

Klarmann keeps UNC lacrosse program stable

New coach, old system should continue Heels' winning ways

By Jason Bates
Staff Writer

Spring is nigh. The time when a young man's fancy turns to many things — love, cutting class, lying out on Connor Beach watching the world.

It's spring, and it's time to relax. To other young men, spring means running, ball handling, passing and beating the hell out of each other with big wooden sticks.

Yes, it's spring, and it's time to relax.

Lacrosse season is upon us. The 1991 North Carolina lacrosse season promises to be different than previous editions. Head coach Willie Scroggs, who led the Tar Heels to three NCAA and six ACC titles in 12 years, has moved on to become an assistant athletic director for the University.

In his place will be Dave Klarmann, a Tar Heel assistant coach for the past 11 years. Klarmann knows the UNC system well, and he has hired three assistants, all of whom played for Scroggs and Klarmann at UNC — Rob Russell, Class of 1986, and Chip Mayer and Joe Breschi, both Class of 1990. With a coaching staff that knows how Tar Heel lacrosse operates, the transition period will not be a difficult one.

Helping the new staff through the adjustment period will be 29 returning letter winners from last year's 12-4 team. That team won UNC's third ACC title in a row and advanced to the NCAA semifinals, where it fell to eventual national champion Syracuse, 21-10. UNC ended the season ranked fourth in the U.S. Intercollegiate Lacrosse Association coaches' poll.

But that was then, and now Klarmann must take over the coaching reins.

The North Carolina attack will be one of the strong points of this year's team. The only senior on attack will be Dennis Goldstein, the Tar Heels' only returning All-America. He was also All-ACC in 1990 after leading the conference with 62 points on 31 goals and 31 assists. Goldstein is a fifth-year senior and two-year starter.

Other returning regulars are junior Mike Acee and redshirt sophomore John Webster. Acee was named the Most Improved Player in 1990. He had 39 points last year from 26 goals and 13 assists. Webster had 27 goals and 18 assists for 45 points last season, the most ever by a Tar Heel freshman.

Lacrosse

Head Coach: Dave Klarmann (North Carolina 1977)

Career Record: 0-0 (first year)

Record at School: same

Assistant Coaches: Rob Russell, Joe Breschi, Chip Mayer

1990 Record: 12-4, 2-1 ACC (first), NCAA semifinals

Starters Returning/Lost: 6/5

Top Returnees: Andy Piazza (Sr.), Dennis Goldstein (Sr.), John Webster (So.), Mike Acee (Jr.), Graham Harden (Sr.), Brian Kelly (Sr.), Michael Thomas (Jr.)

Top Newcomers: Steve Muir (Bethesda, Md.), Gary Lehrman (Dix Hills, N.Y.), John Speers (Fayetteville, N.Y.)

Facility: Fetzer Field (5,700)

The UNC attack should be helped by the return of junior Michael Thomas, who sat out last season with a medical redshirt after breaking his wrist during a preseason practice. In 1989, Thomas was named MVP of the inaugural ACC tournament.

Other attackmen who could see action are sophomores Steve Speers (14g, 5a in 1990) and Dan Levy (8g, 5a). Two freshmen, Gregg Langhoff and Rick Codd, could also be called in.

The midfield was seriously damaged by graduation losses. Gone are two 1990 honorable mention All-Americans, Mayer and Steve Huff. Also missing is four-year letterman Andy Dunkerton.

Ten lettermen do return for the Tar Heels at midfield, led by senior Craig Hasslinger. Hasslinger, who was a senior last season, petitioned for and received a medical redshirt because he did not play during his freshman season of 1986-87. He was a major factor last year, scoring 11 goals and adding nine assists. Hasslinger led UNC with 80 ground balls and was second on the team with 54 loose balls caused.

Five juniors — Jim Buczek, Joe Bedell, Steve Gilhuley, Eric Seremet and Dan Donnelly — will help form the midfield's nucleus. Buczek is a returning All-ACC performer who had 15 goals, nine assists and 51 ground balls last season. Bedell was switched from attack to midfield during his freshman year and last season finished as the fifth-leading scorer on the team with 16 goals and 11 assists for 27 points.



DTH/David Minton

Senior defenseman Graham Harden (left) hopes to loosen three-time champion Syracuse's grasp on the NCAA lacrosse crown

Gilhuley was one of UNC's key faceoff men last season, winning 41 out of 75 for a .547 percentage. Seremet and Donnelly combined for 21 goals and eight assists last year.

"We have nice depth in the midfield," Klarmann said. "I'm not telling you we have a first or second midfield. We've got 12 people that are going to be fighting and scratching to play in an area where eight is about as many as you can usually play in a game. It's a position that doesn't allow you to play many more than eight people — four per unit."

The Tar Heels have also added seven new midfield players for the 1991 season. Senior Robin Cornish from Perth, West Australia and freshman Ryan Wade of Davidsonville, Md., are ex-

pected to contribute this year. Cornish has one year of collegiate eligibility. He played for the Australian national team in the World Lacrosse Championships last summer. Wade was named the Baltimore Sun's 1990 High School Lacrosse Player of the Year.

Other newcomers expected to contribute are junior Sean Hooker, sophomore Steve Muir (a 6-foot-3, 213-pound transfer from the U.S. Naval Academy) and freshmen Steve Schreiber, Jon Speers and Wilson Felter.

"We're in a state of flux," Klarmann said. "We haven't determined who is going to play all the time yet. Muir and Cornish are top 10 guys, sometimes they're top eight. I'd like to see them play. They're fast. Muir is a big person.

He is as big a person as you're going to find playing midfield in lacrosse in college. He sat out a year and that's a long time. It's not the same when you don't play. It's a little different feeling."

The defensive area seems fairly solid for UNC. Gone is first team All-America Breschi, who was named MVP of last year's ACC tourney. But plenty of experienced players return.

"Joe was our only senior (on defense) last year," Klarmann said. "We've got Graham Harden back. He's a quality defenseman. Bryan Kelly's got a full year of experience in the crease. He knows what to do and what to say. The third spot is still wide open."

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