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Welcome to the *Wahoo Central Podcast*. I'm your host Jeff White from [virginiasports.com](http://virginiasports.com). The spring is in the air in Charlottesville. Today we'll be talking with two of UVA's most talented student athletes. And they're both only second years. Cole Kastner from men's lacrosse is coming on in the second segment, but joining the show right now is the reigning singles champion and NCAA women's tennis. And that of course is Emma Navarro. Emma, great to see you again. Thanks for making time for this.

Yeah, good to see you. Thanks for having me.

So what has year two at UVA been like for you so far? Your first year here, the pandemic pretty much hung over every aspect of life on grounds and maybe life off grounds too. What's this year been like? A little more normal?

Yeah. First year was definitely different than this year. First of all, I didn't even come first semester. I stayed home just because of COVID. So when I finally got here, it was-- yeah, it was just like getting into the swing of things, like getting used to things. I was taking my first college classes on grounds.

And before I came to school, I never really followed college tennis. I didn't know what I was getting into. I didn't know the flow of the season or anything like that. So yeah, I was just like getting a lay of the land. And then this year, I've had a lot of fun. We've had less COVID things to worry about. And yeah, it's been really great.

Did you-- in the spring last year, did you have any in-person classes or was it still all online at that point?

I had-- yeah, all online.

So what's it been like this school year actually being in class with other students again?

Yeah, it's been much better. It's great to be able to go to class. I try to schedule as many classes as I can with teammates or friends so that I can go to class with them. Yeah, it's been a much better school experience and a better learning environment too just to be around classmates and actually be in class and be able to see the professor. Yeah, it's been really good.

Have you picked a major yet?

Not yet. Yeah, we're in the works with that.

You still got time. So--

Yeah.

You are juggling a lot of balls. In addition to competing for UVA and taking classes, you occasionally go out of town to compete as an amateur in professional tournaments. You're ranked number 200 in the world. Is it challenging to balance everything? Or how-- I'm sure it's challenging. How challenging is it?

Yeah. At times it gets challenging but I've been on this balancing act for a while now. Starting in fourth grade, I would go play tennis before school at six in the morning, go to school, go play afterwards. And then I would miss-- we had-- most junior tournaments, they would go Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Monday. So I was missing school all the time even, I don't know how old you are in fourth grade, like 10 or whatever.

So yeah, I've been practicing-- I've had a lot of practice balancing everything. So I think I've gotten pretty decent at it. But yeah, at times it gets challenging, especially when I come back to school and I have exams and work due and all that kind of thing. But yeah, I'm grateful that I'm in this position that I'm able to have all these opportunities.

So you won an ITF tournament in Orlando back in November. You've also competed at WTA tournaments, most recently won at Indian Hills in California over spring break this month. I'm guessing it's fair to say that Sara O'Leary and the rest of the coaching staff are very supportive of you in this because it'd be hard--

They've been really great. Yeah, I got really lucky coming to UVA, having such great coaches. They're always supporting me. And yeah, I'm really grateful for that. They're always texting me when I'm at tournaments, good luck. Good job. All that kind of thing. So yeah, that's-- I know not all college coaches would react that way to me going to tournaments, especially during the season. So yeah, I'm lucky for that.

The tournament you won in Orlando, I believe was at the same venue where the NCAA tournament was held last spring. Did that feeling-- did that familiarity with the courts and the venue help you at all get comfortable?

We actually played on clay at that 25K. So different courts but yeah, same venue. For sure, coming back to a site that you're familiar with, it's definitely easier. You don't have to-- there's not as much getting used to. So yeah. And I've played a few junior tournaments down there too so--

So you grew up in Charleston, South Carolina. You mentioned you started playing competitively in the fourth grade. At what age did you first pick up a tennis racket?

Sorry, you cut out for a second there.

Yeah. At what age did you first pick up a tennis racket?

I think I was around three. I have no memories of being that age. My memory started like six maybe. But yeah, my parents tell me I was three. And I have two older brothers too who they played. And they're a few years older than me. So I was kind of out in the court with my brothers and my dad. And I would run around and pick up balls. So yeah, I think I first started to swing the racket at like three.

Did you play other sports as a kid?

Not really. Tennis was always my main sport. I played-- I was on the basket-- the girls' basketball team in elementary school, which was fun. I had fun doing that. And then I did swim team for a while but that was more as like a crossfit sort of thing to tennis. But yeah, always my siblings and I would be playing random sports in the backyard and stuff like that so--

What is it-- I mean you've devoted an incredible amount of time to tennis. You're obviously good at it. What is it about the sport that really appeals to you, that makes it worth your while to devote so much time and energy to it?

