

Lacrosse team undefeated

by NORMAN CANNADA

The state of North Carolina has never claimed to be a hotbed for lacrosse.

At the present time there is no interscholastic competition in North Carolina's high schools. No member of Carolina's 1982 lacrosse team is from this state.

ON SPORTS

Still, the Tar Heels have one thing no other lacrosse team in the country has—a national championship.

"The lacrosse program wasn't in as bad shape as some people might have thought," UNC coach Willie Scroggs said. "They had already had some success on the national level."

Scroggs came to Chapel Hill from lacrosse national power Johns Hopkins four years ago. He began recruiting heavily and last spring brought the Tar Heels their first national championship. This year UNC is 4-0 and is ranked No. 1 in the country.

The key to this success has been recruiting players from out of state. This year's Tar Heel team has seven players who were all-state in Maryland in 1979.

"We've had great success recruiting," Scroggs said. "I think one reason that people have been willing to go there is that there is no professional career in lacrosse. So, it's not as important for them to go to a place that might help them in that respect."

"We have several attractions that might make someone want to come here. We play Division I lacrosse, which is the highest level of lacrosse, and we have a very academically attractive school."

With the success of recruiting and the rise as a national power, the Tar Heels lacrosse team has enjoyed more success in crowd attendance. In a game against Navy last May, a crowd of more than 5,400 fans paid to see the game. And classes were not even in session.

"The attendance has been very encouraging," Scroggs said. "We've done it with a minimum of publicity. We're not trying to educate everyone on lacrosse, but we do say that we have one of the top lacrosse teams in the country. It's an enjoyable game and we play in the springtime in Chapel Hill."

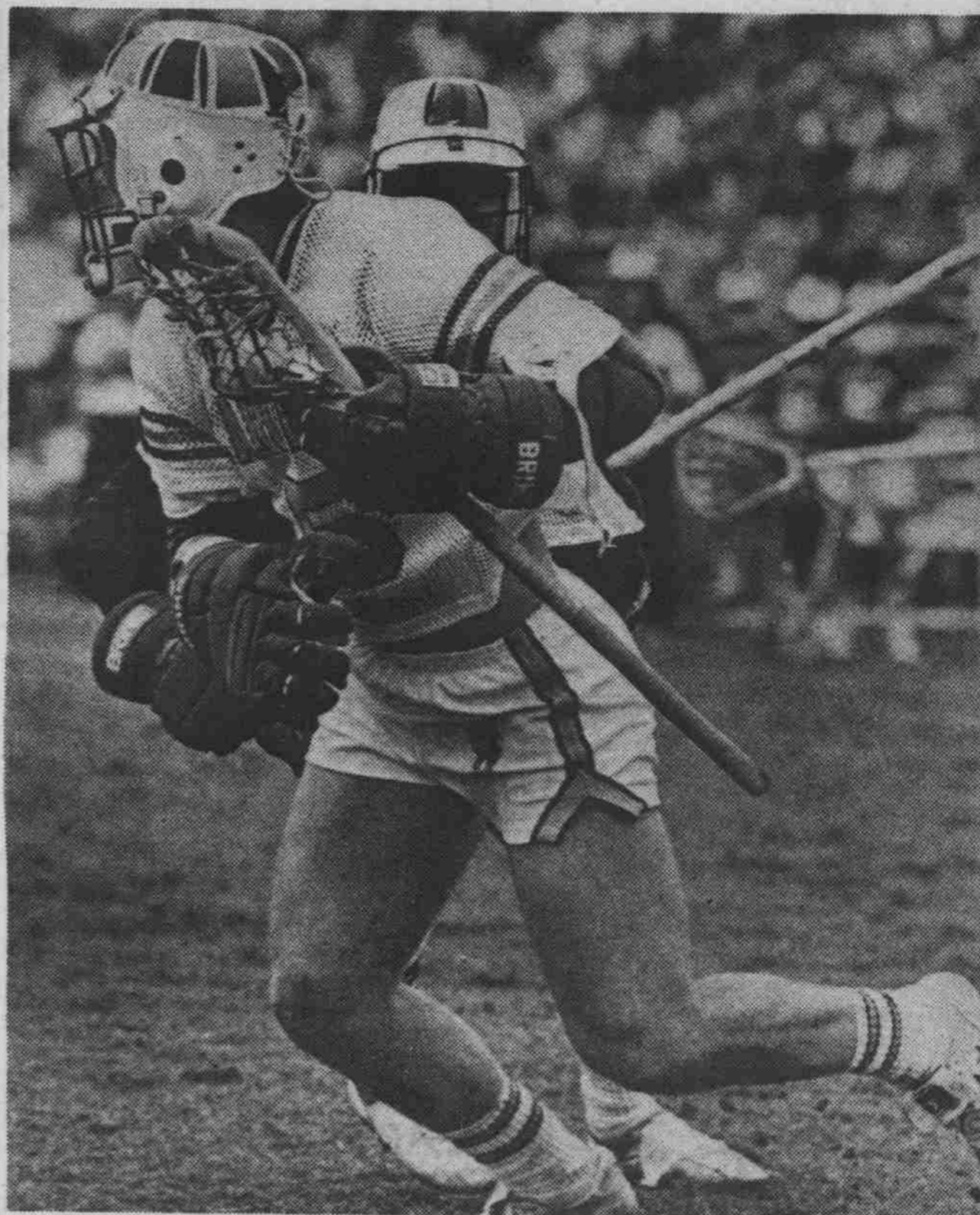
Although, there is not a strong high school program in lacrosse in North Carolina, the trend appears to be on the verge of a reversal.

