

Women's lax makes it to seventh straight ODAC quarterfinals

By Audrey Ross
STAFF WRITER

Amidst preparation for finals, the ever-so-popular Serendipity, and the regular chaotic lives of Guilford students, on Saturday the women's lacrosse team (8-8 overall, 4-4 ODAC) was defeated 18-6 in their last regular-season home game in Old Dominion Athletic Conference (ODAC) action with Randolph-Macon College (10-4, 7-1 ODAC). Saturday's game was the last game to be played on home turf for many of the members.

"I don't think we were really focused on what we needed to do," said Head Coach Ken Glardon. "It got us really frustrated. It was hard to focus on the game with everything going on during the weekend."

Freshman attack Keli Donnelly led all Guilford scorers with three points (two goals, one assist). Senior defenseman Tina Schroeter netted two balls for two points. Fellow senior Nel Andrews scored a goal and was followed by Melissa Urann, who scored off Donnelly's assist. The Yellow Jackets managed to hold Junior Jenn Jankowski, Guilford's top scorer and the current ODAC player of the week, scoreless for the first time in 26 games.

"We had a lot of turnovers and we didn't protect the ball," said Glardon. "There were too

many people open on defense. The average shot was three or four feet from the goal, which is hard to stop."

Senior goalie Lauren Gill made eight saves off of the 32 shots on goal, allowing Randolph-Macon to net 18 balls.

"I felt Saturday was a challenge to my mental strength and I succeeded," said Gill. "It is difficult for me to know that in our last home game as seniors we did not play well. Saturday was a wake-up call for Lynchburg because it flat-out showed us we needed to play tighter defense."

"The Macon game was certainly a challenge," said senior Carmen Eckman. "We certainly came close to collapsing in the first half but managed to pick it up in the second half."

Then, in Wednesday's ODAC quarterfinal, Guilford was defeated 10-6 by Lynchburg College. The Quakers finished 5th in the ODAC for the 1999 season, while 4th-ranked Lynchburg will take on Roanoke on Saturday in Salem, VA at the ODAC semifinals.

"I thought the focus was very good, much better on defense," said Glardon. "We got off to a very good start, which helped. Our biggest problems were turnovers due to the hard pressure and doubles. I am definitely proud of what the seniors have done in the past four years. The eight of them stuck with it, which is good."

Jenn Jankowski got back in the books with two goals, and Tina Schroeter also netted two goals. Nel Andrews made her fifteenth goal of the season and made one assist, while Donnelly netted one goal and Luisella Perri dished out one assist.

Gill saved 12 of 21 shots, allowing Lynchburg to score 10 goals.

"The talent that exists on this team wasn't at its peak on Saturday, but we did seem to redeem ourselves against Lynchburg," said Eckman. "We played a strong game, particularly on the defense. It was a tough loss, but I still feel like we walked off the field with an incredible sense of dignity and pride."

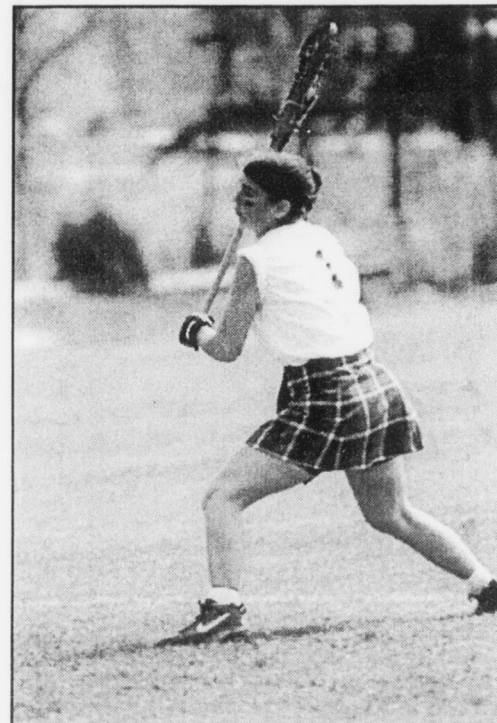
This was the conclusion to the women's season.

"I think this team is something special," said senior Becki Davis. "The past two games tested how strong we are and how much stronger we'll become. Now that I am done, it doesn't matter what place we came in. I am proud of each and every person on the team and I

hope they are proud of themselves as well."

Many seniors reflected after the game about their past seasons at Guilford. "I think today was a hard realization with two minutes left in the game that it was the last time I'd play on a college team," said Guilford's lone tri-sport athlete Luisella Perri. "But we all played like that, we gave it all we had."

"There's a lot of history on this team, a lot of strong roots," said Eckman. "So, in the end it's not really whether we advanced to the 2nd round or not, it's what we've shared with this team and what we will take with us along our separate journeys."



COURTESY OF SPORTS INFORMATION

Tina Schroeter netted two goals in as many games this past week.



COURTESY OF SPORTS INFORMATION

Carmen Eckman finishes her career as a Quaker.

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mean to do it," Gretzky said afterward. "That's what I used to say."

But even that couldn't take the luster off his day.

The puck had barely rippled the chords of the Rangers' net when Jagr, heir apparent to Gretzky's crown as the best in the game, led his teammates in forming a receiving line to shake The Great One's hand. Countless hugs, three curtain calls and several tearful laps of the arena later, Gretzky was gone, though a final set of fingerprints lingered.

Before the game the Rangers painted "99" on the ice between the nets and the backboards on both ends to recognize the space Gretzky called his "office"—the place where he dished out literally hundreds of assists. Earlier, on his third shift of the opening period, he set up shop there and two Penguins, defenseman Kevin Hatcher and right wing Alexei Kovalev, materialized on either side of the net, hoping to hem Gretzky in.

He began stickhandling, shifting the puck from backhand to forehand, keeping it tantalizingly out of the reach of both players. Neither dared lunge at him, maybe because they had seen the same replays everyone else had hundreds of times:

Gretzky threading a lethal pass through the narrowest of openings; Gretzky delicately flipping the puck over the net, off the back of the goalkeeper, and into the net; Gretzky spotting an on-rushing teammate and caroming the puck off the corner boards, the way a pool hustler might.

The Penguins, as it turned out, dodged the bullet that time and on another dozen opportunities like it. Gretzky kept setting up teammates; they kept failing to finish. But every time he did so was one more reminder that the game really does slow down for the great ones, that they know not just where everything would happen, but where it would happen next.

The only thing that surprised Gretzky all afternoon happened with 30 seconds left in the game. John Muckler, the Ranger coach who had been an assistant when Gretzky broke in with the Edmonton Oilers some 15 years ago, called a timeout with the score tied 1-1.

"John's got a daughter that's about to give birth in Edmonton ... and he said, 'I've got to tell you something. I just had a grandson today. And now you got to get the winner,'" Gretzky recalled. "And maybe when I was younger, I might have got it for him. I didn't today, so maybe that's why it's the right time."