

2007 VMI LACROSSE

VMI QUICK FACTS

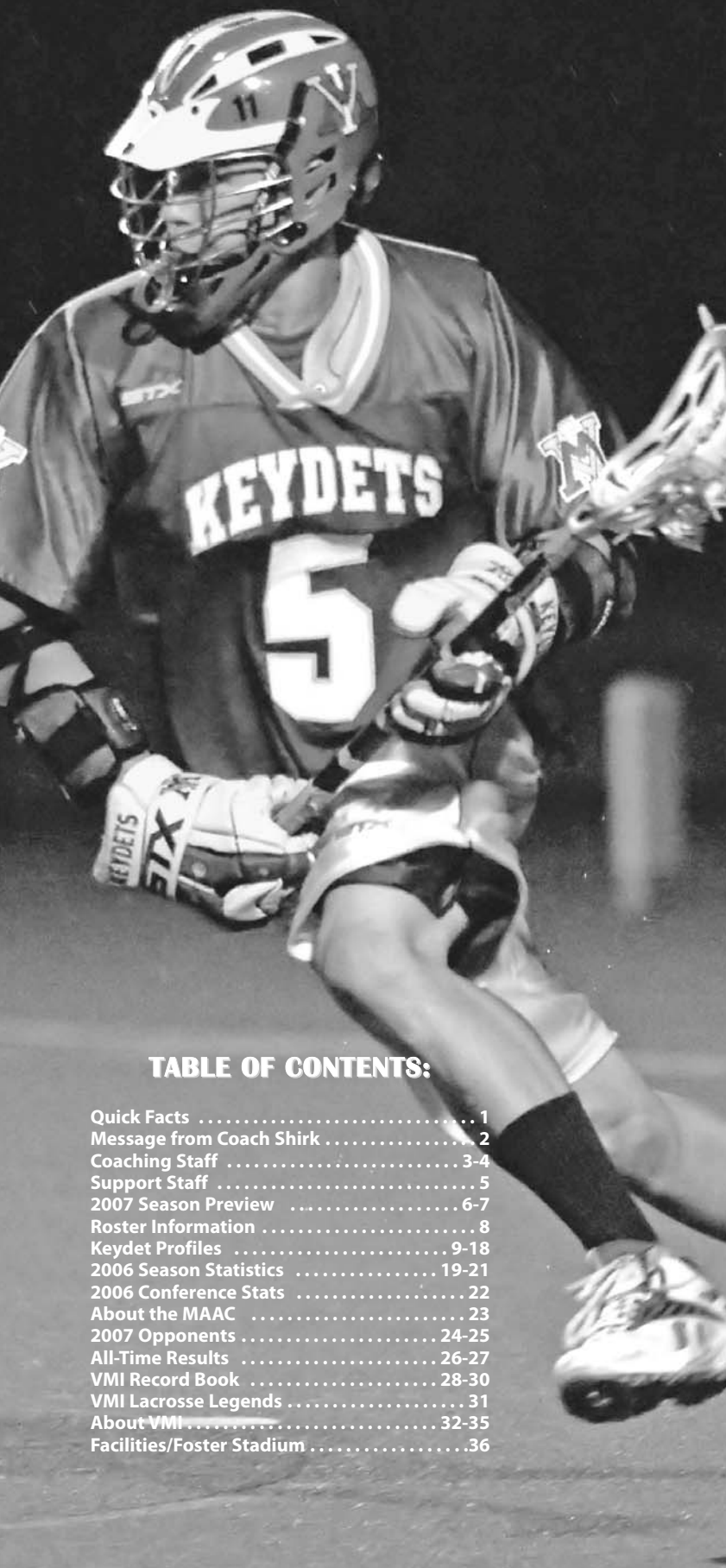


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GENERAL INFORMATION:

Name of School Virginia Military Institute
 City/Zip Lexington, Va./24450
 Founded 1839
 Enrollment 1,300
 Nickname "Keydets"
 Mascot Kangaroo
 School Colors Red, White, and Yellow
 Affiliation NCAA Division I
 Conference Metro Atlantic Athletic Conf. (MAAC)
 Superintendent Gen. J.H. Binford Peay, III
 Alma Mater/Yr. (VMI '62)
 Athletics Director Donny White
 Alma Mater/Yr. (VMI '65)

TEAM INFORMATION:

Head Coach Jeff Shirk
 Alma Mater (Year) Maryland ('01)
 Record at VMI, Years First Season
 Overall Record, Years First Season
 Email shirkjl@vmi.edu
 Phone (540) 464-7512

