

## Nothing More Than Feelings?

SEVEN ATHLETES AND COACHES SHARE THEIR SUPERSTITIONS

Whether it's picking a single-digit number to wear on a football jersey or crossing hockey sticks on the bench, athletes and coaches have always been very superstitious folks—and they're no different at Rutgers.

**TIGHT SQUEEZE** Since ninth grade, Scarlet Knight junior wide receiver Tres Moses has worn underneath his jersey the same gray Adidas T-shirt. "It's my special shirt. The first time I wore it I scored two touchdowns," he says. "It's really run down and small now, but I don't play without it."

**DON'T TOUCH** New players on the Scarlet Knights baseball team quickly learn one thing: do not touch the practice ball after it's rolled back to the dugout. "That's my ball," declares head coach Fred Hill. "I'm the only one allowed to pick it up. This thing I have is kind of a standing joke with the veteran players."

**MEAN FEETS** When Michelle Bisceglia's high school soccer team in Franklinville won a game after opening its season with a loss, she decided not to wash her socks until the team lost again. "We went on a 16-game winning streak," recalls the freshman fullback for the Scarlet Raptors women's soccer team in Camden. Her teammates, known to complain about the funky odor coming from her direction, haven't convinced her to change her ways—or her footwear. "It's a big problem



when it rains, but I hang them outside my window to dry," says Bisceglia.

**LADY LUCK** Vivian Stringer, head coach of the Scarlet Knights women's basketball team, admits to having collected a number of quirks over her 34-year career. She has to be the last person out of the locker room. She has to be the last person to take a seat on the bus. And she has to be the only person to witness her game-strategy scribbles. "If I'm going to write anything down on the chalkboard in the locker room, I need the room to be completely empty," she says.

**ENDOWED CHAIR** Fans who follow the Scarlet Raiders in Newark might wonder why assistant volleyball coach Ray Green always seems to wind up in the same seat while keeping the stats. "That's because it's intentional," says Green. "Nine years ago my team won a match when I was sitting there, and I've been

doing it ever since."

**RAP ARTIST** Scarlet Knight gymnasts have grown accustomed to the sight of teammate Sveta Shterenberg pounding on her own noggin. "I once hit myself in the head when there's no wood to knock on," says Shterenberg, noting that superstitions run in her family. The junior has also adopted a few personal peculiarities to her repertoire. Before routines, she and a teammate always exchange a special handshake and recite the same pep talk.

**ODOR CONTROL** Beth Laputl, a Camden junior, sure has a nose for the ball. "When I was a teenager playing third base on a softball team, I got into the habit of smelling the ball after it was tossed around the infield," she says. "Now I do something that I've got to do." Apparently, it's working. Going into the season, the Scarlet Raptors centerfielder had stolen 53 consecutive bases, a school record.—BG