

SPORTS

Opening with a Bang . . .

Last year's regional LAX champions, Wootton, burns up the LAX nets in opener

By Brandy L. Simms
Sentinel Sports

ROCKVILLE - Last Friday marked the first day of spring and the beginning of a new lacrosse season as the Wootton Patriots opened the 2009 campaign with a convincing 16-1 home victory over the Blair Blazers.

Despite the loss of several key players from last year's regional championship squad, the Patriots made a huge statement in Friday's opener.

"There's a reason they're one of the best teams in the state," Blair senior captain Andy Holmes said afterward. "All these kids practice year round, [they] work hard year round, it's in their blood. You see little kids out here practicing on the field when they're like 8 years old. There's a reason they're good."

All told, eight different players scored for Wootton, including junior Jeff Zifrony who led the Patriots with

five goals. Tim Lenardo added a hat trick while Chris Cornelius and John Zamora scored two goals apiece.

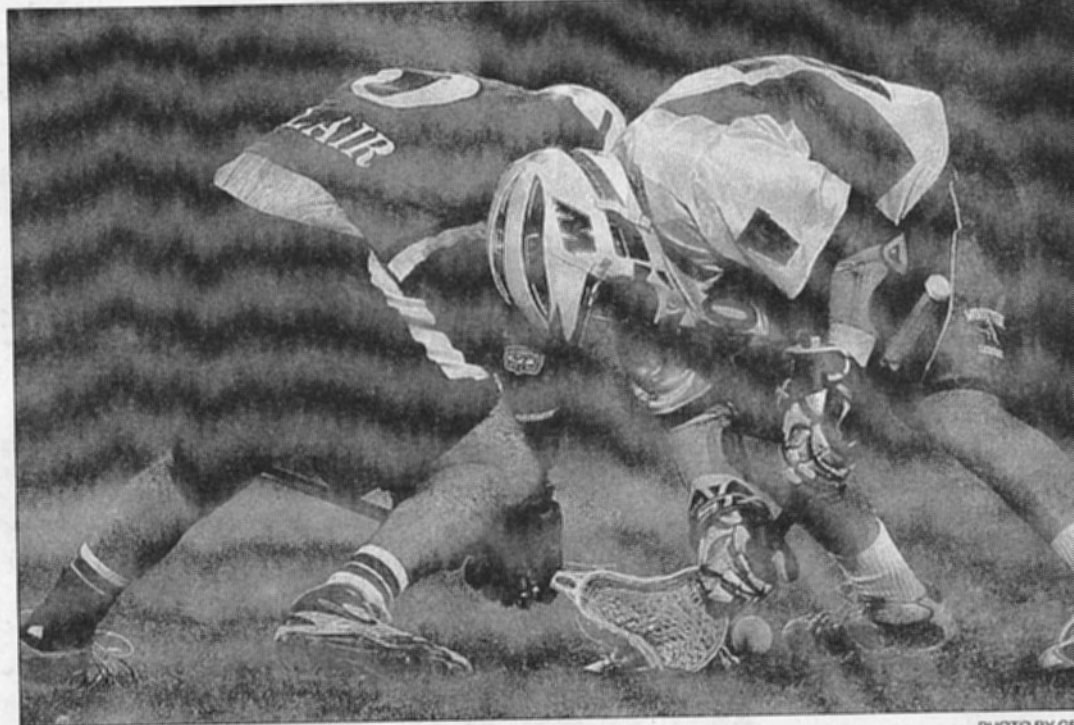
"I thought it was a team effort," said Wootton Head Coach Colin Thomson.

Gordie Gold, Christopher Doran, Michael Brailovsky and Alex Kyle also scored goals for Wootton. Defensively, the Patriots were led by senior goalie Yanni Rindler who finished with six saves.

"Overall," said Rindler, "our defense played a great game."

After racing out to a 12-0 lead at halftime, the Patriots slowed down in the second half. Late in the game, Blair sophomore Gudong Fu scored the Blazers only goal, preventing a shutout and providing some momentum for the Silver Spring school.

"I think we plan to improve the whole year," said Holmes, whose team finished 8-6 last season. "I don't think we expect a game like this for the rest of the season. We just expect to get better and better and better."



Blair's Elliot Gold faces off against Wootton's Alex Kyle

PHOTO BY GEORGE