Yeah. I love the individuality of it. You're out there. And college is a little different because you have coaches out there and you also have your team out there playing as well. But I love the problem solving aspect of it. You always have-- you always have a problem that you have to find a solution to. And I really like that part of it. Yeah, I would say those are the main things.

The first woman from UVA to win the NCAA singles title was Danielle Collins who did it twice. You've gotten to know Danielle a little bit, haven't you?

Yeah.

What's that been like?

She's definitely a character. You can see it on the court. She's got-- sometimes she's got antics and she's funny. But yeah, off the court, she's always been super supportive and yeah, she makes me laugh. And it's really cool to see all the success she's having out on the tour. I think she's like 10 in the world now, which is super impressive. Yeah.

You are much more even keeled on the court, right? I know Andres Pedroso told me once that watching you play, it's impossible to tell from your demeanor whether you're playing well or playing poorly. Is that a conscious thing or have you always just been like that?

I've always been like that on the court. I don't know. I like to keep all my feelings and thoughts inside my head and sort of not give my opponent any room to see that I'm not playing well or playing well or whatever. So yeah, that was natural when I was young. And then as I got older, I acknowledged it and I embraced it. I've been getting a little bit more rowdy on the court in college matches recently. I actually had a fist pump at indoors. So yeah.

So did you get up early or stay up late to watch Danielle in the Australian Open singles final this year?

I did-- no, I didn't watch the finals. I watched all of her matches. I think it was leading up to the finals. And then the finals, I don't know. It was at like 3:00 AM or something. I didn't make it.

So Danielle has become something of an ambassador for college tennis by showing that a player can get his or her degree and then go on to a successful pro career. You said you didn't know a whole lot about college tennis when you got here. Have you come to appreciate it more than maybe you thought you would?

For sure. Definitely. Yeah, I've had a really great time. And playing on a team is something that I've always wanted to do. And yeah, I have a greater appreciation for the work these girls and guys put in on and off the court. And we've all got crazy schedules and it's definitely-- it's tough. But yeah, it's really great and it's really rewarding. So I'm super glad that I made the decision to come to college and to stay another year.

Had you played on a team-- I mean mentioned you played elementary school basketball. In tennis, had you ever been part of a team?

Yeah, there's a few junior tournaments. There's like two or three throughout the year that you play on a team. There's inner sectionals where you play for your region and then there's spring team nationals where you're all randomly assigned to a team. But yeah, those are the only two. I'm pretty sure in juniors throughout the year so--

Last year when you won the NCAA singles, you became the first freshman to do so in 12 years on the women's side. I mean you're still young. As a player, has your game progressed do you feel since last year? And if so, in what ways?

Yeah, for sure. I've got great coaches around me that are always pushing for more. We're never trying to maintain a level. So I feel like I'm getting better every day. And I think I've embraced my forehand more, tried to make it more of a weapon. And then just I feel like I have more, I guess, improved dexterity throughout my game. Like I've been using more slices, just more variety generally.

I think serves and returns are a huge thing, a big thing I've been working on. And I think my serve is always improving. It can always get better but I feel like it's definitely gotten better. And returns too. And just being more aggressive overall. That's definitely a big thing I've been working on in the past few weeks, especially so--

I know there's a lot of emphasis in the athletic department with student athletes on educating them about nutrition and providing good nutritional opportunities. Is that something you paid much attention to before you got here?

Yeah. My physical trainer who I've been working with since I was like 12, he's always put an emphasis on that and tried to teach me about what to eat when. And that's been really helpful. I didn't always embrace it when I was younger, but definitely now it's a big thing because everything you do matters, how much sleep you get, what you eat, all that kind of thing. So yeah, for sure.

Also last year, you and Rosie Johanson became the first women's double team from UVA to reach the NCAA semifinals. Rosie has graduated and now you're mainly playing with Amber O'Dell. What's the process of building chemistry with a new partner like?

Yeah. Last few matches, I've actually played with Hibah. So our number two player, Elaine, has been out with a stress fracture. So we've mixed up the doubles teams a little bit because of that. So yeah, I think the process of building that chemistry, I feel like it happens most in matches. Like you can practice however much you want but when you really-- when you really find that, it's in matches.

I think a big thing is just being unconditionally supportive of your partner. I like to be-- when my partner misses, it's like she just hit a winner. Like it doesn't matter. And I think if you can have that mutual support, you'll build that chemistry and success as a doubles team will follow.

