

# Nazareth earns national title with 22-11 win

By Mike Latona  
Staff writer

PHILADELPHIA — Teams such as the Chicago Cubs, New York Rangers and Boston Red Sox must be scratching their heads.

How, those perennially hard-luck teams are asking, can a team that didn't even exist 10 years ago already become a national champion?

Scott Nelson provided the answer. "I drive about 30,000-35,000 miles recruiting during the year, visiting at least 75 high schools," said Nazareth College's head lacrosse coach.

The 32-year-old Nelson, who began the Golden Flyer lacrosse program in 1986, saw his efforts pay off in a big way this past Sunday, May 24. That's when Nazareth, behind Ronnie Davis' six-goal, three-assist performance, scored a 22-11 victory over Roanoke College (Va.) in the NCAA Division III championship game held at Franklin Field.

Nazareth scored the game's last eight goals, all in the fourth quarter, to ensure the first national title for the East Avenue college in any sport. The Golden Flyers tied their season high for goals in a game and ended the season with a 14-1 record.

This victory came on the heels of a 13-12 overtime win over Hobart one week earlier in a semifinal game that broke the Statesmen's 12-year reign as NCAA champs.

Despite the emotional high from beating Hobart, the players' heads were no longer in the clouds by the time they stepped onto the field against Roanoke, Nelson said.

"In our Wednesday and Thursday (May 20-21) practices we tried to defuse everyone mentally from the Hobart game," Nelson explained.

Nazareth came out strong against Roanoke, a 13-12 loser to the Golden Flyers back on March 21. Nazareth took a 5-2 lead after the first quarter thanks to three goals by Davis, and led by as much as 8-2 before going into the locker room with an 8-4 halftime edge.

After the Maroons closed to within 10-8 in the third quarter, Nazareth scored four of the next five goals for a 14-9 advantage at period's end.

Roanoke applied the heat again, getting two straight goals to make it 14-11. Shortly thereafter, though, Nazareth uncorked its knockout punch.

Jeremy Hollenbeck scored with 11:32 left in the game for a 15-11 lead before Marty Kelly scored during a man-up situation just over a minute later. Hollenbeck added two more goals during



Babette G. Augustin/Photo editor  
Nazareth's Marty Kelly casually fended off a check by Hobart's Dave Mapstone during the Golden Flyers' win last week. Kelly had two goals and three assists during Nazareth's 21-11 rout over Roanoke May 24.

the Golden Flyers' eight-goal flurry that closed out the game — and the season — on a spectacular note.

Hollenbeck finished with three goals and no assists. Kelly, the Golden Flyers' all-time leading scorer with 142 goals, had two goals and three assists on the day; and Cam Bomberry collected four goals and an assist.

But the spotlight shone most brightly on Davis, a 5-foot-9-inch senior midfielder and one of four Rush-Henrietta High School graduates on the Nazareth roster.

Davis had been in a similar situation as a senior for Rush-Henrietta in 1988, when he scored four goals for the Royal Comets in the Section 5 finals.



Nazareth College graduates (from left) John McAuliffe, Lisa Renzl, Jerome Lazore and Tom Cincebox came out to cheer on the Golden Flyers against the Statesmen at Geneva's Boswell Field.

Unfortunately for Davis, R-H lost the championship to Irondequoit.

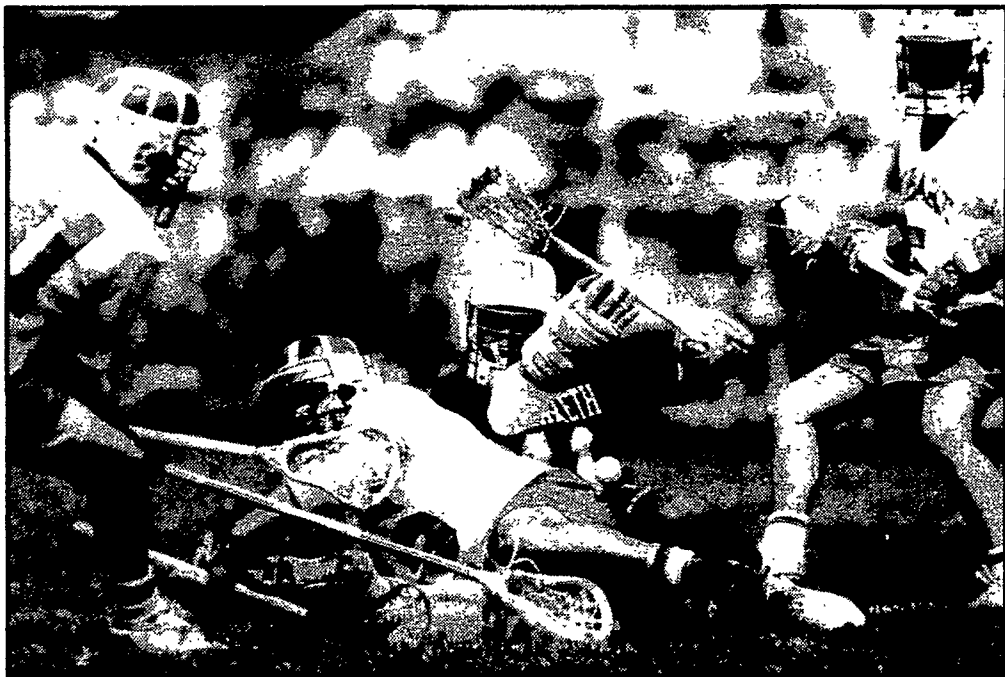
This time around, Davis said, he wanted to play well in a championship game but also come away with a trophy.

"This was my last chance. All I was thinking about was not letting this game slip away, and doing everything I could that was physically possible.

"This is a storybook ending," added Davis. "It's something I've always dreamed about."

Now, for the first time, the Golden Flyers can go through the summer with championship memories.

"I think it's going to be a lot easier on my wife," laughed Nelson, who is married to the former Lynne Stever, Nazareth's all-time leading scorer in women's soccer. "We can both have a nicer summer now."



Golden Flyer Brian Silcott (center, #11) attempts to scoop the ball off the face-off during the second period of Nazareth's May 17 win over Hobart.

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