

Rebuilding a Tradition

By James Giza • Assistant Sports Editor

It was Saturday, April 5, 1983 when the largest crowd for a lacrosse game in the history of the state packed into North Carolina's Fetzer Field.

The game pitted North Carolina against Johns Hopkins, a regular season rematch of the past two NCAA championships, both won by the Tar Heels.

A ticket distribution for UNC students had been held the Wednesday before the game at 8:30 a.m. at the ticket office in Carmichael Auditorium.

"Tickets will also be available on the day of the game at Fetzer Field," an article in the Daily Tar Heel had warned that Tuesday, "but at that point the 4,500 seats at the field may be taken and standing-room-only tickets will be distributed."

Eight thousand people showed up at the game.

These were glory days for the Tar Heel lacrosse program. And John Haus was there.

He was a four-year starter on close defense for the Tar Heels from 1980 to '83. Now he's been handed the responsibility of rekindling the fire that once burned so brightly within the program.

"There was a lot of excitement, and we were very successful," Haus said. "And, obviously, the key to having people come out and watch you is if you're successful and you win games. And we were. At that time, I felt we were the best program in the country."

Haus was named head coach in June, replacing Dave Klamann, who resigned after 10 seasons. The Ruxton, Md., native came to UNC from Johns Hopkins, the most successful and storied college team in the sport, after leading the Blue Jays to consecutive NCAA final four appearances in his two seasons.

"I never personally envisioned where I thought I would end up being," Haus said. "I just tried to work hard and do the best job I could, and I felt if I did that then I'd be at a university or a college that was going to be best for me."

He holds the reins of a program that has been in a downward spiral since its fourth and most recent NCAA championship in 1991. UNC finished 8-6 last season, missing the NCAA tournament for the third time in four seasons. The Tar Heels are 1-11 in ACC play since 1996 – the last time they won the conference championship – with a 26-29 record overall.

It is a program that has also been marred by tragedy. Three players have died during the past six years, enveloping the program in an eerie somberness.

The team needed something to kick it out of its doldrums. It thinks it has found it in John Haus.

"Coach Haus is such an intense guy, and it just seems to rub off on everyone around the program," UNC senior defenseman Hunter Sims said. "Not taking anything away from Coach Klamann – I think he's a good coach too. It's just a different feel this year, and I think it's going to pay off, not only this year, but in the long run, too."

Willie Scroggs is counting on it.

A UNC senior associate athletics director, Scroggs coached the Tar Heels from 1979 to '90, capturing three NCAA championships. Scroggs recruited Haus out of Loyola-Blakefield School and was instrumental in bringing him back as coach.

"This is not an exaggeration. John Haus was the most intense player that we've ever had here, that I've ever coached and that I've ever seen since I've stopped coaching," Scroggs said.

"I can remember when he was a freshman in the weight room with the weight staff. I said to all the coaches, 'Look at this kid. Look at how he's working. He's going to be an All-American.' This was when he was a freshman, and he hadn't even played a moment for us.

"He played every practice as hard as he possibly could. And we had players that were better players than John, that were better athletes, but we never had anybody that worked at the same level every day that he did."

Haus was named a first-team All-American his junior season and second-team as a senior.

In the spring of 1988, Haus was hired as defen-

sive coordinator at Johns Hopkins. During his tenure, he coached nine All-American defensemen and goalies, and the Blue Jays went to three final four, including the national championship in 1989.

Tony Seaman, who took over as coach at Johns Hopkins in 1991, said Haus' discipline, deep knowledge of the game, focus and intensity made him an effective coach. Seaman also involved Haus in recruiting and quickly learned that the boyish handsomeness of the young coach was a valuable weapon.

"I always made sure he knocked on the door first and talked to the mom first because usually they fell in love right away," Seaman said. "When you're recruiting players, you're also recruiting the moms, and he always made a good impression."

But it hasn't been looks alone that have made

"I think he's real sincere," Scroggs said. "I think people can sense that. He's a no-nonsense guy. Some people can kind of tell when people are kind of phony and glad-handers. John's quiet, but I think that people can sense that he's got an inner strength, an inner confidence."

That recruiting touch served him well when he was lured to Washington College, a Division III school in Maryland, in August of 1994. Without any athletic scholarships to offer, Haus brought in 24 recruits after finishing the 1995 season 6-8.

In 1996, the Shoremen advanced to the national final, falling in overtime to Nazareth.

After the game, Haus gathered his team together. "Unfortunately, you won't play for another national championship," Haus said to his seniors.



Men's Lacrosse



UNC men's lacrosse coach John Haus

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| Feb. 24 | at Bucknell | 1 p.m. |
| March 3 | at Navy | 1 p.m. |
| March 10 | at Delaware | 7:30 p.m. |
| March 17 | Butler | 1 p.m. |
| March 21 | Duke | 7:30 p.m. |
| April 7 | at Virginia | 3 p.m. |
| April 20-22 | ACC Tournament at Orlando, Fla. | TBA |
| April 26 | Pfeiffer | 4 p.m. |
| May 12-13 | NCAA First Round at various sites | TBA |
| May 19-20 | NCAA Quarterfinals at various sites | TBA |
| May 26 | NCAA Final Four at New Brunswick, N. J. | noon, 3 p.m. |
| May 28 | NCAA Championship at New Brunswick, N.J. | 10:55 a.m. |

Haus a persuasive recruiter.

He stopped and looked at the rest of his players.