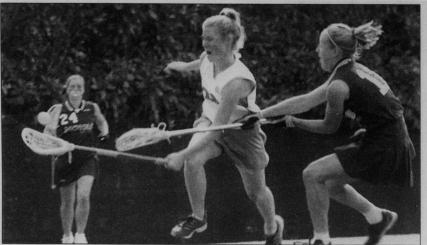
Friday, February 18, 2000



Attacker Meghann Mohler finished as the Tar Heels' leading scorer last year with 25 goals and 15 assists.

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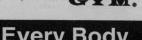
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UNC Seeks Return To Winning Ways

The women's lacrosse team is coming off the program's worst season in its four years as a UNC varsity sport.

By MATT TERRY

Staff Writer

It's understandable that the confidence of the North Carolina women's lacrosse team might be a little shaky after the team fell from back-to-back final four appearances to an 8-7 record and a first-round NCAA tournament exit in 1999.

However, senior attacker and co-cap-tain Kristin Off sounds confident for a player who was part of the team's worst season in history.

"We have the desire to go out there and just play well, to go out and kill teams and have fun doing it," Off said.

Not only are the Tar Heels confident, but they're also cocky. And perhaps they've earned that right.

UNC has established itself as one of the nation's elite squads in only four seasons, putting up a 49-18 mark in the process and reaching the national semi-

finals in its second and third years.

This year's team is led by Meghann Mohler, the Tar Heels' leading scorer from a year ago. Mohler's 25 goals and 15 assists last season made the senior a preseason All-America candidate for 2000. With Off and senior Gray MacNair, the three captains make up one of the nation's top attacking units.

Off was third on the team in scoring last season with 33 points. Sophomore attacker Kellie Thompson (26 points) was fourth, and MacNair ranked fifth (21).

The Tar Heels should be able to cope with the loss of Erin McGinnis, who graduated last year as UNC's all-time leading scorer with 211 points.

"This season we're looking at a really well-rounded attack," said coach Jenny Slingluff Levy, who has led the program since its inception. "We've got a lot of kids who can put the ball in the back of the net, and I think that will be a strength of ours."

Slingluff Levy called her defense "interesting," but she said she wasn't

challenges that the departures of All-America defender Brooke Crawford and starter Katie Loovis present.

The Tar Heels will be counting on contributions several defenders, including senior Jennie Voishan, junior Meghan Stringer and sophomore Christine McPike.



Kristin Off ranked third on scoring in 1999 with 33 points.

"Our strength (at defense) may not be a power individual like Brooke," Slingluff Levy said. "We've got a very fast defense with the ability to really put

a lot of pressure on other teams."

As UNC prepares for its season opener Feb. 29 against James Madison, several questions remain unanswered. The goaltending position is still up for grabs between sophomore Melissa Coyne and and freshman Margaret Garofalo.

The Tar Heels also don't know what to expect from a heralded recruiting class. Betsy Gaines, a starter on the U.S. Under-19 team, and Katie Boyle look to add to the attack. Andy Fortino and Meghan Kelly might get the opportunity to help shore up the UNC defense.

"We've got four players right on that bubble in that freshman class," Slingluff Levy said. "If they get their focus and gain some confidence, they can earn some playing time and contribute on the

The Tar Heels know they must capitalize on their enormous potential something they failed to do a year ago if they are to regain their national stand-

Slingluff Levy said UNC is ready to take on the rest of the ACC - teams such as Duke, a final four squad last year, and Maryland, which has won five consecutive national championships.

"Other teams probably don't respect us as much as we think they should, and we value that as a motivator," Off said. "We believe in ourselves, and that's all

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TRA

Women's Lacrosse



UNC women's lacrosse coach Jenny Slingluff Levy March 3 March 5 March 10 March 12 March 17 March 19 March 25 March 29 April 2

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