

2003 OUTLOOK

The University of Delaware field hockey team enters the 2003 campaign looking to build on a successful 2002 season, which saw them defeat several nationally-ranked opponents as well as qualify for the Colonial Athletic Association (CAA) Tournament in just its first season in the conference.

After posting a 13-8 mark the previous year in their final season of play in America East, the Blue Hens finished last season with a 10-10 mark, including a 4-3 record in CAA play. Earning the No. 3 seed in the CAA Tournament, Delaware was ousted by William & Mary in the semifinals, one of three teams from the CAA that earned a berth in the 16-team NCAA Tournament.

"In retrospect, I have a real positive feeling about our first season in the CAA," said Miller, who picked up her 200th career victory last season in a 4-1 win over Drexel on November 3. "There are always games where you look back and wonder what would have happened if we could had done some things differently, but this was the first time the CAA had three schools - Old Dominion, James Madison and William & Mary - represented in the NCAA Tournament. Because we were right there against those teams, as well as experiencing some awesome wins against Top 10 opponents, I felt last season was a very positive experience for everyone."

First-team All-CAA selection Erica LaBar returns as the team's catalyst on offense. After missing the 2000 season with a knee injury and getting back into the game in 2001, LaBar, a redshirt-junior demonstrated what she can do at full stride last season when she posted a pair of team-highs with 11 goals and 31 points. For her efforts, LaBar was also named to the 2002 STX/NFHCA Division I All-American third-team. Despite re-injuring her knee this past spring, LaBar will be ready to start the season.

"We'll need another outstanding performance from Erica this season," said Miller. "She has really stepped up and become a role model on this team. I look for her to again be our 'quarterback' on the field."

Also returning on offense for the Blue Hens is Leah Geib, previous a member of the Under 18 National Team. Geib didn't suffer from the sophomore jinx last year, earning second-team All-CAA honors.

Geib posted 10 goals and four assists as a freshman, garnering both All-America East and America East All-Rookie honors. Last season, she added five goals and three assists.

In addition, senior Jessica Breault will look to carry over her solid second-half play from last season, where she posted nine points in her last five games. Breault finished the 2003 season with 13 points (5g,



Erica LaBar

3a). Senior Megan Henry, a rock on defense, also returns to the Blue Hens this fall after having started all 20 games last season. "Megan will also be asked to step up her play as one of our field leaders," said Miller. "The team has increasingly gained a great deal of confidence in her leadership both on and off the field.

"Jess Breault is another player who has matured in both her play and her personality," said Miller. "She along with Leah Geib, just completed an outstanding season with the USFHA United Summer League team, and we expect positive things from both of them in 2003.

"Leah, Megan and Jess were asked to play more of a leadership roll this off-season and did so with confidence and responsibility," said Miller. "All three of these players will continue to be vital cogs on both offense and defense this season."

Another important piece of Miller's offense is junior Jessi Balmer. After starting 18 games as a freshman, Balmer started all 20 contests last season and finished second on the Blue Hens in goals with seven. Fellow junior Lauren Carr continued to emerge as an offensive threat last season, finishing with 10 points (4g, 2a) in 2002 after a solid freshman campaign which saw her post nine points.

Junior Carly Campana (12 games played), along with sophomores Jennifer Adamek (12 games played, five starts), Sarah Mills and redshirt-freshman Kaili Kao provide depth at the forward and mid-field positions.

"Our juniors - Jessi Balmer, Lauren Carr, Leah Geib - have been one of our most talented classes to date. If Carly can con-

Quick Facts

LocationNewark, Delaware 19716
Founded 1743
Enrollment 16,000 Undergraduates
NicknameFightin' Blue Hens
ColorsRoyal Blue & Gold
Home CourtFred P. Rull Stadium
Capacity2,000
Press Box Phone(302) 831-3526
NCAA Affiliation NCAA Division I
Conference..Colonial Ath. Assoc. (First Season)

President Dr. David P. Roselle
NCAA Faculty Rep. .. Dr. John L. Burmeister
Athletic Director Edgar N. Johnson
Sr. Assoc. Athletic Director Mary Ann Hitchens
Assoc. AD/Programs & Facilities.. Kate Pohlig
Assoc. AD/BusinessScott Eatough
Asst. AD/Compliance & Operation..Susan Groff
Marketing DirectorCurt Krouse
Ath. Development Dir...... Kathleen Houghton

SID Office Phone302-831-2186
SID Office Fax 302-831-8653
Athletics Web Site ..www.udel.edu/sportsinfo
Sports Information Director ..Scott Selheimer
Selheimer's Home Phone302-368-8639
Selheimer's Cell Phone302-562-5129
Email Addressselheime@udel.edu
Asst. SIDMike Hirschman
Hirschman's Home Phone302-292-1356
SID InternsPete DiVito (FH), Austin Calhoun

Sports Med. Physician .. Dr. Vincent Disabella
Head Trainer Keith Handling
Associate Head Trainer Joan Couch
Asst. TrainersMike Higgins, John Smith
Strength & Cond. Coach.... Russell Barbarino

Head Coach Carol Miller (Delaware '82)
Record at Delaware115-82 (10 seasons)
Overall Record201-134-18 (18 seasons)
Office Phone302-831-6721
Office Fax302-831-4058
Email Addresscamiller@udel.edu
Asst. Coach.....Dawn Hill (Old Dominion. '87)
Graduate Asst.Amy Cohen (Lafayette '02)

2002 Record10-10, 4-3 CAA (3rd)
Post-Seasonlost in CAA semifinals
Letterwinners Returning / Lost14/4
Starters Returning / Lost.....7/4
2003 CaptainsJessica Breault, Erica LaBar,
Megan Henry

All-Time Record353-199-39 (32 seasons)
Conf. Titles1982, 1985, 1988, 1990
NCAA Tourn. Appearances2 (1982, 1988)
AIAW Tourn. Appearances4
(1976, 1977, 1978, 1980)

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Leah Geib

tinue to come back from an injury she suffered this past spring, these four players can really make a difference for us this year," said Miller.