Assistant Coach Nat St. Laurent
 Alma Mater (Year) Keuka College ('04)
 Email stlaurentnr@vmi.edu
 Phone (540) 464-7789

2006 Record 3-10-0
 MAAC Record/Finish 2-6-0/Eighth
 Starters Returning/Lost 4/6
 Letterwinners Returning/Lost 27/16
 Newcomers 18
 Overall Program Record 125-176 (24 Seasons)
 Home Field (capacity) Foster Stadium (10,000)

SPORTS INFORMATION:

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 116 Smith Hall
 Lexington, Va. 24450

www.vmikeydets.com

2007 SCHEDULE:

Feb. 24	at Hartford	West Hartford, Conn.	12:00 pm
Feb. 28	vs Presbyterian	Lexington, Va.	3:30 pm
March 5	at Virginia	Charlottesville, Va.	7:00 pm
March 12	at Robert Morris	Moon Township, Pa.	3:30 pm
March 17	vs Siena*	Lexington, Va.	1:00 pm
March 24	vs Manhattan*	Lexington, Va.	1:00 pm
March 27	vs Drexel	Lexington, Va.	3:30 pm
March 31	at Canisius*	Buffalo, N.Y.	12:00 pm
April 4	vs Washington & Lee#	Lexington, Va.	4:00 pm
April 7	at St. Joseph's*	Philadelphia, Pa.	1:00 pm
April 14	vs Providence*	Lexington, Va.	12:00 pm
April 21	at Wagner*	Staten Island, N.Y.	1:00 pm
April 25	vs Mount St. Mary's*	Lexington, Va.	4:00 pm
April 28	at Marist*	Poughkeepsie, N.Y.	1:00 pm
May 4-6	MAAC Champ.	Emmittsburg, Md.	TBD

* MAAC Opponent

20th Annual Lee-Jackson Classic

MEDIA GUIDE CREDITS:

The 2007 VMI Lacrosse media guide is a publication of the VMI Sports Information Office. Compiled, written & edited by Joel Balthaser, Assistant SID. Layout & cover design by Joel Balthaser. Special assistance by Wade Branner, Sports Information Dir. and Christian Hoffman, Assistant SID. **Photography:** Chuck Steenburgh '86, Jeremy Ledbetter of Andre Studios, VMI Communications & Marketing and Luke Schwartz. **Printing:** Collinsville Printing - Martinsville, Va. The 2007 Virginia Military Institute lacrosse media guide was compiled and written for the benefit of all interested in learning detailed information regarding the Institute, coaches, staff, and student-athletes of the Keydet lacrosse program.



There are decisions made in every young man's life that make everlasting changes in how he is perceived by those around him and how he perceives himself. None can be more telling than what he pursues after high school. There are many fine colleges and universities from which to choose but none tells more of a young man's character and drive than VMI.

The Virginia Military Institute is one of the finest Institutions of higher learning in the country that sets itself apart from other universities with its military element of discipline. VMI students not only graduate with a highly respected degree but one that is highly sought after in the workforce because of its focus and training in the area of leadership. I have the distinct pleasure of working at a school that truly makes a positive impact on a young man's life.

I believe that VMI and all of its challenges are ideal for a college lacrosse player with a burning desire to be more than he once thought possible. The climate at VMI for lacrosse has never been better and the education is second to none. It is clearly our objective to attract the top lacrosse players from the state of Virginia and across the country, but we look for even more in a young man. VMI lacrosse embraces the missions of the Institute and seeks to draw from the challenges a strength that we will carry on the field helping lead us to victory.

Sincerely,

Jeff Shirk
Head Lacrosse Coach



The screenshot shows the VMI Keydets website with a navigation menu on the left and a main content area. The featured article is titled "2006 Lacrosse Alumni Game Draws Big Crowd at Delaney Field". The article text reads: "LEXINGTON, Va. -- The 2007 VMI lacrosse team battled it out with former Keydet standouts on Friday, October 13 on a chilly night at Delaney Field. The event, organized by the new coaching staff, kicked off a busy weekend of athletic events for VMI's Parent's Weekend. In the game, the alums struck first and held off the 2007 team to come away with a 4-3 victory in the 2006 Lacrosse Alumni Game. READ MORE..."

