

Veteran field hockey squad anxious for a return to Final Four

By ANDREW PODOLSKY
Staff Writer

"This is the strongest team we have ever had." — UNC field hockey coach Karen Shelton.

It has been just about nine months now since the UNC field hockey team coasted into the slot of the third-ranked team in the nation in 1986.

On the surface, this was quite an admirable accomplishment, but seventh-year coach Karen Shelton and the rest of the 1987 team head into this season with a grim look of determination. The 1986 team spent all but one week atop the national polls before losing to 14th-ranked Northwestern in the last game of the regular season.

Soon to follow was a 2-1 NCAA semifinal loss to New Hampshire, which had handed the Tar Heels their first setback early in the season. That loss, coupled with a 4-0 victory over Penn State in the consolation game of the Final Four, gave UNC a 19-3 final record.

But this year the team may finally have the tools to go all the way. "We've got depth, good leadership, and we have another traditional Carolina strong defensive squad," Shelton said. "One of the big keys is the leadership we need from our many seniors."

In the last four years, UNC has finished the season ranked 13th, eighth, fifth and third. Judging by that rate of improvement, the Tar Heels could net their first national championship.

The team lost only two starters from last year, including star forward Claire Dougherty, while picking up a number of top recruits, including forward Laurel Hershey, from Hummersville, Pa., goalkeeper Evelien Spee, from The Netherlands, and

forward Peggy Anthon, of St. Louis. "I feel really good about the developing competition for the open slots on the starting lineup," said Shelton. "We had a taste of being on top last year, and losing that will be a big motivating force for the team this season."

"We met all our goals last year, and we're aiming a little higher this year with a fifth consecutive ACC championship, and making the Final Four on the agenda. If we can get to the Final Four this year, I think we have a great shot at winning."

Because the team is senior-dominated, 1987 may be the last good chance at a national championship for a while. In the next few years, sportswriters all over will be using that fun phrase "rebuilding year" to describe the team's prospects.

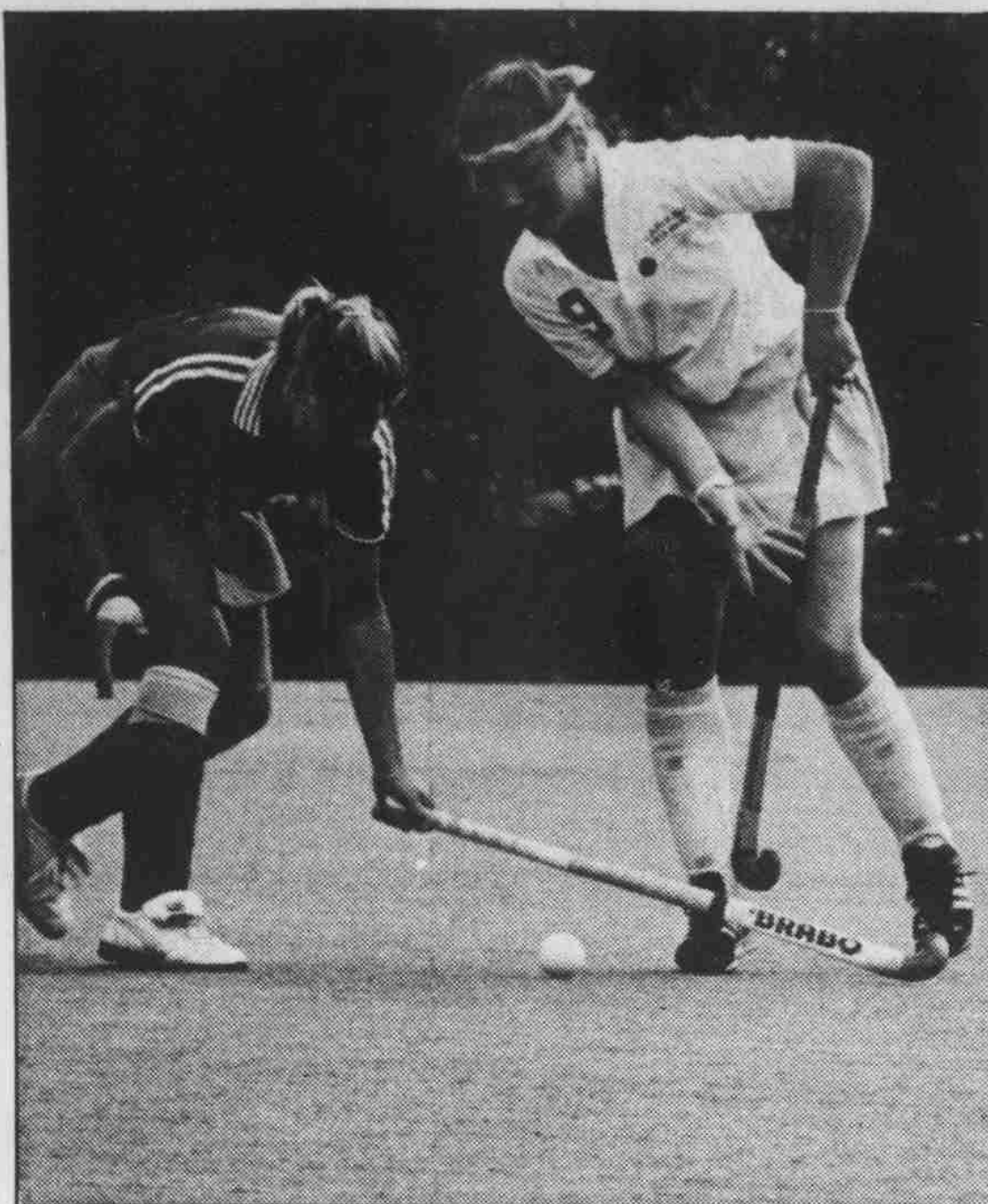
But all that is down the line. More important are the strengths of this year's squad. A multitude of veterans will lead this year's run for the title.

