

Sports

Super Saturday — busy weekend for UNC



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Lacrosse, 6-2, tries to pick up a win over top-ranked Johns Hopkins at Kenan Stadium Saturday

Lax faces No. 1-ranked Johns Hopkins at Kenan

By JOHN BLAND
Staff Writer

In the world of lacrosse, all roads lead from Baltimore, Md., and Johns Hopkins University.

The Blue Jays have won seven national championships since the NCAA tournament began in 1971. Before that, under the U.S. Intercollegiate Lacrosse Association (USILA) jurisdiction, they won many, many more.

UNC head coach Willie Scroggs played for the Blue Jays and was an assistant coach there before joining the Tar Heel program in 1978. Johns Hopkins head coach Don Zimmerman also played for the Jays and was an assistant at UNC before returning to Hopkins in 1983.

Johns Hopkins is consistently at the top of the polls and is always a challenger for the national title.

Then again, so are the Tar Heels. Saturday, UNC's fifth-ranked lacrosse team (6-2, 0-1), coming off a painful loss to Maryland, faces the top-ranked and undefeated Blue Jays of Johns Hopkins University at 3 p.m. in a game that should be one heckuva defensive battle.

The game will be the second half of Super Saturday, which opens with the Blue-White football scrimmage at 1 p.m. This is one of the few times since 1978 that UNC's lacrosse team has played in Kenan Stadium.

"Johns Hopkins' defense is one of the most dominating in the game,"

Scroggs said. "They are very effective at putting a lot of pressure on opposing teams' offenses, and we'll have our hands full trying to combat that."

But the Tar Heels' defense is nothing to be ashamed about, either. Senior defensemen Paul Fitzpatrick and Craig O'Callaghan lead a unit that has been exceptionally stingy so far. Senior goalkeeper Pat Olmert's .643 save percentage (72 saves, 40 goals allowed) has also been a key factor in the Tar Heels' overall defensive play.

Offensively, however, the Tar Heels just haven't been able to get it together. The four goals scored against Maryland were the fewest since the Tar Heels beat the Jays 19-1 way back in 1973. Counter that with the record 29 scored by UNC against hapless Ohio State earlier in the year, and you've got a team that can't seem to make up its mind.

Sophomore attackman Michael Thomas leads the Tar Heels in assists (with 17) and has 13 goals to go along with that. Senior attackmen John Szczypinski and Neill Redfern lead the team in scoring with 15 and 14 goals, respectively.

But in order to get their offense in gear, the Tar Heels will have to figure out how to get past the Blue Jays' tight defense and, most importantly, their junior goalkeeper, Quint Kessenich.

As a freshman, Kessenich led

Johns Hopkins to the 1987 NCAA championship. And, after a disappointment at the end of last season (the Jays were upset by the Virginia Cavaliers in the quarterfinals, the first time since the tournament began that they had not made at least the semis), the Jays are gunning to take the title back.

Kessenich, a first team All-American last year, has 55 saves with 22 goals allowed for a save percentage of .679 this season. To get to him, though, the Tar Heels have to beat defenseman Dave Pietramala, another first team All-American last year.

Offensively, the Jays are led by sophomore attackman Matt Panetta, who has 10 goals and six assists for 16 points, followed by three players with eight goals each: midfielder John Wilkens (three assists), midfielder Brendan Kelly (two assists) and attackman Jeff Ihm (one assist).

To break the Blue Jays, the Tar Heel offense will have to rise to the occasion.

Johns Hopkins leads the series 8-6 and has won three in a row, but all by only one goal. Last year's affair was another low-scoring defensive battle that the Blue Jays took 6-5 at Homewood Field in Baltimore.

The last Tar Heel victory was in the 1986 NCAA semifinals, which the Tar Heels won 10-9 on their way to the national title.

Kennedy back to lead golfers

By BOBBY McCROSKEY
Staff Writer

Ask Brendan Kennedy what adversity means to him, and the redshirt junior from Winter Park, Fla., can give a variety of answers. That's not surprising to anyone who follows UNC golf on a regular basis.

But, he also knows how to overcome adversity by not giving up. A winning attitude and a confident smile go with him each day to the golf course. The important thing this year is that, now, they also leave with him.

This new frame of mind is the main difference between Kennedy today and one year ago.

