

## Apex girls defeat three-time champs for title

Trombley named state's coach of the year



Apex's Courtney McLaughlin, back, jumps into the arms of teammate Danielle Lovell (25) as time expires in the NCHSWLA State Championship Game.

Apex defeated East Chapel Hill 9-5 to win the title.

*Photo by Jeffrey A. Camarati for The Cary News*

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## By Nicki Jhabvala, Correspondent

GREENSBORO — Anything less than ear-to-ear grins and a swarm of fans onto the field would have just simply been inappropriate.

And it seems the Apex High women's lacrosse team knew it.

In only its third year as a competitive squad, the Cougars picked up the program's first NCHSWLA 4-A State Championship — a feat that came only by defeating three-time champion East Chapel Hill High.

Twice earlier in the season, the Wildcats downed Apex by only one point, leaving the Cougars with a bitter taste in their mouths for the title game.

“It feels great,” Apex coach Jessica Trombley said. “The girls played hard all season, and they just came out today and played their hearts out.”

The opening draw left Apex midfielder Sarah Fellows bloodied after taking a stick to the face.

But the controversial first seconds didn't deter ECH from quickly getting the first point on the board, as Sara Yusko found the back of the Apex net at the 1:02 minute mark.

The Cougar confidence stifled? Hardly.

Enter Vedock.

The junior midfielder, and the tournament's Most Valuable Player, quickly retaliated with her first goal of the game, recovering a loose ball behind the Cougars' net and sprinting the length of the field for the score.

“I thought it was a really tough game, but we stepped it up,” junior midfielder Sasha Vedock said. “We shut down most of [East Chapel Hill's] main players, so we were able to win.”

About a minute later, the cycle repeated. ECH scored, and Vedock picked up another of her own.

Vedock recorded a hat trick in less than 15 minutes of play and helped her team to a 4-3 lead at the break.

The Wildcats served up one last major scare for the Cougars in the opening seconds of the second period with goal by sophomore attacker Chloe Edgerton to tie the game at 4-all.

“I was very nervous when they came back,” Vedock said. “I was like, ‘We've gotta win this time, because we've lost so many times to them.’ We had to win this time.”

Following the Vedock precedence, senior midfielder Allison Faulhaber put the Cougars back on top for good with a goal in the ninth minute.

“I was just so happy to be out here,” she said. “I mean, this was the last game of my entire high school career, so I had to put it all out there.”

Faulhaber went on to finish with two goals and an assist while teammate Lisa Cook added two goals as well in the second half. ECH slipped in one last goal with about a minute remaining to close the score to within four, but the momentum of the Cougars proved too much to overcome.

Especially that of Fellows, who, despite a rough start, returned only to add two goals and the tournament's Runnerup MVP honor — not to mention a spot on the All-Conference roster alongside Vedock and sophomore attacker Courtney McLaughlin.

But the honors didn't stop there.

Along with being given the ceremonial dousing of the water cooler by her players, Trombley, a former Syracuse University lacrosse standout, was named the state's coach of the year.

And as far as she can tell, the success for Apex is only beginning.

“We have a lot of players who are still young and very tough,” she said. “I just think we’re going to keep going up from here.”

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