Sophomore sensation Julie Blaisse comes off a freshman year in which she scored a record-tying 21 goals. Senior captain Ellen Bakken will head a squad of seniors trying to win it all. The goalkeeper waiting as the final obstacle of the always-miserly defense is Kathy Mulvey. Mulvey's 1986 season included nine shutouts and a .73 goals allowed average.

Other returning players include 1986 first-team All-Americans Lori Bruney and Maryellen Falcone, and second-team All-American Tracey Yurgin.

Bruney and Yurgin competed on their home field this summer at the U.S. Olympic Festival.

A fifth consecutive ACC championship shouldn't be too much trouble this season. The Tar Heels



Tar Heel file photo

Sophomore Julie Blaisse (9) will be essential to field hockey's success

host the tournament at AstroTurf Field, with their main competition coming from Maryland and Virginia.

The hunt for the national title will be a bit rougher. Shelton expects the Tar Heels to begin the season ranked either second or third behind defending national champion Iowa.

Other competition nationally will include Old Dominion, which holds a 9-4 advantage in the series with the Tar Heels since the rivalry began in 1978. In fact, up until two years ago, ODU had defeated UNC nine straight times.

"ODU is probably our biggest rival," Shelton said. "They seem to

use selective excellence in their sports programs. After turning their women's basketball team into national champions, they focused their attention on field hockey and bang! they win three consecutive national championships. They also have the coach who won all these titles returning this year after a three-year absence."

Perhaps UNC's biggest game this year will come against New Hampshire. The Penmen, of course, handed UNC two of its three defeats last season. UNC has never defeated the Penmen, despite outshooting them 23-5 in their semifinal loss last year and similarly dominating their first contest.

Three UNC foes in AP pre-season Top Twenty

From Associated Press reports

For the third year in a row and the sixth time in Barry Switzer's 15 years as head coach, Oklahoma is the pre-season choice in the Associated press poll to win college football's national championship.

Clemson, the only Atlantic Coast Conference school ranked, is No. 9. Maryland, Georgia Tech and North Carolina received votes, but didn't come close to cracking the Top 20.

North Carolina will meet the Sooners Sep. 11 in Norman, Okla., and will also face Top 10 teams Auburn and Clemson.