Below the article is a photo of two players in lacrosse gear. To the right of the article is a sidebar with "RELATED CONTENT" including "GAMES & EVENTS" (Feb 24 at Hartford West Hartford, Conn.; Feb 28 vs Presbyterian Lexington, Va.; Mar 5 at Virginia Charlottesville, Va.; Mar 12 at Robert Morris Moon Township, Penn.), "ROSTER", "SCHEDULE", "SCOREBOARD", "STATISTICS", "MEDIA GUIDES", "2007 QUICK FACTS" (Lax Coaching Staff; Lax Game Notes), and "Keydets All-LAXess VMI Lacrosse Monthly Updates".

At the bottom of the screenshot, a banner reads: "Log on to vmikeydets.com to get all the latest news on the VMI Lacrosse team."

Jeff Shirk Lacrosse Camps

Jeff Shirk Lacrosse Camps are dedicated to helping young lacrosse players realize, develop, and achieve their goals. All campers, beginner and advanced, will be guided to reach their full potential in the game of lacrosse. Campers will benefit from the expert instruction of Jeff Shirk, college coaches from across the country, and some of the best college lacrosse players in the game today.

2007 Instructional Camp
at Virginia Military Institute

Dates: June 27 - 30, 2007
Age: Boys 7 - 18
Cost: \$450-Overnight; \$350-Day

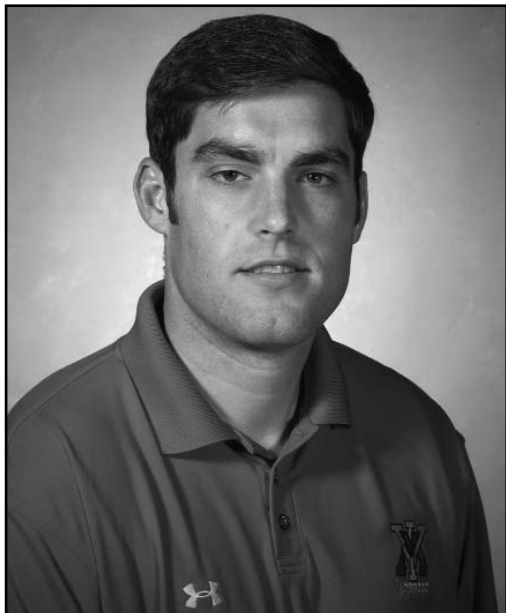
June 2007 Team Camp
at Virginia Military Institute

This camp is designed for teams from all areas to compete against each other in a 10 vs. 10 full-field game format.



www.shirklacrosse.com

P.O. Box 577 • Lexington, VA 24450 • (540) 908-2152 • jeffshirk@shirklacrosse.com



Jeff Shirk

• Head Lacrosse Coach • 1st Season • Univ. of Maryland (2001)

unit and assisting with the recruiting efforts of the program. Prior to his position at Brown, Shirk spent the 2004-05 season with his alma mater, Maryland, as an assistant coach where he helped the team reach the NCAA Final Four.

In the first head coaching role of his young career, Shirk took over the lacrosse program at the Naval Academy Preparatory School (NAPS) in the fall of 2001. He spent three seasons with the team, leading them to a 22-11 record, and was responsible for overseeing all aspects of the program. While at NAPS, Shirk also served as the Institution's Associate Director of Athletics, holding additional responsibilities that adapted him to the military environment.

Shirk is also the founder and director of the Jeff Shirk Lacrosse Camps, providing instructional camps to young lacrosse players throughout the year, and played in the National Lacrosse League for the Philadelphia Wings (2001), Washington Power (2002) and the New York Saints (2003) while he began his coaching career.

Shirk, a Mountain Lakes, N.J. native, boasts an impressive background that will help in leading the VMI lacrosse program, and he can also turn to his father for some professional advice. His dad, Gary Shirk, was a tight end in the NFL for over a decade, including seven years with the N.Y. Giants. He caught 130 passes for 1,640 career yards, and also held the team record for most receptions in a game (11) until 2006.

Shirk is married to the former Elizabeth Love, and the couple currently lives in Lexington.

Former University of Maryland defender and assistant coach Jeff Shirk was named the new head coach of the VMI men's lacrosse team in July 2006.

Shirk comes to the Institute with an impressive background in lacrosse, having played at the collegiate and professional level for eight seasons, followed by six years of coaching experience.

"I couldn't be more excited for this opportunity to work at such an outstanding institution," said Shirk. "I was impressed with General Peay and Donny White's dedication to the Vision 2039 plan, the facility upgrades, the town, and I am very glad to be joining the VMI lacrosse family."

"Lacrosse is a great sport for VMI, and I am very happy that Jeff Shirk will lead our program," said VMI athletic director Donny White. "I am impressed with his background, both as a player and as a coach. I am confident that he will build and coach our team to be a contender for the MAAC championship."

