

# Tar Heel lacrosse: a national title and the joy of revenge



Tommy Haus, shown here in an early-season Virginia loss, paced the Tar Heels in the national tourney

By **EDDY LANDRETH**  
Staff Writer

With a phoenix-like performance, the North Carolina lacrosse team arose as NCAA champions on May 26 for its third national title in the past six years.

After a season with three defeats, including one especially humbling 16-4 loss to Johns Hopkins, people began to give this team up for dead.

However, UNC did manage to make the NCAA tournament and proceeded to avenge its losses by beating those same teams - Maryland, Johns Hopkins and Virginia - on its way to the national title.

So, what type of magic did head coach Willie Scroggs perform in such a dramatic about-face? None, according to him.

"We just got hot near the end of the season and started to play our best lacrosse," Scroggs said. "Last year we lost in the semi-finals of the NCAA in sudden-death and on paper we may have had a better group than we had this year. We had more outstanding players, but the competition was maybe a little keener last year."

Hot or not, attaining this championship was no easy task. But, having to play the teams that had beaten them earlier was advantageous to the sport, Scroggs said.

"I think it's good for lacrosse," he said, "that we could lose three games

and come back and win the championship, and it's great to beat the three teams we lost to in the regular season."

The Tar Heels first beat Maryland 12-10, which placed them in the semi-finals against two-time defending champion and top-seeded Johns Hopkins. They once again rose to the occasion with a 10-9 overtime victory.

In the finals, fifth-seeded UNC found itself matched against ACC rival Virginia, who had won a 11-9 decision at Chapel Hill in the regular season.

North Carolina's Gary Seivold played well throughout the tournament, scoring five goals and contributing five assists. But his most important goal came at 2:10 in overtime against Virginia, to give the Tar Heels the national championship.

North Carolina's top player in the tournament may have been All-American defenseman Tom Haus. Haus held Virginia standout Jeff Nicklas to one goal. In the season's previous confrontation, the Cavalier attackman dominated UNC's defense with six goals.

"He (Haus) made it tough for me to play my game," Nicklas said. "He's probably the best defenseman I've faced all year."

Although all championships are special, this one was different

because the team had played so poorly earlier in the year, Scroggs said.

"This year had a lot of significance because this team was a team that was kind of counted out," Scroggs said. "They came together and played their best lacrosse when the tournament started. That made it a good feeling."

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## Madden

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59 percent from the field. But during the NCAA Tournament his playing time dwindled and he was not a factor.

Over the summer, Madden attended school at UNC and according to Smith, struggled in calculus while performing capably in his other courses. As for the decision to hold Madden out a year, there was an air of inevitability in Smith's tones as he talked about the situation. "We'll know better at the end of the year where he stands academically," the coach said. "It could work out best for Kevin, but it won't be the best for this year's team."

The consequences for next year's team are obviously difficult to estimate at this point, particularly given Madden's lack of quality playing time during the NCAA's. But the decision robs Smith of a number of options, and may thrust Curtis Hunter into a starting role. As for Madden, it will be a year of wait and see. Rumors of Madden transferring have been floating around, but at this point it appears he will be staying in Chapel Hill.

"I think he's happy," Smith said. "He knows what he has to do."



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