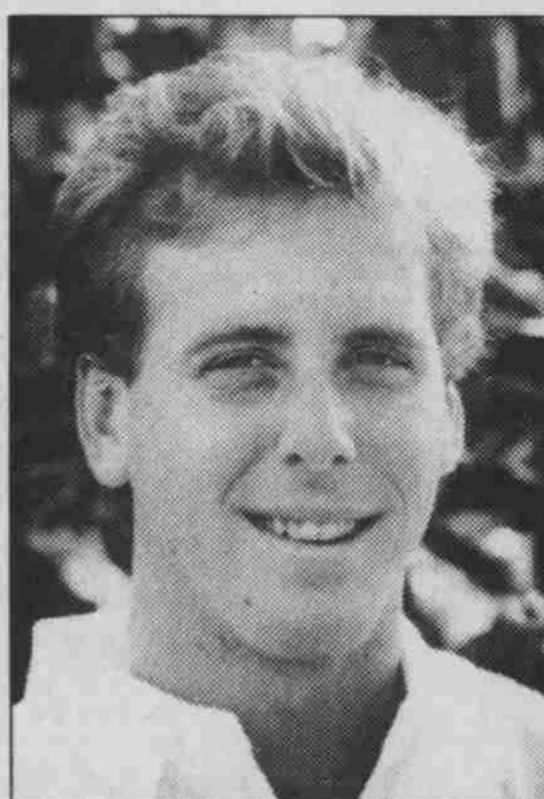
Because of his poor performance last year, Kennedy lost all confidence in his abilities. As a result, coach Devon Brouse decided that redshirting Kennedy would be the best thing for all involved.

"Being redshirted had a positive effect because I wasn't playing well at all," Kennedy said. "I almost quit golf on three different occasions. I was down on myself, and I was really close to quitting. The year off gave me time to do well in school and figure out how I stood with the game, whether I wanted to keep playing or not."

"I decided I wanted to (keep playing), so I worked really hard. I'm back to a point where I can compete on a high level."

Brouse agreed with Kennedy. "Brendan lost his confidence because he wasn't qualifying well," Brouse said. "We didn't want him to waste a year, so we decided on redshirting him. It gave him the opportunity to regain his confidence."

Kennedy first learned the game of golf from his father. Through good times and bad, his father has been supporting and encouraging his



Brendan Kennedy

efforts.

"My dad started me playing when I was six years old," Kennedy said. "He cut down some clubs for me. He didn't push me into it, but he'd take me out to the course with him. He left (the decision) up to me, but I liked it so much. I just picked it up naturally."

"He sponsors me during the summer to play in amateur tournaments. He's probably seen every competitive round I've played, so he's had a big influence."

Kennedy began his career at UNC in high fashion. He cracked a tough starting lineup and went on to finish fourth individually in the 1986 ACC Championship, as the Tar Heels captured the team title.

"I think doing so well my freshman year was definitely a factor in losing my game," Kennedy said. "I had no expectations as a freshman. No one knew who I was, so I could go out

and play aggressively, and I had a good year."

"After that, expectations were heaped on me, from my coach, the players, my parents and my friends. People who didn't even know me, but knew I had played well, were expecting me to play well, and I felt that. When I didn't perform, I let it affect me."

This year has been a different story for Kennedy. He has regained his confidence and has been the Tar Heels' top golfer since the second tournament of the season, according to Brouse. In five tournaments, he has four individual top 20 finishes. He averages 73.17 strokes per round. Last year's disappointments are fading fast.

"In the past, I was more aware of how other people were playing," Kennedy said. "When my game turned bad, I learned that I can't change what other people are doing. I need to play my own game and do the best I can every time I play."

Kennedy lets his winning attitude, instead of a poor performance, carry over from week to week.

With the Tar Heel Invitational, which begins today at Finley Golf Course, and the ACC tournament coming up next Friday in Rocky Mount, these next two weekends are no exception.

"I think we have a good chance of winning (the Tar Heel Invitational), but I don't think any of us is expecting to win it," Kennedy said. "It's dangerous when you expect to win something. If we play well and another team beats us, that's fine. If we play poorly and win, I don't think we can be satisfied. We'd like to win, and I think we can. But our goal is to play well."

Baseball faces tough ACC competition this weekend

By JASON BATES
Staff Writer

The UNC baseball team is doing its part during this weekend's Sports Saturday, hosting Maryland Saturday at 6 p.m., but this is only part of a busy weekend schedule for the team.

The Tar Heels four-game challenge begins Friday with the first game of double-header against the Maryland Terrapins starting at 3 p.m. at Boshamer Stadium.