The Sooners were picked by an overwhelming margin over Nebraska, their annual rival for the Big Eight championship.

This is only the fourth time since the AP began its pre-season polls in 1950 that two teams from the same conference have been ranked first and second. Iowa and Ohio State of the Big Ten were 1-2 in the 1961 pre-season poll, Nebraska and Colorado of the Big Eight held the top spots in 1972, and Nebraska and Oklahoma led the way in 1983.

Oklahoma is the first school to be ranked first in the pre-season poll three consecutive years.

Defending national champion Penn State, which must cope with the

loss of NFL first-round draft picks D.J. Dozier and Shane Conlan, is No. 11 having received one first-place vote and 603 points.

AP Top 20

1. Oklahoma (55)	11-1	1,193
2. Nebraska (3)	10-2-0	1,005
3. UCLA (1)	8-3-1	935
4. Ohio State	10-3-0	906
5. Auburn	10-2-0	835
6. Louisiana St.	9-3-0	789
7. Michigan	11-2-0	754
8. Florida St.	7-4-1	723
9. Clemson	8-2-2	682
10. Miami, Fla.	11-1-0	676
11. Penn. St. (1)	12-0-0	603
12. Arkansas	9-3-0	598
13. Washington	8-3-1	521
14. Arizona St.	10-1-1	442
15. Texas A&M	9-3-0	424
16. Iowa	9-3-0	318
17. Tennessee	7-5-0	231
18. Notre Dame	5-6-0	207
19. Southern Cal	7-5-0	141
20. Florida	6-5-0	127
(tie) Georgia	8-4-0	127

Others receiving votes: Pittsburgh 118, Alabama 67, Colorado 41, Michigan State 33, Mississippi 24, South Carolina 23, San Diego St. 17, Arizona 8, Brigham Young 8, Stanford 8, Illinois 5, Maryland 3, Syracuse 3, Boston College 2, Georgia Tech 2, North Carolina 2, Oklahoma St. 1.

Summer

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Baseball Draftees

Five Tar Heels were selected in the June major league baseball draft, including star shortstop Darin Campbell, who decided not to sign with the Chicago Cubs in order to return for his junior season.

The four UNC signees were first baseman Howard Freiling (L.A. Dodgers), and pitchers David Trautwein (N.Y. Mets), Doug Torborg (Pittsburgh Pirates) and Todd Koczynski (Texas Rangers).

Freiling, who drove in a team-leading 69 runs as a junior last season, decided to pass up his senior year

after the Dodgers tabbed the Philadelphia native in the eighth round. Freiling has played this summer with Vero Beach (Fla.) of the Class A Florida State League.

Trautwein and Torborg have been competitors in the New York-Penn Summer A League, pitching for Little Falls and Watertown, respectively.

Koczynski, who finished his senior year with a flourish of complete game victories, decided to put medical school on hold to play for the Gulf Coast (Fla.) Rangers rookie league team.

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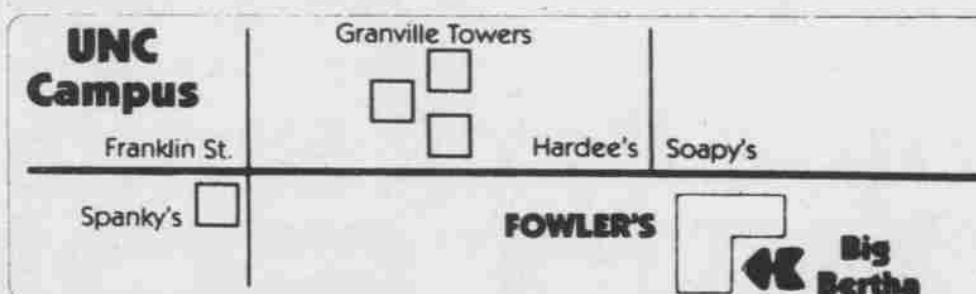
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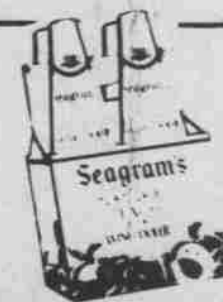
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