

# State Champions



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED BY JIM MARKHAM

Apex sophomore Sarah Fellows fires a shot at net during Saturday's state championship .  
game against East Chapel Hill.

## Apex overwhelms East Chapel Hill

When Apex coach Jessica Trombley held her first practice for the new lacrosse program back in 2005, a state championship was the furthest thing from her mind.

Few of the girls who showed up for that practice session knew the roles of the sport and even fewer understood the game's fundamentals.

Although Trombley didn't realize it at the time, the foundation for the 2007 state title was being put in place.

Apex defeated East Chapel Hill 9-5 on Saturday at Greensboro College to capture the NC High School Women's Lacrosse Association's state championship.

With the victory, the Lady Cougars (16-3) became the first girls' team in Apex High history to win a state title.

Making the accomplishment even more impressive is that Apex is only playing in its second year of varsity competition after fielding a club team in 2005.

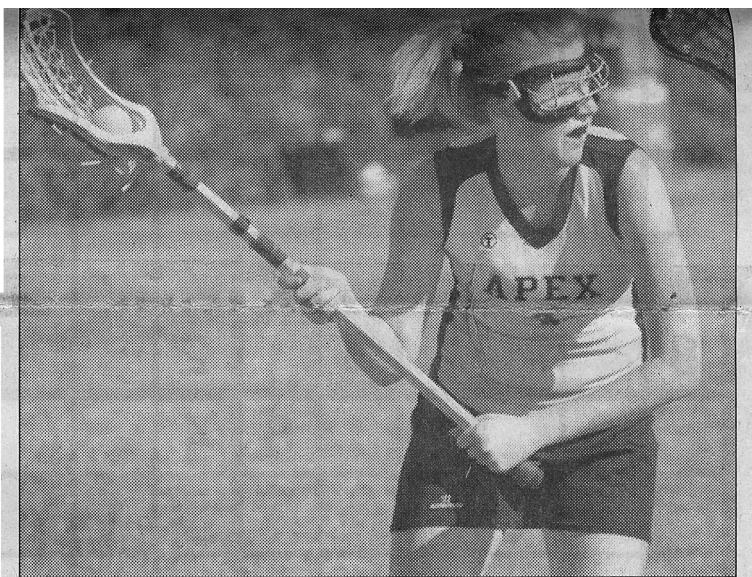
"I'm not sure how we did it so quickly," said Trombley with a laugh. "Actually, I do know how. The girls picked up the game very quickly and they practiced a lot on their own. We also had great support from parents who dedicated so much time to lacrosse.

"Half of the girls didn't know the game at all (at the first practice). Some of them couldn't tell you what a stick was and I don't think any of them could catch. But they just kept working and practicing and you could see the tremendous improvement each year."

Apex defeated North Mecklenburg 11-8 on Saturday morning in the semifinals. That set up the third showdown of the season with East Chapel Hill.

Although the Lady Cougars lost the previous two games against the Lady Wildcats by one goal, the team believed the third time would be a charm.

"East Chapel Hill had beaten us twice but we all felt we were the better team," said senior Jessica Thurston. "We knew we could beat them and we wanted that satisfaction of proving it. They had beaten us twice but we hadn't played our best game either time."



Senior Allison Faulhaber looks for an open teammate.

"We knew East Chapel Hill was a great team so there were some butterflies," said Trombley. "But it was nice playing a team that we knew. We also knew that if we played better against them we could have won both (regular season) games.

"Now, I don't want it to sound like we played terrible against them because that's not the case. East Chapel Hill is an outstanding team but we certainly had some areas where there was a lot of room for improvement."

The Lady Cougars trailed 2-1 early but quickly grabbed the lead as junior midfielder Sasha Vedock scored a pair of goals and sophomore midfielder Sarah Fellows added another for a 4-2 advantage.

The Lady Wildcats knotted the score at 4-4 early in the second half but Apex dominated the rest of the way.

Senior Allison Faulhaber and junior Lisa Cook both scored two goals apiece and Fellows contributed another tally en route to the victory.

"I knew we were better than East Chapel Hill," said senior JoEllen Billotte who contributed an assist. "We lost to

them twice and didn't play well either time."

Vedock, who scored three goals, was named the game's Most Valuable Player while Fellows earned runner-up MVP honors.

But the key to victory, said Trombley, had nothing to do with individual honors.

"What made us the best teams in the state on Saturday is that we had 12 girls on the field who played hard all the time," said Trombley. "It wasn't just one or two people who stepped up, it was everyone contributing and people stepping up all over the place.

"Our defense was excellent and probably had its best game of the season. They kept attacking the ball and were very aggressive. We just dominated on the field."