You didn't play any ITA matches in the fall so you came into 2022 officially unranked. So in the early season matches, I would always get a kick out of unranked Emma Navarro beating someone who was ranked. And I know that's just the way the system works, but did the absurdity of that strike you at times?

I was excited to come into this season unranked. It's a good feeling, honestly. Yeah, I'm not fully sure how the ranking system works. I don't fully understand it. But yeah, I've been able to work my way up a little bit. I've never cared or worried too much about rankings. Anyone can be anyone on any given day. So yeah, it is what it is.

Virginia has two home matches this weekend, Friday afternoon against Florida State and then Sunday morning against another ACC team Miami, which is ranked 10th nationally. UVA is 11th now I believe. What are your thoughts on this UVA team and its potential? You lost Rosie but you've added some talented first years. You mentioned Elaine. And when she's healthy, she's really something.

Yeah. I think-- I feel like we have a lot more depth in our lineup this year. Yeah, we've got Elaine who's super talented. And then Sophie has been fighting really hard, pulling out some close matches. And then Hibah has been playing really well, too. And our newcomer second year, Sara, has also been a really good addition. So yeah, I think we have more depth.

And I think-- I feel like people have been working super hard this season. I think they see our potential and we've gotten a taste of what we're capable of this season. So I think everyone's super excited about that. And yeah, this weekend should be fun. We lost to both these teams 3-4 last season down in Florida so hoping to avenge some losses.

So as the reigning NCAA singles champion, you have a big target on your back this season. I'm not sure you really snuck up on anybody last year. People knew you were good. But have you noticed anything different in your matches? Because obviously beating Emma Navarro would be a big deal for an opponent.

Yeah, it's funny. I feel like opponents come into matches in one of two ways. They're either just like swinging for the fences like they have nothing to lose or I feel like they're-- they feel like they might not be able to win so they mope around the court a little bit. But yeah, I'm all for the challenge. It's a good feeling playing players who want to beat me really badly because I'm in it for the challenge. So yeah.

The UVA tennis programs move last year from the Snyder Center to a new outdoor facility at the Boar's Head Resort. First of all, did you ever play at Snyder? I don't--

No.

I don't think-- did you ever practice there or have you ever been on the courts there?

Yeah, I practiced there a few times last year, but yeah I never played a match there.

What are your thoughts on the new facility and what do you think that means and could mean going forward for the two programs?

Oh, the new outdoor courts, it's beautiful. I love playing out there. And we just got new lights put in so that should be exciting. Maybe we'll have a night match coming up. Yeah, I think with a new facility, like that is sort of, at least I feel this way, a bit of a responsibility. Like we're here and we're playing for a great university and a great program and we have this responsibility to give it our all every day. And when we're playing matches out there, just fight till the very end.

I don't know-- I mean you committed to UVA before, at least before the facility was finished. I don't know if facilities went into your decision at all, but is that a big deal-- in recruiting, I'm sure something like that doesn't hurt and it probably helps a lot, doesn't it? With elite players.

Yeah, it doesn't hurt. For me personally, it wasn't a big factor. I visited other schools with larger weight rooms and cleaner locker rooms, whatever. That wasn't a big factor in my decision. I'm not sure how other people feel about that.

So you obviously have a busy schedule. Do you have any time to get out and see Charlottesville or do you follow any other teams or sports here?

Yeah, I get all my sports news on all the Instagram accounts. So yeah, sometimes I'll go on and I'll catch up on all the other teams. Yeah, when I have a day off or an evening off or something, I'll try to get out in Charlottesville, eat somewhere fun or whatever, just see the city.

What's your go-to restaurant in town?

Ooh, that's a tough one. I love Corner Juice. It's not really a dinner spot, but I go there for lunch all the time.

All right. And then I ate at South and Central the other evening, which was really good.

Is that in Dairy Market, the new place?

Yeah.

Yeah.

Yeah.

All right. Do you know anything about lacrosse? Our next guest is on the men's lacrosse team. You ever get out and see those guys play?

I haven't. I haven't gone to a lacrosse game, but I know they're really good. So if I get an opportunity, I would love to.

All right. Well I'm going from one NCAA champion to another. Thank you for your time. Good luck this weekend against Florida State and Miami. Good luck the rest of the way.

Yeah, thank you. Appreciate it.

All right, take care. We'll be back after a quick break to talk with a rising lacrosse star who's looking to help the Hoos win a third straight NCAA championship.

