

Stickmen Hope to Send Coach Out as Winner

By JAMES GIZA
Staff Writer

Ten years ago, Dave Klarmann began his tenure as North Carolina's men's lacrosse coach.

He was no stranger to the program, garnering All-America status as a Tar Heel defenseman in 1976 and serving as an assistant to predecessor Willie Scroggs for 10 years before his promotion.

The Tar Heels went 16-0 in his rookie campaign in 1991, capturing ACC and NCAA titles along the way.

The 2000 season will be his last at the helm. But Klarmann, who announced he would retire last June, said the approaching end of his days on the Hill has not crossed his mind.

"Let's just say I don't think about it," he said.

Instead, Klarmann has focused his attention on avoiding a fourth consecutive losing season and guiding his squad back into the NCAA tournament.

The Tar Heels finished a disappointing 6-9 last year after starting off 5-2, dropping several close contests to ranked opponents. They were left off the mailing list when berths to the NCAA tourney were delivered.

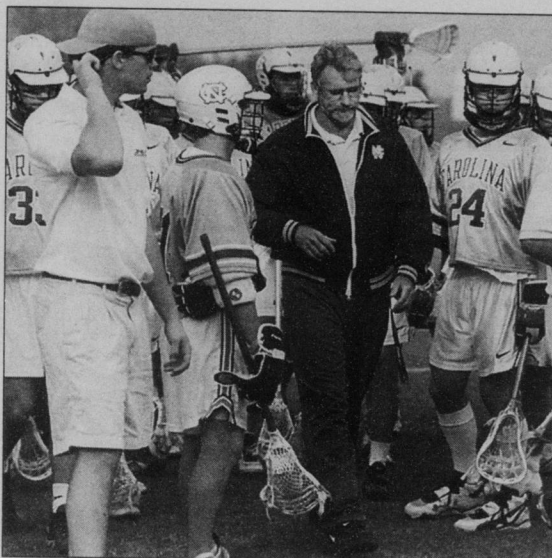
Klarmann's players said they would love to recapture the glory that their coach experienced nearly a decade ago.

"We're definitely going to play hard for him this year so that he can go out on a positive note," UNC attackman Matt Crofton said. "He's been here a long time. He deserves a good winning season. He's been through a lot."

He has — and so have his players. Tragedy has made a point of visiting the team recently. Three Tar Heel laxers have passed away in the past five years.

"It's a stark harsh reality that this team, unfortunately, has had to experience too much of in too short a time," Klarmann said. "Kevin Lawn last year and Matt (Kull) this year, and a couple of years ago it was Kevin Reichardt."

Reichardt was a sophomore midfielder when he was shot and killed by deranged UNC law student Wendell Williams in 1995. Last year the mysteri-



DTH/JEN GUTHRIE

Dave Klarmann enters his 10th and final season as the North Carolina men's lacrosse coach. He has compiled a 92-46 record at UNC.

ous death of Lawn, also a second-year middle, devastated the team.

Now the Tar Heels are coping with the loss of Kull. The sophomore red-shirt defenseman died in January after a prolonged battle with cancer.

"One of the things that I think is driving and is motivating people is we want to dedicate this season to Matt Kull," UNC defenseman Todd Maher said, adding that team unity has improved from last year. "He was such an example for everybody. He was such a hard worker. And everybody just wants to try to live up to what he did here."

Ranked 10th nationally in a preseason coaches poll by Faceoff Magazine, the Tar Heels return 27 letterwinners, including starting attackmen Crofton, Chase Martin and Jeff Sonke.

"We should expect to score every time we have the ball," Martin said.

Jordan Herrick switches from defensive to offensive midfielder this year, leading a deep group of middies who, while young, possess speed and talent.

Defensively, Maher anchors a unit that will try to improve upon the 11.3 goals per game it surrendered last year. Sophomore goalie Kris Blindenbacher, who saw quality minutes in 1999, assumes the starting role in the crease.

Last season the squad was plagued by injuries that shrank it close to high school team size. Now the well of talented depth seems bottomless.

"We have the middies to be able to run three, four lines," Sonke said. "So we should be able to run other teams into the ground."

Depth, speed, high-flying attackmen and unity — it could be just enough to spite tragedy and bring Klarmann's career full circle.

UNC Attacking Unit Brings Variety of Weapons to Field

By JOHN ZHU
Staff Writer

When Chase Martin talks about getting the North Carolina men's lacrosse team back to where it used to be, he knows what he's talking about.

Martin's brother Alex was a defenseman on the 1991 UNC squad that took home the national championship. Alex was also an All-American the following two years, when UNC advanced to the NCAA semifinals and title game.

Chase Martin, a senior attackman on this year's team, has seen considerably less success. The Tar Heels went 54-9 during Alex's four years but have gone 19-24 in Chase's three seasons.

Whereas Alex's squads lost just two ACC games, the Tar Heels, partly because of thin rosters, have gone 1-8 in the conference during the past three seasons.

"We have a lot to prove, not only to ourselves but to the rest of the University, that we're still a force in the world of lacrosse," Martin said.

If UNC wants to begin its ascent back toward the top of the lacrosse world this season, Martin will have to be one of the main contributors.

The four-year starter enters this season in the best shape of his career, having trimmed 40 pounds from his sophomore weight.

"I just kind of looked at myself and knew that I wanted to improve," Martin said. "Everything I do, I just wanted to do it full steam."

Full steam — a phrase that also describes Martin's playing style, a style that involves bullying past defenders.

Martin's fellow starting attackmen rely on drastically different methods to do the job. Junior Jeff Sonke, whose 30 goals and 17 assists earned him All-America honorable mention last season, relies on his blazing speed to run past defenders.

Senior Matt Crofton, who led North Carolina in scoring in 1999, completes the triple threat with his knack for finding the open seams.

"It takes an exceptional athlete to stay with Jeff Sonke, so he'll undoubtedly draw most people's No. 1 defenseman," UNC coach Dave Klarmann said. "And then the No. 2 guy's got to be very good to stop Chase."

"Matt's the guy we hope can play well enough, tough enough, to make a defenseman guard him and not a short-stick middle."

Adding to the threat is the familiarity resulting from the three seasons the trio has played together.

"We know each other so well that we know what we're going to do," Crofton said. "It just transfers into easier goals and better team work."

Men's Lacrosse



UNC men's lacrosse coach
Dave Klarmann

Feb. 20	Fairfield	Noon
Feb. 26	Butler	2 p.m.
March 4	Navy	1 p.m.
March 11	Delaware	1 p.m.
March 14	Pennsylvania	7 p.m.
March 18	Ohio State	2 p.m.
March 22	at Duke	7 p.m.
March 25	Maryland	1 p.m.
April 1	at Johns Hopkins	3 p.m.
April 8	Virginia	2 p.m.
April 15	UMBC	2 p.m.
April 21-23	ACC Tournament at Maryland	
April 29	at Hofstra	1 p.m.
May 4	Lehigh	2 p.m.

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