



LaxWorld DeWalt emerged from the pack as ALL champions for the second straight year.

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# Never Too Old for this Stuff

## ALL, USC IA Crown Repeat Champions

BY JEFF SEIDEL

**R**oger Barth made a play that every defenseman would love. The play began when an attackman tried to get to the goal by making a quick move on Barth and cutting to the crease. But Barth took care of business very quickly. He lowered his shoulder and buried it in the guy's chest and flattened him.

Not bad considering the attackman

was 30 pounds heavier.

Even better considering the defenseman is 64 years old.

Roger Barth lives in Bethesda, Md., and practices tax law in Washington. He's loved lacrosse since his days at Princeton – graduated in 1960 – and is one of the players who's devoted to the American Lacrosse League, the biggest post-collegiate men's lacrosse

league in the United States.

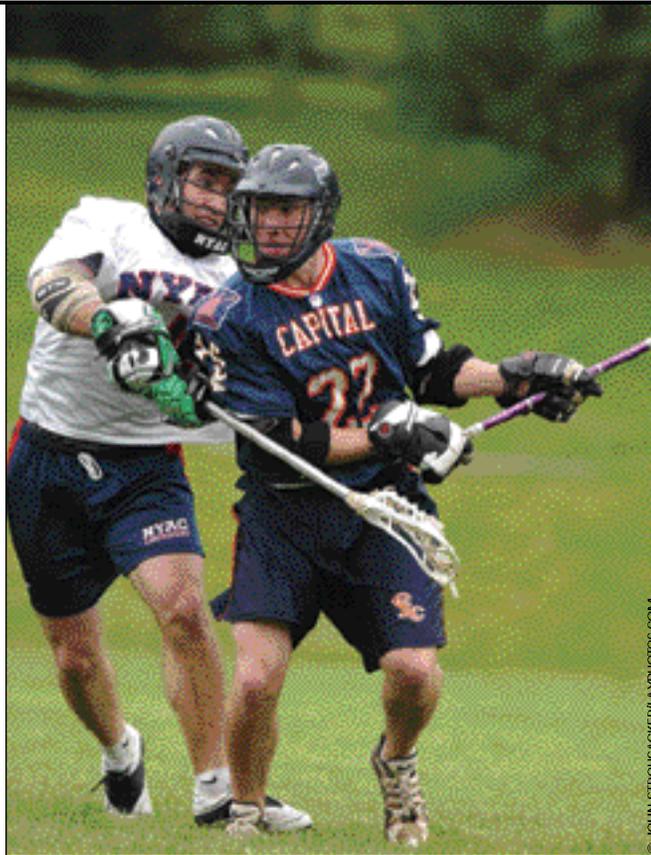
The league has been in existence for over 30 years. There are about 1,200 players in the league – formerly known as the Central Atlantic Lacrosse League – and it is split between North and South with Philadelphia the cutoff point. There are three divisions per conference (named the Blue and Gray

Conferences) and some teams have to do some traveling.

That's why the games are always on weekends. The start times are mandated to be at 2 p.m. Sunday unless both teams agree to something different as it allows for everyone to travel back and forth. After all, these guys have jobs now.

"People take it very seriously, almost as seriously as the pro league on game days," said Tom Snedeker, division coordinator for the Gray Conference's Southern Division. "During the game, they're dead serious about it."

The seriousness may jump to another level during the league's championship weekend. LaxWorld DeWalt, out of the Gray Conference's West Division, knocked off Great Atlantic of the South, 18-8, in the semifinals before beating North American Lacrosse Club out of the Blue



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Capital defeated the NYAC Lacrosse Club in a USCLA quarterfinal.

Conference's New Jersey Division, 8-6, for the championship. The title marked the second straight and third in four years for LaxWorld.

Team member Scott Joyner credited good faceoff play by Victor Mignolio during the weekend as a key to LaxWorld's championship. Joyner also said defenseman John Brasko matched up with opponents' top players well throughout the season.

Steve Mahrol, Josh Hahn and Joyner led the team in scoring.

NALC had beaten New York Athletic Club out of the Blue Conference's New York Division in the



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Mt. Washington got past Long Island to round out the USCLA's first all-Southern Division final four ever.

semifinals.

Generally, the ALL's most competitive season is in the spring; there are other tournaments and games throughout the year but the earlier one is the best. That's when games are played every Sunday from late February through early June. They'll also occasionally play weeknight games.

Snedeker's team, for example, is the Michelob Light Lacrosse Club and is based in Anne Arundel County, Md. During the lower-key summer season, games are usually played at a private school in Montgomery County, Md. Players also go in tournaments individually and as a team during the fall, where there is no official season.



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The main point of the league is an easy one – to keep these guys playing lacrosse. A very popular sport in the mid-Atlantic region and on the East Coast, there's never been a solid professional league for men's lacrosse.

Harry Mazaheri is the director of post-collegiate lacrosse at US Lacrosse and one of the people the ALL was built for. He participated on one of the early teams, the 1974 Harrisburg Lacrosse Club. Mazaheri played goalie at Washington & Lee – the same place Snedeker played in the early '90s – but didn't see much playing time.

Mazaheri had never seen lacrosse until his college days and was bitten by the bug rather quickly.

"We had a really good team, but I was not a key member," he said. "I just wanted to keep playing."