The Tar Heels (16-8, 5-2 in the ACC) will send junior right-hander John Thoden (4-0, 2.29 ERA) to the mound for the first game against the Terrapins.

Maryland (7-12, 1-7) will counter with senior co-captain Rich Smith, who is suffering through a rough start and is currently 0-6.

The Tar Heels enter Friday's games on a five-game winning streak, the last win being a 6-3 come-from-behind victory over conference rival Duke at Durham. They are currently in second place in the ACC, one game behind Clemson.

Maryland comes into the contest on a two-game winning streak, having captured four of its last five contests. Its last win was a 23-4 pounding of Catholic University as the Terrapins tagged the Catholic pitchers for 18 hits.

The Terrapin outfield provides most of the offense. Chris Burdick, a junior center fielder leads the Terrapin attack with a .362 average, a team-leading seven doubles and

four stolen bases. Ken Trusky, a senior right fielder, hits at a .356 clip. Sophomore Drew Johnson leads the team in home runs with five.

Besides Smith, also expect to see Charles Devereux (1-1, one complete game) and John Rayne (3-3, two complete games) on the mound for Maryland.

Sunday will see the Virginia Cavaliers come into Boshamer Stadium trying to avenge two losses at the hands of the Tar Heels last weekend.

Virginia (10-14-2, 3-6) enters the weekend in sixth place in the ACC. They have won their last two games: five of their last seven.

Junior center fielder Chris Kughn leads the team with a .356 average. He has 31 hits and 16 RBIs and is tied for the team lead in home runs with three.

Senior designated hitter Keith Lee comes into the game dominating the Virginia offense. He is currently hitting .350 and leads the team in hits with 36 and RBIs with 28. He shares the lead for home runs with Kughn at three.

The pitching staff is led by junior right-hander Mike Long (1-2, 5.39 ERA, 17 strikeouts), junior left-hander Keith Siler (2-2, 5.55 ERA, 32 Ks) and senior left-hander David Sammons (3-1, 6.87 ERA, 25 Ks). The man out of the pen for the Cavaliers is Kevin Stock (1-1, 2.13 ERA).

The Tar Heels' offense is led by hot-hitting catcher Jesse Levis, who leads the team in hitting with a .417

average, in hits with 35 and RBIs with 16. First baseman Steve Estroff comes in with a .270 average and 17 hits. Second baseman Dave Arendas is hitting .267, with 23 hits and 15 RBIs.

Besides Thoden, the Tar Heel pitchers are led by right-hander Jim Dougherty (3-1, 3.15 ERA, 42 strikeouts) and left-hander Frank Maney (3-0, 2.19 ERA).

The relievers are led by left-hander Brad Woodall (1-0, 1.37 ERA, 3 saves).

North Carolina is coming off of a strong performance at Duke last Tuesday, and it looks as if its early-season hitting woes are becoming a thing of the past.

Levis is hitting often and with power. Senior Ryan Howison and sophomore Darren Villani, who hit first and second in the lineup, are coming out of slumps, helping to get needed baserunners on early for the Tar Heels.

Second baseman Ron Mauer and outfielder Todd Nichols, who lead the team in homers with three apiece, give the Tar Heels the long ball threat.

In last year's doubleheader, UNC split with UVa as the Tar Heels shut down the Cavaliers in the first game, 12-1, but in the nightcap the Wahoos triumphed, 13-5.

So, if you're in the mood for baseball and you have a little time on this Super Saturday weekend, make a visit to Boshamer Stadium to root on the Tar Heels.

Levis hitting his way into national prominence

By MARK ANDERSON
Staff Writer

Hard work pays off.

If North Carolina catcher Jesse Levis lived by a motto, this simple phrase would have to be it. And his work has paid big dividends this year.

On his way to being named to the all-tourney team for the Best of the West Classic, Levis ripped hits in the first 16 games of the season, reaching base in 20 of the first 22. He leads the team with a .417 average, 16 RBIs and a .548 slugging percentage. In addition, he continues to have one of the ACC's best eyes, walking 17 times, while fanning only five.

Why the hot start? The only answer you'd expect from Levis.

"I believe that if you work hard enough, you'll get results," he said.

But Levis' results are so good, his work must have begun before this season. In fact, he credits his first major break to his brother.

"My brother Elliott looked at my build and knew I would be a catcher," Levis said. "He tried to make me a switch-hitter because I would be more valuable."

The junior currently hits only left-handed, which is still a hot commodity in a backstop.