Shirk, 28, who takes over the reins of the program from 21-year head coach Doug Bartlett, comes to VMI after serving last season as assistant coach at Brown University in the Ivy League.

While at Brown, Shirk was the team's defensive coordinator, while also working with the face-off

In his playing days, he was a standout letterman in the Maryland Terrapins' defense for four seasons under coaching legend Dick Edell from 1997 through the 2000 season. Throughout his career, he was known for his tough style of defense, and was even coined the "Nastiest Hitter" in the nation by the Baltimore Sun. Prior to the 2001 season, Shirk was also selected First Team Preseason All-American by Face-Off Magazine, as well as Third Team Preseason All-American by College Lacrosse USA.

In his four seasons at Maryland, the Terps reached the NCAA championship game twice (1997-98), and the quarterfinals in his senior season (2000). He graduated from Maryland in May 2001 with a Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education.



Shirk Snapshot

- Bachelor's of Science in Elementary Education (Maryland '01)
- Assistant Coach at Brown University (2005-06 season)
- Assistant Coach at the University of Maryland (2004-05 season)
- Head Coach - NAPS (2001-2004) - 22-11 record
- Four-year letterwinner at Maryland (1997-2001)
- Named College Lacrosse's "Nastiest Hitter" by the Baltimore Sun in 2001
- 2001 team captain as a senior
- Mountain Lakes, N.J. native

Shirk's Career Playing Stats

(Maryland 1997-2000)

Year	GP/GS	Goals	Asst.	Pts.	Shots	GB	Face-offs	Win%
1997	16/0	1	0	1	2	17	7/17	41.2
1998	17/0	1	0	1	4	12	0/2	0.0
1999	14/3	1	2	3	1	19	0/1	0.0
2000	16/16	0	1	1	1	35	58/115	50.4
Totals	63/19	3	3	6	8	83	65/135	48.1



Nat St. Laurent

• Assistant Coach • 3rd Season • Keuka College (2004)

"I am excited to work with Coach St. Laurent and use his enthusiasm, experience, and dedication as tools to help build this program into a consistent winner," said VMI head coach Jeff Shirk. "Coach St. Laurent will be an immeasurable asset to the future success of this program. His work ethic, knowledge of the game, and outstanding attitude made Nat the right fit for me, our program, and the Institute."

His work ethic, knowledge of the game, and outstanding attitude made Nat the right fit for me, our program, and the Institute."

-- Head Coach Jeff Shirk

St. Laurent began his collegiate career at Lasell College in Newton, Mass., where he was named team captain as a freshman following a standout high school career at national power Carthage High School.

St. Laurent came to Lexington after finishing up his degree, and worked as an Elementary Special Education Teacher at Enderly Heights Elementary in Buena Vista, Va. He also began work as an instructor in the 80th infantry division of the Army Reserve based out of Charlottesville, Va.

After one season at Lasell, he moved on to Jefferson Community College in Watertown, N.Y. At Jefferson, he was named Honorable Mention All-Region after leading the team in scoring as the Cannoneers made it to the national tournament.

St. Laurent is also starting a new endeavor of putting together high school travel teams featuring student-athletes from local Virginia-area high schools, giving them another avenue to improve their skills before moving on to collegiate lacrosse.

He and his wife to be, Cristin Cavanaugh, reside in Lexington.

Shortly after accepting the head coaching job at VMI in July 2006, Jeff Shirk quickly promoted Nat St. Laurent to full-time Assistant Lacrosse Coach after serving the past two seasons on the sidelines with the Keydets.

Heading into his third season at the Institute, St. Laurent, a 2004 Keuka (NY) College graduate, continues to increase his role with the VMI lacrosse team. While his primary responsibilities rest with the Keydet offense, St. Laurent also assists in many other aspects of the program including the recruitment of new players.

St. Laurent transferred to Keuka College in upstate New York to wrap up his playing career, but injuries limited his playing time to only three games at Keuka. He graduated from Keuka in the Spring of 2004 with his degree in Elementary and Special Education.

His impact on the VMI offense was immediately felt by the program. In 2006, the Keydets ranked 21st nationally in man-up offense with an average of 0.328 man-up goals per game. In 2005, the team ranked in the top three in nearly all offensive categories in the MAAC, including first in total points per game (16.29) and assists per game (6.14), as well as second in goals per game (10.14). Nationally, the Keydets ranked 19th overall in scoring and 11th in face-off win percentage.