And so he did. The Harrisburg Lacrosse Club played at a high school in the city that doesn't exist any more. Mazaheri has helped run a number of different clubs in the league since then. He got away from it for awhile during his time living in New York City, but got involved in a heavier way once again when moving back to Lancaster (Pa.) about four years ago.

He now runs the Crease Monkeys, a team based out of Lancaster and a group that has a lot of fun with just being involved with the game. They'll travel to a couple of tournaments each year. They're headed for Hawaii this year and also will go to New Zealand.

In addition, they sponsor youth teams in Seattle and Salt Lake City.

"We're just a bunch of guys who like lacrosse," said Mazaheri, who's worked in finance for years but now is taking some time off to be with his two little kids. "They want to stay involved in the sport, and they like the sort of team-oriented lacrosse atmosphere. The league has gotten much more serious over the years, and now it's much more competitive, but it's still fun."

Mazaheri said that sponsoring the teams in the other cities is important also because it's a way for the older players to help the future generation.

"It keeps them involved in the sport," Mazaheri said. "What it also does or should do...is it helps them have a vehicle to help youth lacrosse. It's something to give back."

Snedeker said that about three-quarters of the league played in Division III and the other part were Division I players, and they've always got a consistent number of teams. He said that teams must post a bond when joining because they want stability.

"It's rare that a team drops out," Snedeker said. "But more often it's a team joining. Usually you have one or two new teams per year. Last year, we had three or four new teams."

Snedeker, a former Gray Conference director, also said that there could be other changes in the league in the coming months and years. The league presently fields teams in cities from Connecticut to Durham, N.C., and they've thought about expanding to encompass a bigger area through the Midwest and Southeast.

To that end, the ALL has been in talks with the Southeast Lacrosse League and the Midwest Cities Lacrosse League about pulling them in to form more of a nation-wide lacrosse league. Both sides are interested and they're presently trying to lay the foundation for the deal.

"I think it will happen,"

Snedeker said. "There are travel concerns and details have to be worked out. People who play the game, they just love it so much that it's just a brotherhood that's grown so much. It's grown exponentially."

Snedeker said the sport itself has grown so much over the past 30 years. The best lacrosse used to be basically in Baltimore and New York. Now good lacrosse players can be found up and down the East Coast and out into the Midwest.

"There's just so many more players now that I just think the



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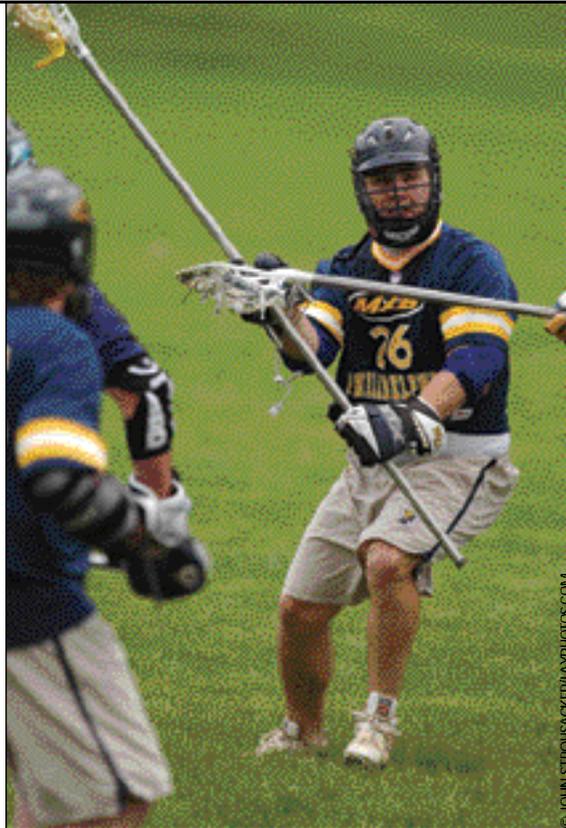
Single Source Solution repeated as champion in the USCLA, the oldest of the post-collegiate club leagues in the U.S.

league's going to keep growing and growing," said Snedeker, who runs his own promotion/marketing business with restaurants and bars based in Arlington, Va.

Barth knows how hard it can be to find good lacrosse after your college days are over. He struggled with that task 40 years ago after going to SUNY-Buffalo for law school in the early '60s. There were no teams around at that time and he helped start the Buffalo Lacrosse Club in 1961.

At that point, the only teams they could find to play against were Indian teams on reservations, so Buffalo played wherever it could until this league began. Barth remembers actually playing box lacrosse rules on outdoor fields at Indian reservation.

He moved down to Washington in 1969 and joined the league shortly thereafter. Barth has been on Snedeker's team for awhile.



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MAB Philadelphia returned to the USCLA finals but couldn't get past Single Source Solution in a two-goal affair.

Snedeker said that Barth is like everyone else, a guy who loves to play the game. He's just a little bit older.

Snedeker said that while Barth has lost some foot speed, he's still got everything else and can play the game at a high level. The team will wait until they're up or down by five goals to use Barth in some important games while letting him go at any time in others.

"I'm a lawyer, I don't get to hit people normally," Barth said.

Barth loved how he decked the aforementioned player when he tried to make a move to the crease. He may be 64, but he's still a defenseman.

He's still a lacrosse player.

"Hey, they love it when the old guy gets a hit," Barth said with a laugh. "My wife [asked], 'why don't you stop playing and coach?' I said 'When I can't walk anymore, that's when I'll stop playing.'"

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