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[Joe](#)

[Streaking Tigers look to continue successful runs](#)

Stop the presses. The RIT men's hockey team is 0-3 and headed for a tough season, right? Not at all, and I will get to that in a few paragraphs. The big stories this week, are the impressive runs put forth by the men's and women's soccer squads, along with the men's cross country team.

Rewind to the night of Sept. 29, when the Tiger [men's soccer team](#) fell to University of Rochester, 3-1, dropping their record to 2-6-1. Battling injuries, the Tigers season looked lost to some. Three weeks later, the Tigers are sitting pretty, riding a five-game winning streak, and find themselves tied for first place in the Empire 8 conference with crosstown rival Nazareth. The Tigers have outscored its foes, 11-5 during the streak. Junior transfer [Dom Colaprete](#) leads RIT with six goals, including three-game winning tallies in the last four games. The Tigers host St. John Fisher at 12 p.m. on Saturday, looking to get one step closer to clinching a playoff berth. If RIT wins out, they will host the 2009 Empire 8 Championship.

"We have a very young team, with 18 first year players, five freshman starters, including four in defensive positions. The majority of our players have had to make a very steep transition to the collegiate level of competition," said RIT Head Coach [Bill Garno](#). "We have also been through more than our share of adversity since we got back to campus in August, but the team has stuck together, continues to train very hard, and perseverance is become a defining characteristic for the team. Four victories in double overtime speak not only to the fitness level of the team, but also to the character of our team. We are very much still evolving as a team, and I think the team is playing better and better. We're very much looking forward to the remainder of the season, and the opportunity to continue to improve."

The [women's soccer](#) squad got off to a tough start as well, starting the year 0-3-3. Since then, the Tigers have roared back with a 6-1 record over their last seven games to move to 6-4-3 overall, and keep its hopes alive for an Empire 8 playoff berth. Over the last seven games, RIT has outscored its foes 13-3, with five shutouts. This afternoon, RIT's Empire 8 playoff berth is on the line at Nazareth. RIT needs a win today to stay in the hunt, as they are in a three-way tie for the fourth and final berth with Hartwick and Stevens.

"We have received team continuity on the field," said Head Coach [Tom Natalie](#) about his team's turnaround. "Our team has nine freshman and as a group we have found formations and a rhythm. This in turn has built confidence that we can get it done."

On Saturday, the men's cross country team continued its tremendous season, placing second among division I and division III teams at the Albany Invitational on Saturday. The Tigers tallied 73 points, and defeated a dozen Division I schools. The Tigers bested nationally ranked Plattsburgh State Cardinals, beating the 25th ranked Cardinals by a whopping 88 points. It is the fourth time in school history that RIT defeated a nationally-ranked team, and first time since 2006. Senior [Jared Burdick](#) was RIT's top runner for the third meet in a row, placing third with an impressive time of 24:44. In addition, [Mike Brindak](#) was sixth and [Mike Hardbarger](#), 11th. All three were members of the squad in 2006 that advanced to the NCAA Tournament. This year's team has a great chance to advance to the NCAA's as well.

"This has been the most consistent season I have had with a team at RIT," said RIT Head Coach [Dave Warth](#). "We are consistent in practice and competitions, which is showing in the excellent meet results we have had so far and I believe will show even more as we move to the championship season. This team set a goal of making nationals and finishing in the top 20 and I believe we are right on track at this time."

Back to men's hockey. While on the surface, the 3-1 and 5-3 losses to St. Lawrence and Clarkson last weekend look discouraging, the effort and play was anything but. On Friday, RIT dominated St. Lawrence for a good 52 minutes of that contest, out-shot the Saints, 43-20, including 23-5 in the third period, and played about as well of a road game as you can imagine. Unfortunately, the Tigers ran into a hot goaltender in Robby Moss, who stopped everything, and played the game of his life. The following evening, RIT fired 45 shots, including 21 in the third period, but could [not get past Clarkson](#), 5-3.

Clarkson was definitely the better of the two teams, but even so, RIT played another strong road game. If the Tigers continue to play this way, with strong effort and determination, there is no doubt in my mind that they will duplicate, or even surpass last season's 20-6-2 record in conference play. It will not be easy this weekend, as well, [with the annual trip to Air Force](#) for two tough games with the Falcons. RIT is 7-8-2 against the Falcons since 2005, and 10-10-2 all-time.

Despite the 0-3 start, RIT Head Coach [Wayne Wilson](#) is not deterred at all, either.

"I am very pleased with the play of our team, just not the results," said Wilson. "In four short years we have closed the gap

on Clarkson and St Lawrence. We used to go up there and try to hang on while getting out shot now we can turn it up a notch and have had great games with dominating third periods. I'm really proud of our improvement over the course of playing Division I."

Next week, co-director Steve Jaynes will share his trip on the road to and from Colorado Springs with the hockey team.

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