St. Laurent has worked many summer camps, including the Lacrosse Academy camp in Lexington and Special Olympics and elementary school camps back in New York.



St. Laurent Snapshot

- Works primarily with the Keydet offensive unit
- Handles Offensive Coordinator and Recruiting duties
- Received Bachelor's of Science degree in Elementary Education (Keuka '04)
- Honorable Mention All-Region at Jefferson Community College
- Freshman team captain at Lasell College in Newton, Mass.
- Also an Instructor in the 80th infantry division of the Army Reserve
- Letterwinner at Carthage High School
- Born in Carthage, N.Y.



Noelle Parent

- Graduate Assistant Athletic Trainer
- 1st Season
- Mount Union College '06

Noelle Parent is completing her first season at the Institute as a graduate assistant athletic trainer in the Sports Medicine Department.

At VMI, Parent has worked with the cross country, track, wrestling and lacrosse teams. Her primary responsibilities with the Keydet

lacrosse program include prevention, rehabilitation, evaluation, and care of all players and injuries that occur throughout the season. She also schedules doctor appointments when necessary, keeps daily records of injuries, and communicates daily with the coaching staff on the status of players.

Parent is a 2006 graduate of Mount Union College in Alliance, Ohio with Bachelor's degrees in Athletic Training and Exercise Science. While at Mount Union, Parent worked with the Purple Raiders' nine-time Division III Championships football team, as well as men's basketball, softball, swimming and diving, and men's and women's tennis programs.

A native of Youngstown, N.Y., Parent has received a host of academic accolades. At Mount Union, she was a Presidential Scholar recipient, and was named to the Dean's List all eight semesters. She received awards as the top junior and senior athletic training student, as well as the Academic Achievement Award for the top GPA in the Athletic Training Program for two consecutive years.

She is currently enrolled at the University of Virginia, where she is working in the Athletic Training Masters program.



Joel Balthaser

- Assistant Sports Information Dir.
- 2nd Season
- University of Dayton '02

Balthaser is in his second season with the Keydets after joining the VMI Sports Information Department in the fall of 2005.

At VMI, Balthaser has served as the media contact for several Keydet sports including men's soccer, men's and women's indoor/outdoor track and field, and men's lacrosse. Balthaser's duties also include assisting in the promotion of football and basketball and assisting with in-game operations and post-game interviews.

Balthaser received his Bachelor's degree in Sport Management from the University of Dayton, with minors in journalism and general business in 2002. While at Dayton, Balthaser worked for three years with the Miami Valley Golf Association as media relations coordinator, and interned with the Illinois Junior Golf Association in Chicago as communications manager.

Prior to coming to VMI, Balthaser spent three years as the National Director of Media Relations for Pop Warner football, in charge of website maintenance, publications and all related media initiatives. He was the primary media contact for three Pop Warner Super Bowls, and planned and coordinated three national scholar banquets for the company.

Balthaser is a member of the College Sports Information Directors of America (CoSIDA), and recently received a Fred Stabley Writing Award for a feature on the VMI lacrosse program. At Pop Warner, Balthaser also published an image series book entitled "Images of America: Pop Warner" for the company in the spring of 2004.

VMI Lacrosse Support Staff:



Col. Thomas Baur
Faculty Athletic Representative



Sherry Baucom
Athletic Academic Advisor/S.W.A.



Stephen Ross
Athletic Academic Advisor



Cliff Wade
Assoc. Athletics Director (Compliance & Business)



Lance Fujiwara
Assistant A.D. (Sports Medicine)



Bart Bellairs
Senior Associate A.D. Operations & Marketing



Andrew Westhouse
Assistant to the A.D. Tickets & Promotions



Elizabeth Igo
Assistant Athletic Administrator



Betsey Nicely
Administrative Assistant



Jimmy Coale
Head Strength & Conditioning Coach



Keydets Feature New Look, Fresh Faces for 2007 Season

A new era has officially begun for VMI lacrosse under the direction of first-year head coach Jeff Shirk, who took over the program back in July 2006. Shirk comes to the Institute with an array of experience as a player and coach, including a solid career at the University of Maryland. Joining Shirk on the sidelines this year is Nat St. Laurent, who returns for his third season at VMI as assistant coach.

Along with a new head coach, the team will also be sporting new uniforms and helmets for the upcoming season, completing the transition of the new coaching staff. But the 2007 Keydets will also feature a bevy of new faces on the field after the departure of 16 letterwinners, including six starters from last year's team.