Seniors Erin Shaklee (20 starts, three goals), Gloria Compello (14 games, seven starts) and Jill Stevens (10 games played, one assist) will also receive significant playing time at the forward and midfield positions.

"I expect these three players to provide us with solid leadership and stability both on and off the field," Miller said. "They have been in the program for three years and know what to expect, and have always been great role models. Their work ethic is extraordinary."

While Miller's offense remains intact from last season, the Blue Hens face the task of replacing two graduated starter, first-team All-CAA selection Kim Wagaman and Kelly Coyle. Also the CAA Scholar Athlete of the Year last year, Wagaman finished tied for second on the team in assists (9) and points (15) in 2002.

Wagaman's classmate Coyle graduated with 17 career assists, good for eighth on the school's all-time list. She accumulated many of those over the last two seasons as the person starting the Blue Hens' corners.

One of the players Miller will rely on to fill the voids in the backfield is sophomore Amber Deimler, who saw action in 15 games last year.

Meghan O'Meara, a redshirt-junior is attempting to come back after missing all of last season with an injury to contribute in the backfield for the 2003 squad.

Redshirt-junior Heidi Hibshman enters 2003 as the Blue Hens only returning net-minder, replacing the graduated Stephanie

Judefind. Hibshman played in six games last season, posting a 2.02 goals against average (GAA) and two shared shutouts after notching six wins and posting a solid 1.26 GAA in 2001. One of Hibshman's wins last year came when Delaware defeated fourth-ranked Louisville, its highest ranked win in 15 years.

Freshman Megan Allen, a highly touted goaltending prospect who led Kempsville HS in Virginia Beach, VA to the state tournament last fall, will push Hibshman for playing time.

"We brought in a very qualified freshman in Megan Allen, so we're very excited about what she brings to the table," said Miller. "Heidi knows what we expect, so we look for her to come in and dazzle us because she has worked very hard. It will take Megan a little bit of time to get to know us and become familiar with the program, but I see those two competing for the starting position."

In addition to Allen, several other former high school standouts join the Blue and Gold this season - defenders Maggie Chamberlain and Lindsay Piester, midfielder Sheri Grondski and forwards Stephanie Swain and Amanda Warrington. Chamberlain and Piester both played at Stafford HS, leading their team to region and district titles this past fall and a spot in the Virginia Class AAA Tournament. Grondski was a two-time USFHA National Futures Tournament participant.

A pair of homegrown products, Swain was a three-time All-Blue Hen Conference selection and Stevens, the younger sister of senior forward Jill Stevens, earned honorable mention all-state honors this past fall.

Katie Evans, a native of Newtown

Square, PA and an all-state selection at Marple Newtown HS, has also impressed Miller.

"Warrington has gone to B Camp and has proven to be a tremendous athlete. She will play either in the midfield or back for us," said Miller. "We are also excited about Stephanie Swain, who is a William Penn HS graduate and will play forward or as an attacking midfielder.

"We picked up a couple of outstanding Virginia products, too. Lindsay Piester is one of the top recruits from the Virginia area and was an all-state player, along with Maggi Chamberlain.

"Katie Evans, a USFHA National Futures Tournament selection, has also proven to be a very good playmaker for us during the preseason," said Miller. "I can see her stepping in immediately and making some contributions for us.

"These players have been outstanding for us thus far in camp," Miller said. "We're also looking for Danielle Stevens, Dusti Vanderwende, and Katie Wilson to develop nicely and round out our very talented frosh class and team."

Delaware opens the 2003 season by hosting The Blue Hen Classic at Rullo Stadium on August 30-31. Participants include Duke, Rutgers and West Chester Following non-conference games against Villanova, Pacific and Penn, the Blue Hens depart for the Chicago area to take on Ball State at Northwestern University on Sept. 14 and face the host Wildcats the following day.

Delaware opens conference play with a home match against James Madison on Oct. 3 and concludes the regular season with a match against rival Towson on Halloween night.

Miller has a series of goals in mind for the team this season.

"Qualifying for the conference tournament is much more difficult than it was when we were in the America East," Miller said. "But the players and coaches are up to the challenge.

"We are striving to play for national recognition and gain the best seed possible in the CAA Tournament, which would put us in a position to host it and win it," said Miller.

"Our ultimate goal is to get to the NCAA Tournament, whether we come in the front door as the CAA's automatic qualifier or through the back door as a team with quality wins, a high RPI and a national ranking throughout the season."

"We all know, however, that it will take consistent combined efforts and high level performances each and everyday at practices and games, together our ultimate goal still remains - a conference championship and onto the NCAA Tournament."



Jessica Breault