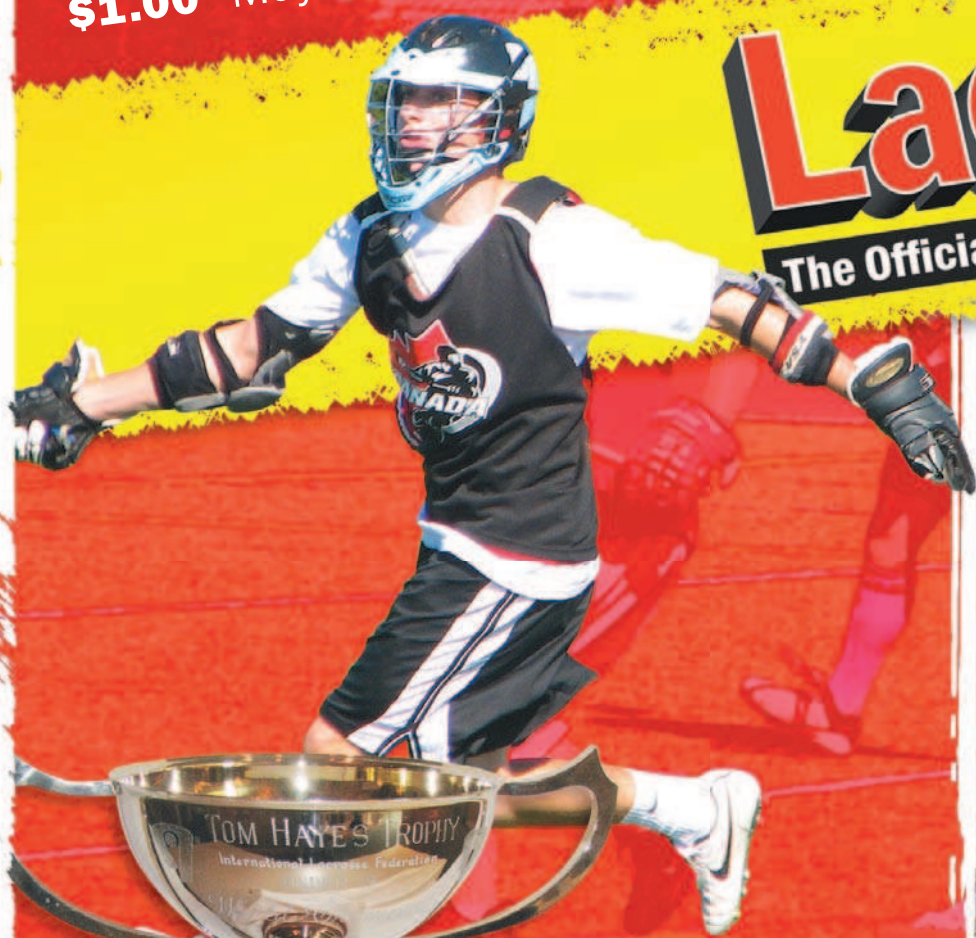


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# LacrosseTalk

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## Canada's U-19 Squad Aims for Golden Homecoming



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They're no longer a group of box lacrosse players with box skills and box physiques assembled to compete together in the field game.

Overall, Canada's men's field lacrosse program is at a stage where they are a legitimate contender in the international field lacrosse game and could even be pegged as perennial favourites at all levels of competition.

The evolution to developing internationally acclaimed field lacrosse players in recent years at the Under 19 level can be credited in large part to groups like Edge Lacrosse, the Hill Academy and Burnaby Mountain Selects (SFU) and spawned by the growth and interest of the game in B.C., Prairies, and Ontario.

Since the U-19 Men's Lacrosse World Championships began in 1988, the United States has gone undefeated with a 29-0 record in championship play. While the U.S. team will be the odds-on favourite to win again, Canada is definitely closing the gap in parody.

Fresh off the heels of the senior men's ILF Warrior World Lacrosse title in 2006, ending a 28-year drought, Canada's current U-19 team is looking to follow in their mentors' footsteps. The team that started its catharsis with regional tryouts in 2007, and was whittled down to 64 players at a final selection camp in New Westminster, B.C., in October, 2007, is now a healthy contender.

Canada finished second in 2004 in Baltimore, dropping the final 18-11 to the Americans. They hope the development of the field game at the national level from coast to coast will lift them to their first U-19 international title.

The team will look to a familiar blood-line to get the task done.

Mark Cockerton, and older brother, Matt, both selected to the team, are hoping to make a difference using their sibling chemistry.

The brothers hope to have success similar to Canadian national predecessors, Victoria, B.C., twin sensations Gary and Paul Gait.

Fittingly, Gary will coach the pair in Coquitlam.

Matt and Mark, as well as their U-19 teammates, will have the opportunity to learn

from Gary, a man who knows what it takes to be successful at the high-performance and international level. Currently coaching Syracuse's women's team – and a former coach with the NLL's Colorado Mammoth – Gait has a solid foundation built.

The Canadian squad includes 13 of 23 players on Edge Lacrosse's field lacrosse teams designed to groom elite lacrosse players for the next level of play at Division I college programs in the United States.

The Edge Lacrosse program provides Canadian youth lacrosse players with exposure to the American game and the chance to get college scholarships to U.S. universities. Not only does the Edge Lacrosse program produce elite lacrosse talent, it also prepares players for academic success with tutoring support to help them earn scholarships.

According to head coach Gary Gait, who was part of Canada's senior men's triumph over the U.S. in 2006 in London, Ontario, Canada's team chemistry will dictate how successful they can be.

"I expect a lot of good things from them. I need some guys to step up and make an impact to make the team successful," he said in a previous interview.

On defence, Brock Sorenson carries his Minto and Mann Cup experience and is joined by Reid Acton, Robert Koger and Greg Miceli (Toronto), Adrian Sorichetti and John Lafontaine (Whitby), and Reed MacPhail (Victoria).

The Cockerton brothers, sons of legendary player Stan Cockerton who opened the door for field opportunities for Canadians after starring with the North Carolina State Wolfpack in the 70's, Kiel Matisz (Stoney Creek, Ont), Mark Matthews (Oshawa), and Steve Higgs (Victoria) will be on attack.

"Mark Cockerton is only 17 but he was our best offensive player during camp," Team GM Terry Lloyd told the Canadian Press in 2007. "Being that young and so dominant, he looks like a rising star."

The midfielders will be Michael Cudmore (Whitby, Ont), Zach Palmer (Oshawa), Kevin Crowley (New Westminster, BC), Cam Flint (Georgetown, Ont), Kyle Clancy (Peterborough), Tyler Burton (London, Ont), Robbie Campbell (Delta, BC), Adam Jones (Owen Sound, Ont), and Jayson Card (Caledon, Ont).

Canada will be solid in net with two goalies with different styles. The duo of Jason Crawford (Burlington, Ont), who starred with the CUFLA champion Brock Badgers, and Remington Steele (Dallas, TX) who plays at Robert Morris will be capable.

According to Canadian assistant coach Jeff Gombar, "Jason and Remington are great goalies adding different dimensions to our team defense."

Crawford will be familiar to many Ontario field fans after winning the CUFLA rookie of the year and goalie of the year awards in his freshman year, guiding the Badgers to the national championship MVP award.

Steele on the other hand will be a vital part of Canada's possession game and in the clear.

*continues on page 3*

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