In high school, Levis was a three-time All-Philadelphia selection and made the All-State team twice. He credits his family's support for his success along with ... you guessed it.

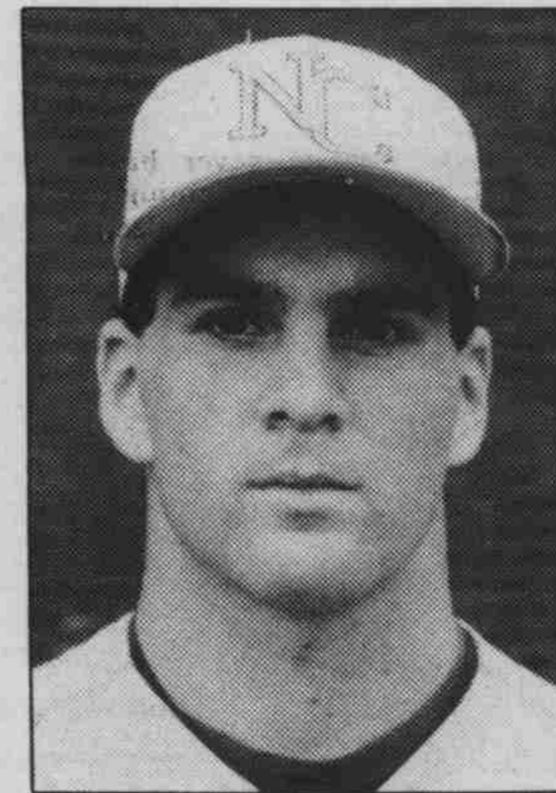
"It comes from hard work. I just love to work and have fun," Levis said.

After graduation in 1986, Levis garnered some valuable experience by playing for the U.S. National Youth Team in the World Championships in Canada. He also represented the East in the Olympic Festival.

"It gave me confidence," Levis said, "because I saw what the best was, and I saw they weren't that much better than me."

Just as in the movies, the hero was then drafted by the hometown team, the Phillies.

"It was a big thrill to be drafted," Levis said. "But I was a low pick,



Jesse Levis

so I was really torn. I knew (UNC) was a good school with a great catching tradition, and I knew the spot was open.

"If there wasn't this good an atmosphere, I wouldn't have come. I weighed all the options, and I think I made the right choice. I still do."

Once on campus, Levis showed no signs of being an awe-struck freshman. He led the team with a .344 average and 12 doubles in his rookie tour.

"I just played like I had always played," he said. "Then, I started to feel the pressure when I was leading the team in hitting. The biggest adjustment I had to make was the amount of games. I got tired and I think that hurt me."

Levis' run-down feeling seemed to carry over into his sophomore season.

"I got off to a slow start, and it seemed like I was tired every day," he said. "When I'd go 0-fer, I'd get mentally tired also. It was a good time for it, though, because it was something I needed to overcome."

He managed to overcome it to the tune of second on the team in hitting (.317), home runs (10) and total bases. He was an ACC all-tournament selection and was named second-team

All-ACC. The most significant improvement from his initial season may have been his nine-homer jump.

"I lifted weights," Levis said. "I also used wood bats over the summer in the Cape Cod League, which helped me make more solid contact."

Levis made good enough contact to travel with Team USA to Taiwan last November.

"We beat the Japan National Team (which played in the Olympics) twice and won the silver medal," he said. "I got another chance to play with the best competition and experience the country, the lifestyle."

Despite this success, Levis felt he had improvements to make before his junior year.

"I have to be consistent day in and day out," he said. "I have to show I can catch, block and throw every day."

Levis has allowed only one passed ball this season, but has thrown out only 5 of 21 base-stealers and committed four errors.

Off the field, Levis also felt he had more of a role to play.

"I'm not as vocal as I should be," he said. "I'm a quiet leader; I lead by example. I'm vocal on the field, just not in the clubhouse."

Unfortunately, after being ranked in the pre-season top 20, the team has not mirrored Levis' success.

"(The ranking) gave us a lot of confidence early," Levis said. "But it doesn't mean anything until you do something. We have a lot of talent, but we haven't put it together consistently."

The major problem seems to be the lack of support for Levis on offense.

"We have to improve our hitting," Levis said. "Our pitching has been outstanding, but you can't depend on getting a shutout. If you only get five hits a game, you don't deserve to win."

While the team's future may be unknown, Levis is a sure prospect.

Dream or no dream, one thing is certain wherever he ends up: Jesse Levis will be stinging a baseball — and working hard at it.

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