

DOMINATE the STATE

UA leaves no doubt as it runs away with its fourth straight OHSLA title

By [MICHAEL ALWOOD](#)

It's called the Ohio High School Lacrosse Association Division I state championship game, but the 2007 version hosted by Dublin Scioto Saturday was really no contest.

The team from Upper Arlington took all the drama out of the final game of the year in the first few minutes by completely dominating previously unbeaten Hudson en route to a 14-2 victory.

It was the fourth consecutive state title for the Golden Bears, and 10th overall under coach Ted Wolford, who also claimed trophies in 1994, 1995, 1997, 1998, 2000 and 2001.

"Things fell into place well for us," the coach said. "We scored our first seven goals and they were all scored by different kids. On past teams we've relied on a couple of people to motivate us and get the job done. But we've got so many different kids this year who really stepped up to play and it made it rather interesting."

The Bears (20-1) roared into the final after similarly trouncing visiting Moeller in last Wednesday's semifinals, 14-5.

Grant Devilbiss led the team in scoring both games, collecting four goals in the win over Moeller and three more Saturday to be named the Offensive Most Valuable Player of the tournament.

Not that he minded the honor, but Devilbiss said it paled in comparison to hoisting the state championship trophy.

"The championship was more satisfying," the senior said. "Since the sixth grade that's been our goal. All the hard work, the sweat and the effort finally paid off. The Offensive MVP was just an added bonus."

Senior goalie Judd Hall, who posted 13 saves in the win over Moeller and nine more Saturday, shut out Hudson for three quarters of the championship and claimed the Defensive MVP honors.

Hall had similar feelings about his award.

"You never really expect anything like that," he said. "Our defense is centered on a team concept so I don't feel there's really just one person that stands out. I was happy I won it but at that point receiving that award doesn't really matter."

Hall said one of the most satisfying aspects of Saturday's victory was seeing the Bears offense let loose on Hudson (19-1).

"This year everyone was saying the offense was our weak point," Hall said. "I don't think Hudson expected that. So I was happy for the offensive players who showed they can carry the team too."

"We knew what we had to do and we executed well," Devilbiss said. "We scored on five of our first six possessions. That obviously took some of the wind out of Hudson's sails. For us to come out strong like that was something the coach was harping on in practice. He wanted us to make a point to Hudson that we were there to play and we were prepared to take whatever they had. It was a good way to start a game."

Arlington was up 9-0 at the half and led 14-0 before the Explorers got on the board in the fourth quarter.

"It was kind of a situation where there were just a lot of holes in the defense," Wolford said. "They would plug up one hole and a new one would spring up. Our guys played very aggressively and went after ground balls. We played as solid a defense as we've played all year long and offensively we were able to get better looks than we've had all year."

In addition to Devilbiss' three goals, Alex Drake had two. Eric Hanover, Nolan Kleinhenz, Adam Donahue, Clark Tanner, Matt Ghidotti, Keith Olson, Cal Case, Kyle Smith and Scott Lathrop all scored a goal in the title game.

Though Wolford has made a habit of collecting state championship trophies, he said he never tires of getting it done.

"It's different every year from a coach's perspective just because you get to see the joy in the kids' faces," he said. "You get a chance to see the fruition of the hard work of the assistant coaches and what they've done and our trainers and parents and everybody."

"We're really proud of the way they fought their way through all year long and worked hard and just kept improving."

Arlington senior defenseman Max Schmidt was also honored at the championship as the Ohio Player of Year, an award Wolford said was very deserving.

"He makes good decisions on the field and he improved all year long," the coach said. "He already came into the year being pretty well thought of. But we've seen him be more patient and during the last half of the season he really started getting into the college mentality in the way he plays defense. He just has a much better grasp of the game than the other kids do at this time in their careers."

Schmidt, a University of Maryland signee, is considered one of the top defensive players in the nation and was recently listed in Rise Magazine as the second-best defensive recruit in the country.



News photo by Jef Vidmar
Upper Arlington senior Max Schmidt kisses the state championship trophy after defeating Hudson Saturday in the state final at Dublin Scioto High School.



Upper Arlington junior Adam Donahue takes a shot on goal against Hudson during the state final Saturday at Dublin Scioto.



Upper Arlington senior Daniel Gaines tackles fellow senior Alex Schmidt after the state championship game against Hudson.