

# Tar Heels Hoping Youngsters Mature Soon

**Second-year UNC coach John Haus expects veterans to lead his team through a difficult early schedule.**

**By BEN DESANTIS**  
Assistant Sports Editor

Steve Will might give you the standard athlete credo that he and his North Carolina lacrosse teammates will take the season one game at a time.

But beneath the surface, he's looking toward May and the NCAA tournament, a place UNC has visited just once in the last six years.

"Winning is tradition here, and I came here to win," said the junior attackman. "We haven't done it yet, and it's pissing the hell out of me."

Even with the added motivation of the team's lack of recent success, UNC, ranked No. 13 by Inside Lacrosse Magazine, will have a tough time making it back to the NCAA field of 12.

The Tar Heels are a young bunch — 40 of 48 players are underclassmen — and Coach John Haus said he hopes his younger players can make a quick transition to the college game.

"Right now, we've got a mixture of veterans and youngsters, and there's a wide gap there," said Haus, in his second year at UNC. "If the older guys can kind of carry us and get us going in the early on, and the younger guys can learn a little bit and get better, I think we should be OK."

But because of UNC's early season schedule — the Tar Heels won their opener against No. 22 Ohio State, and follow it with games against No. 19 Bucknell and No. 14 Navy — Haus' youngsters won't have much time to adjust before being expected to contribute.

"I don't think we have any leeway," Haus said. "I think our schedule's such

that every team we play and every game we play, if we don't play our best, we're definitely going to get beat."

While Haus waits for his youth to mature, he'll rely on the few upperclassmen he has.

UNC returns three of its top four scorers: Will, sophomore attackman Andrew Lucas and junior midfielder Austin Garrison. The trio totaled 37 goals and 30 assists for 67 points in 2001.

And Haus expects his veterans, especially the tri-captain Garrison, to make the freshmen feel as comfortable as possible.

"It's sort of my responsibility to make



Junior tri-captain **Austin Garrison** tallied seven goals and 12 assists last season to lead the Tar Heels' midfield.

sure guys get to it, make sure guys are getting acclimated to the system," Garrison said.

Garrison heads the Tar Heels' midfield, where a lack of depth was compounded when sophomore Lance Zimmerman was lost for the season with a torn anterior cruciate ligament.

Zimmerman, one of the Tar Heels' top four middies last year, was scheduled to be on the starting midfield again this year.

"His loss just takes more away from what depth we had at midfield," Haus said. "When you don't have a lot of depth, and you lose one of your top four guys, it's going to hurt."

To pick up the slack, Haus will look for increased production from seniors Pat Jackson and Tim Gosier, junior Kyle Bell, and for freshman Bryant Will — Steve's brother — to prove why he was one of the nation's most sought-after recruits.

Garrison said though the midfield is young and lacks depth, the group has a

stronger sense of togetherness than in the previous two years.

"The unity is much better than in years past," he said. "We have much more spread-around scoring. It's much more than relying on one guy."

Even in goal, UNC isn't relying on just one guy. Senior Kris Blindenbacher, who started the last two years, and freshman Paul Spellman are competing for the starting job.

"We look for consistency, that's all," Haus said. "Kris and Paul are battling

for the top spot right now. They're both going to be needed on this team."

Haus needs a lot from his players, but he said he takes sole responsibility for rebuilding UNC's program into the national powerhouse it was when he played in Chapel Hill.

"I played here for Coach (Willie) Scroggs and was on two national championship teams," he said. "I told the team the other day that the tradition here is winning, and we need to start doing that again."

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