On offense, the Keydets return just three of their top eight scorers, but do welcome back junior Kevin Hill who had a team-best 31 points (17 goals/14 assists) in 2006, and established himself as one of the top scorers in the conference. Another certain strong point for the team will be the return of three veteran leaders on defense, each of whom has started throughout their careers.

"For us to be successful this year we need our seniors to step up and be leaders," said Shirk, whose team features nine seniors this season. "We're going to need them to lead the young guys, because we are going to play a lot of freshman. We need people on the field that are going to direct them. There are a lot of guys on our team who haven't been in these roles in the past, but we need their support and need them to step in as leaders."

Coach Shirk has also implemented a philosophy that was a major trademark of his game as a d-middie at Maryland; toughness. Shirk's play was once described as a "defensive tenacity and penchant for delivering crushing hits," and that intensity is something the new coach is looking for from his team.

"Overall, we need to be more physical," added Shirk. "We are a military school, and we have been pressing all year about being more physical. We should be able to come in and beat some teams up that we haven't been able to in the past."

Defense:

The defensive unit for the Keydets this year is easily the deepest and most experienced group on the team, and feature a host of veteran's that coach Shirk will look to lead the team. The four players vying for the three starting spots are senior captains Alex Litz and Curtis Jaques, as well as junior's Pat Zanelotti and

Brett Whitsitt, who have made a combined 66 starts in their respective careers, and each feature a good combination of size and athleticism to anchor the back line.

Top Defensive Returners:

CLOSE DEFENSE:

Player, Yr.	GP/GS
• Curtis Jaques, Sr.	38/17
• Alex Litz, Sr.	30/13
• Pat Zanelotti, Jr.	26/14
• Brett Whitsitt, Jr.	10/1

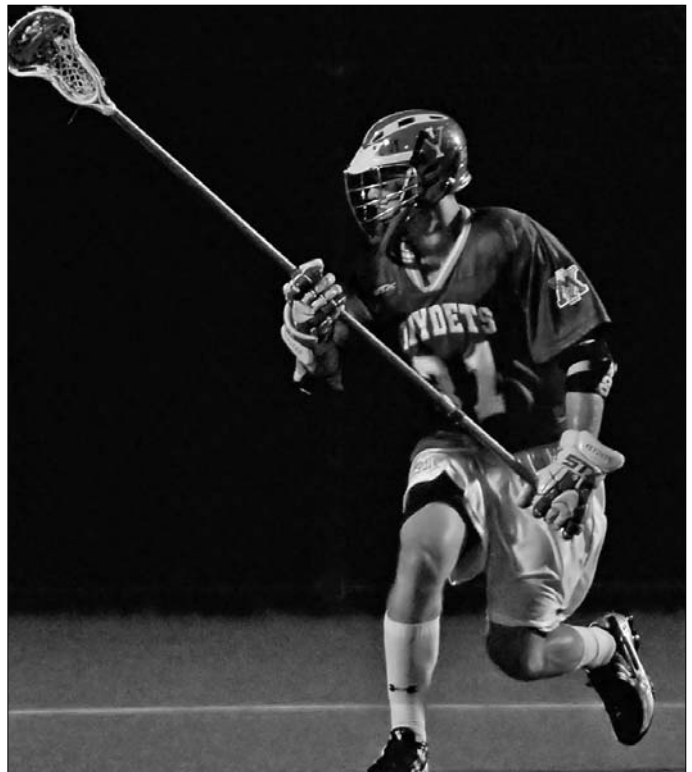
LONG STICK MIDDIE:

Player, Yr.	GP/GS
• Charles Barnes, Sr.	39/21
• Matt Turner, Jr.	13/5

Jaques leads the way coming off the best season of his career in which he was tabbed the team's top defender. Jaques, a Preseason All-MAAC selection, started all 13 games last year for the Keydets and possesses great range in his defending. Litz is expected to return to the starting lineup this season as one of the team's most athletic players, and will also serve as a team captain for his leadership abilities. Zanelotti made ten starts last year for VMI, after making a

smooth transition from LSM after his freshman year. He is also one of the most physical players on this year's squad. Rounding out the potential starters on close defense is junior Brett Whitsitt, who has continued to improve and will be in the mix in the defensive rotation.

The second line of defense features a pair of players with the ability to step into starting roles at any time. Bobby Hawley and Chris DarConte are both juniors who have worked hard this past off-season and will each see increasing roles as a result, making up the second line along with the fourth member from the first team competition.



Senior Curtis Jaques is one of three veteran starters returning in the Keydet defense this season.

"We have a good mix of veteran guys and young talent," added Shirk. "But overall, we should be solid in our defensive units this year because of the veteran leadership."