"We haven't gone around forcing lacrosse on anybody but we have made ourselves available to schools who are interested in learning about the sport," Scroggs said. "Our players and coaches have already worked with just about every high school in this area. I don't think it will be long before there will be serious discussion about lacrosse as an interscholastic sport."

The Tar Heels put their No. 1 ranking on the line this weekend against perennial national power Johns Hopkins in Baltimore. UNC won the last meeting in the national championship game last year, breaking a string of Johns Hopkins' national championships.

"It's one of the biggest if not the biggest game of the season," Scroggs said of the game with the No. 2 ranked Blue Jays. "But it's not a must win. I don't think they have a score to settle and we don't have anything to prove. We just want to go out and do the best job we can."

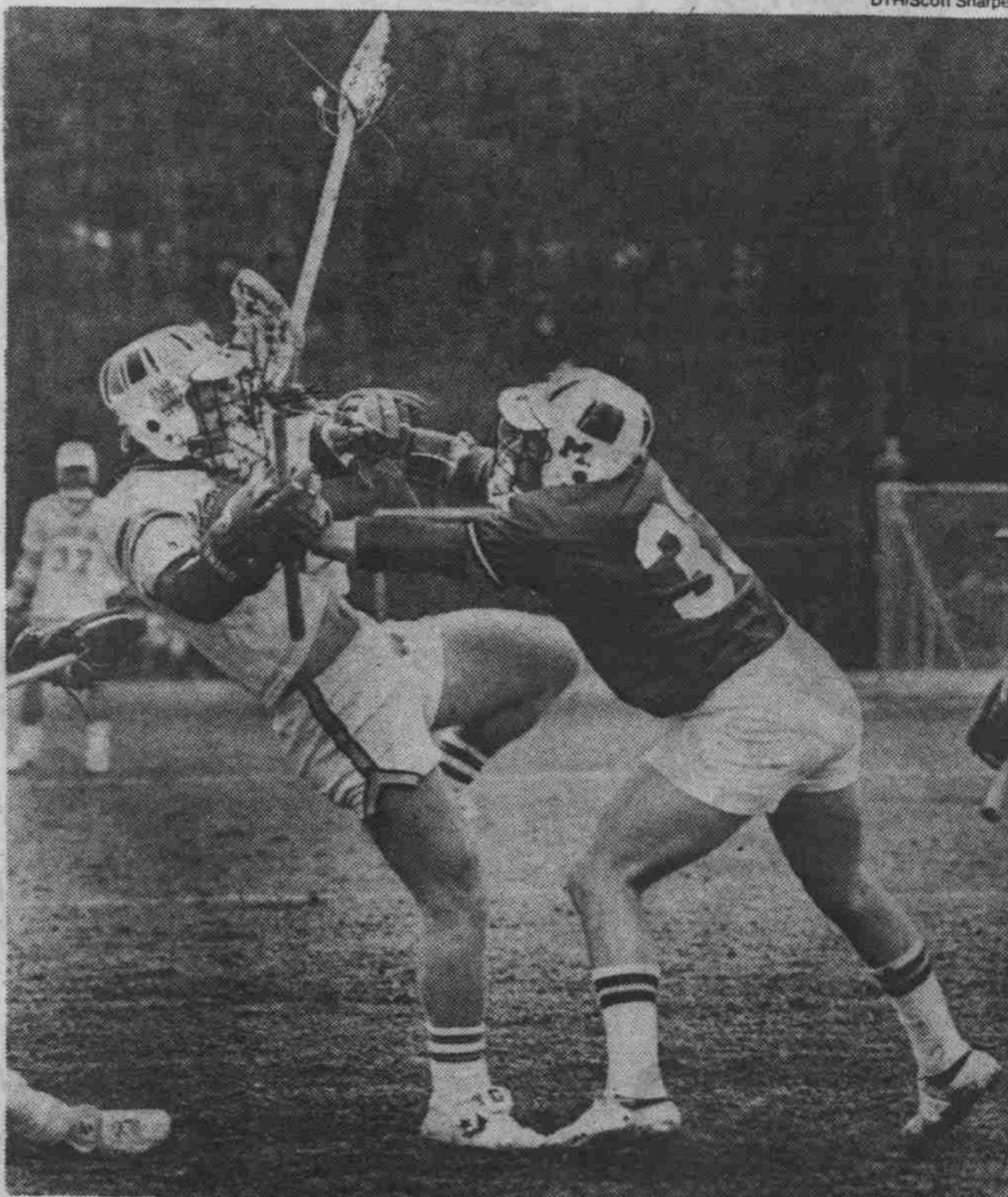
Norman Cannada is a columnist for **The Spotlight**.



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The UNC lacrosse team has earned a reputation for its slick stickwork. Three Tar Heels put some moves on their Maryland opponents.