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## Hopkins' immovable force Lacrosse: Although the position was forced upon him, Johns Hopkins' Brian Carcaterra has distinguished himself as a goalkeeper.

April 09, 1998 | By Jamison Hensley | Jamison Hensley, CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Brian Carcaterra fondly reminisces about his lacrosse initiation.

He flashes a grin as he recalls those carefree afternoons as a 7-year-old when he would follow his older brothers, Paul and Steve, to the back of the neighborhood general store. They'd chalk up the perimeter of a goal on the [wall](#) , hand their younger sibling an attackman's stick and fire away -- at him.

Shot after shot would whiz toward him. Some blazed right by him. Others hammered off his [legs](#) .

But Carcaterra didn't budge, trying to stop every blistering shot. Sure, the stick towered over him. And he didn't mind that he wouldn't get a helmet or pads for another five years.

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Call him crazy. Or just call him the best goalkeeper in Division I today.

Flashy and [athletic](#) , Carcaterra has surpassed most expectations, becoming Johns Hopkins' defensive equalizer.

"I really had no choice in playing goalie," said Carcaterra, a sophomore from Yorktown Heights, N.Y. "I didn't know goalies used a different stick. But that October, they bought me a goalie stick for my birthday, and it became a lot easier after that."

And it became a lot tougher for the opposition.

Stonewalling a point-blank shot, Carcaterra will sprint the ball upfield, eluding attackmen and outracing midfielders. When there's a loose ball on the crease, he'll bolt out of the cage and jump-start a Blue Jays fast break.

The high-energy maneuvers sometimes overshadow his play in the goal. In his past three games, he has allowed just 19 goals while posting a .683 save percentage.

Because he's 5 feet 8, many teams look to beat him with high shots. That's the game plan Virginia employed, and Carcaterra stopped nine shots in the opening eight minutes of the game, finishing with a career-best 21 saves.

"He's our best athlete and probably could play anywhere on the field for us," Hopkins coach Tony Seaman said. "He can change a game. I still think of 1995 and how [Maryland goalkeeper Brian] Dougherty's ability changed that game. I go to bed with it and wake up with that memory every day. Carc has that ability."

Few would have predicted such success.

As a freshman in high school, Carcaterra tried out for the varsity lacrosse team after wrestling season. At 105 pounds, he couldn't throw the ball to midfield and had to wait his turn.

Carcaterra slowly grew and made his impact during his final two years, helping Yorktown to two state titles. However, Hopkins was one of the few major Division I schools that showed interest.

Once at Homewood, Carcaterra had no scholarship, a large tuition bill and no idea of his place on the depth chart.

"I knew if I wasn't going to get a scholarship, I wasn't going to play here anymore," said Carcaterra, whose father's annual salary as a school teacher is \$50,000 -- about twice the cost of a year's tuition at Hopkins. "I didn't want to put that burden on my parents."

During fall scrimmages his freshman year, he not only earned a scholarship, but also was asked to redshirt rather than use a year of eligibility sitting behind senior starter Jonathan Marcus.

Although Carcaterra's playing ability was slow to surface, his communication skills were obvious immediately.

During recruiting, Seaman said regular calls to Carcaterra turned out to be 40-minute conversations, with the coach

getting in a few sentences edgewise. In the middle of practice, Carcaterra will often call out to one of his professors walking past the field for a quick chat.

He revels in communicating with his defense, calling out positioning and slides. He talks so much that he has a tendency to move out of position and lose track of the ball.

"His mouth is always going," said Blue Jays defenseman Rob Doerr, who grew up four miles from Carcaterra and now lives with him off-campus. "Even in the morning, he'll be talking downstairs and it will wake me up. His voice is so loud and it just carries."

That's Carcaterra: vocal, flamboyant and hardly ordinary. When he dreams of scoring, he wants to convert it with an around-the-back shot.

Not surprisingly, his two idols are former Syracuse lacrosse great Gary Gait and professional wrestling star Ric Flair. As a youngster, he used to paint his face with his mother's lipstick before heading to the wrestling matches.

That high-strung personality distinguishes Carcaterra on the field. And Carcaterra's brothers can take some of the credit for that.

"We really did beat him up," said his older brother, Steve, who starred at Towson State from 1992 to 1994. "Paul and I knew we wanted to be attackmen and Brian became the goalie by a process of elimination. Once he started to stop our shots, we rewarded him with a goalie stick."

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