Defensive Middies:

At long-stick middle, the Keydets have two experienced and talented players returning this year. Senior Charles Barnes and junior Matt Turner provide the Keydets with a pair of viable options with the long pole. Barnes is a strong and physical athlete who has seen action in all 39 games in a Keydet uniform. He is one of the best in the league in causing turnovers, and is excellent in getting tough groundballs. Turner will also get significant playing time after a solid sophomore campaign. Turner features very good speed for his position, and is a very good on-ball defender.

At short stick d-middie, sophomore John Collier has been converted from goalie to the likely starter. Collier has made a smooth transition, and the coaches will look to utilize his athleticism at d-middie. First classman Jason LaCerde gained valuable experience last season at the position, and will see increased time as a result. LaCerde is a smart defender and will play a big role in the team's clearing game. Freshmen Sean Kennedy and Dan Perestock are a few of the youngsters that the coaching staff is hoping will pick things up quickly, and fill the spots behind LaCerde and Collier.

Face-off:

One of the players that will be missed from last season is face-off specialist Tony Cavalero, who was one of the best in the league in that category. However, senior Andy Milford got an opportunity last season to handle some of the face-off opportunities, and looks to be the Keydets' top option. Milford attempted 67 face-offs last year, and has worked hard in the off-season to improve his technique. Fellow senior Rob DiDomenico and sophomore Remington Adams have also shown their abilities to handle face-offs, and should see plenty of opportunities this season. Also in the mix for playing time will be freshmen Lowell Patterson, Dave Padgett and Leonard Weschler.



Midfield:

This year's first line of middies will be anchored by senior Steve Long, who made the most of his first opportunity in the starting lineup last season. The lefty captain had an impressive season with 11 goals and 12 assists, and features one of the hardest shots on the team. David Jacobs was another player who took advantage of an increased role last season, playing in 12 games on the first and second lines. Redshirt senior Clay Tharrington also jumps into the Keydet starting lineup this season to round out the starting rotation in the midfield.

Top Offensive Returners:

MIDFIELD:

- **Steve Long (Sr.)**
-11 Goals, 12 Assists, 51 Shots
- **David Jacobs (Jr.)**
-12 GP, 2 Goals, 9 Shots

ATTACK:

- **Kevin Hill (Jr.)**
-17 Goals, 14 Assists, 69 Shots
- **Matt Harrison (Jr.)**
-5 Goals, 1 Assist, 16 Shots

"(Middie) is actually going to be one of our deepest positions this year," said Shirk. "We're going to run a lot of freshman on our midfield lines, but we are confident in Steve Long to be our senior leader out there."

And while the first line features three upperclassmen, the next two are comprised primarily of newcomers vying for playing time. Freshmen Tim Moran, Bobby Davis and Dave Padgett are three highly regarded athletes who have impressed the coaching staff in practice

and in Fall-ball, and look to be the front runners on the second line. Finally, three more freshmen; Justin Ong, Lowell Patterson & Jesse Newman, will compete with upperclassmen John Regan and Eric Harley for time in the second and third lines.

Attack:

Although the attack unit was depleted with the graduation of three of the team's top scorers up front, junior Kevin Hill returns for his second full season in his natural position. Hill has amassed 59 points in two seasons for the Keydets on 28 goals and 31 assists. Toward the end of last season, Hill exhibited his scoring prowess by racking up seven goals and four assists in a two-game span, and the Keydets will look for more of that explosiveness this year.

Joining Hill up front is junior Matt Harrison, who moves up from his traditional midfield spot into the attack. Harrison, a strong player with the ball, will see a majority of his action at attack until some of the freshman are brought along in the midfield. Freshman Brett Leonard looks as though he's earned the final starting nod alongside Harrison and Hill. Leonard has a strong knack for finding the net, after recording nearly 200 goals and 100 assists at St. Vincent Pallotti (Md.) and leading his team to the MIAA B Conference state title.

Behind the starting three is a logjam of underclassmen that have been battling for playing time. Sophomore Brandon Rabon and freshmen Hayden Cox, Steve Lindley, Jacob Weimer, Bobby Morris and Ryan Crean provide the coaching staff with several different options to fill in the starting rotation.

"We did lose a lot of players from last season," said Shirk. "But we also have a lot of young guys ready to step in. Kevin Hill is the leader of the unit. "On the offensive end, we are going to need big contributions from the underclassmen. We need them to take more of a role than they have in the past, but I think that they will be up for it."

