik is also happy with the fact that the Rock has six home games on the season. The Rock has typically had only five per year.

"To have six home games is a plus for the university and the program," Mihalik said. "It's an excellent way for the fans to get involved in the football season early, and as a team will need to get ready for that early slate of home games."

Besides playing Seton Hill to start the season off, the Rock will travel to Bowie State in week three. The Rock will play each of its six divisional opponents, plus games against Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference Eastern Division foes Millersville, Kutztown and East Stroudsburg.

The Rock, which went 7-4 overall and 4-2 PSAC West last year, will need a balanced

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