Goalie:

A big void was left in the net for VMI after the departure of the team's top two starters from a year ago, but a pair of very talented youngsters are waiting in the wings. The front-runner for the starting spot seems to be occupied by Sean McCoy, a highly-touted freshman out of Hudson, Ohio. The youngster has great size (6-2/195) and shows great range in the cage. Sophomore Ian Williams will back up McCoy, and has continued to up his stock with his play in the off-season. Sophomore Patrick Maloney is the team's third option, and features one of the best work ethics on the team.

The Schedule:

The Keydets will play a very tough 14-game schedule this season, one that features an equal seven home games and seven road contests. Heading into the regular season, the team should be battle-tested after scrimmages with UMBC & Delaware last fall, as well as exhibitions against Princeton, Duke and Brown in

February. Those games should pay dividends as VMI opens up with three of its first four games on the road. VMI will travel to face familiar opponents in Hartford, Robert Morris, and the defending national champion Virginia Cavaliers, as well as hosting Presbyterian at Foster Stadium.

"We scheduled the scrimmage with Maryland, Brown and Duke to prepare us for some of the tough teams we play this season," said Shirk. "We want to be competitive with those teams, and the whole point of this year's (non-conference) schedule was to get some very good competition before we head into the MAAC."

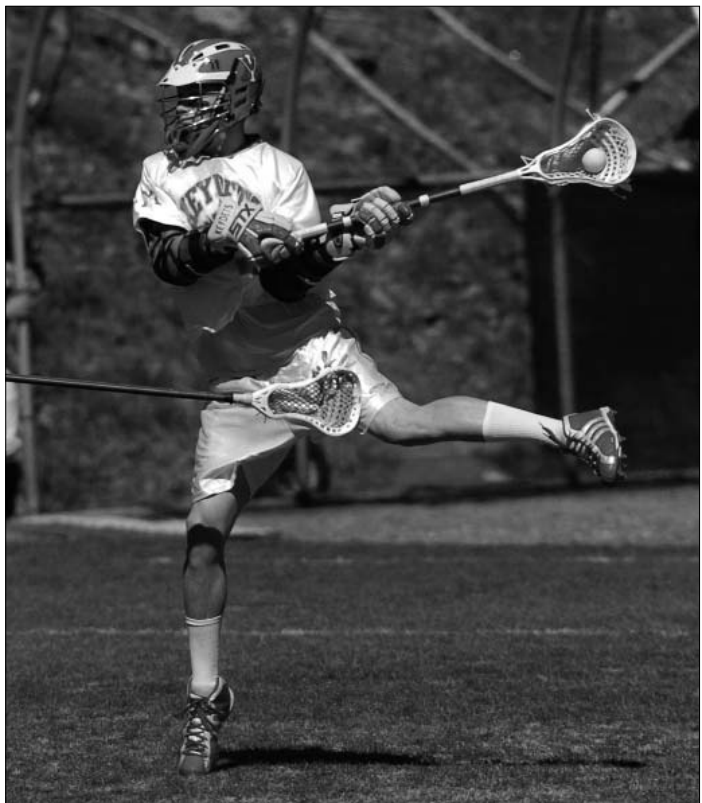
VMI will open up 2007 conference play at home with back-to-back contests against Siena and Manhattan. Following a home non-conference tilt with Drexel in late March, the Keydets will play four of its next six conference games on the road to round out MAAC play. The team will also play host for the 20th Annual Lee-Jackson Classic in early April.

"I think we are right there," commented Shirk in reference to the conference. "Overall, the MAAC conference is very close, and there are probably at least six teams that could potentially win it, and maybe even eight once we get closer to playing. I think every game is going to be close; it is just going to come down to who works harder, who wants it more, and who can play better that day."

Looking Ahead:

With more than half of this year's team in their first two years at the Institute, the future looks bright for the VMI lacrosse team. For this season, coach Shirk will rely on many of those underclassmen to play pivotal roles and he looks for them to establish a "short learning curve." The teams' veteran players, including five captains, will need to step up and provide the leadership to carry the Keydets in their goal of earning a MAAC Championship. With the season rapidly approaching, coach Shirk and the Keydets are eager to get on the field.

"I am just looking forward to getting started," said Shirk. "The guys have worked so hard in the off-season, and have really bought in to the new system. I am looking forward to all of their hard work paying off. Their enthusiasm has been great, and it's going to be high intensity right from the first day. It's now time for the guys to go out there and respond to everything in a positive way."



Junior Kevin Hill returns as the team's top scorer, after racking up 31 points (17 goals and 14 assists) in 2006.