Hey, this is John Freeman, the Voice of the Cavaliers. And with my busy schedule, the best way I've found to keep up with Virginia athletic scores, news, and fan contests is the UVA sports app. You can pick your sports preferences and never miss a final score or any breaking news. You can also listen to all of our coaches' corner shows live on the app. All you got to do is go to the Apple Store or Google Play and search Virginia sports or UVA sports. Join the more than 50,000 Wahoo fans who are already using the UVA sports app.

All right. Now it's my pleasure to welcome in a guy who definitely qualifies as a big man on grounds. And that is 6 foot 7 Cole Kastner from the men's lacrosse team. Cole, thanks for making time for this interview. How's everything going? Busy week for you.

Absolutely. Thank you for having me. Yeah, everything's going real well. Pumped up for this weekend. It's been a great start to this season. And academically, things are doing-- are all good. So I appreciate the time.

So first of all, congrats on being named ACC defensive player of the week for the second week in a row. You were part of a defense that had an amazing performance last week in Chapel Hill where you held a high powered North Carolina offense to a single goal in the second half. The first part of this game was just an absolute back and forth shootout. What changed from your perspective?

Yeah. First of all, that UNC team they have a lot of really good guys out there and a very high powered offense, led by Chris Gray. And he's got an incredible supporting cast around him. So I think just initially coming in there, just getting a feel for the speed of the game against those guys. It's an opponent we know pretty well, but they have a couple of changes going on this year.

And starting to understand their schemes a little bit better and just get a little more confidence in our footing out there. It was a little bit of a slippery field. So we made a few adjustments, but I think people just got more comfortable and more confident and did a great job. Went in their matchups and put us in a real good position.

You have an enormous size advantage on Chris Gray but he's really quick. He's small but incredibly quick. Changes direction well. What's the challenge of covering him?

Yeah, he's an unbelievable player. I think-- I mean, if you saw the-- I think maybe in that first goal of the game but he made me look a little bit silly out there. But as I got a little more comfortable, I tried to get a little bit of early pressure and then let him come to me. Because if I'm trying to anticipate his moves, he makes a quick move and goes the other direction. There's no chance I'm going to catch up to him. So if I let him come to me and use my length in order to steer him where I want him to go, then it works out a little bit better for me.

I mean, there are obvious advantages to being 6 foot 7, I'm sure. And you've got a six-foot stick. You cover a lot of ground, eat up a lot of space. Are there disadvantages to being that big? Adjustments you've had to make.

Potentially, yeah. I mean, obviously you've got to be careful of hitting someone up high on shoulders and above that. But in all honesty, no. I think I'm lucky to have the height I have. And I don't think there's a whole lot of disadvantage to it for me.

You are second in the nation in cause turnovers. 3.75 per game. Do you get the same satisfaction from forcing a turnover as an offensive player gets from scoring a goal or getting an assist?

Yeah. I mean, forcing a turnover is great and all, but I'm just lucky my team puts me in a position to make plays. And when I have that opportunity and I can make something happen, regardless if it's me making the play or one of the other guys making a play and a ride or just playing 66 defense, I think it gets-- I get fired up and I think everyone gets fired up. So it's great.

You did score a goal this season, the first of your college career. I'm sure it won't be the last. Was that a thrill for you? And you played with Jared Conners last year who had an amazing knack for scoring goals. Coming out of the defensive end, did you pick up some pointers from him?

Absolutely. Yeah, just everything that Jared did. I was fortunate enough to be paired up with him in the weight room my first year. And just the way he approached and attacked every single day really inspired me and lit that fire in me. And that's a guy I really look up to for sure. And yeah, I learned a whole lot from him.

Washington DC will be the center of the lacrosse universe on Saturday. There's a triple header at Audi Field, which is the beautiful home of the DC United Soccer Club.

The main attraction is the 3 o'clock game, which is a rematch of last year's NCAA championship game between UVA and Maryland, which UVA won last year obviously. Both teams are unbeaten this year. Both teams have a ton of players back from last year. How is Lars Tiffany and the coaching-- how are the coaches approaching this game? It's a marquee match-up. But the reality is it may not mean all that much if these two teams see each other again in May.

That's exactly right. I think our coaches are doing a great job preparing us so far this week. And we all know this is a big game, a great rematch from last season. And in all honesty, it definitely feels like it could be like a playoff game. The only difference is that both of us get to keep playing the next day. So I think we're really fortunate to have this opportunity and it's going to be a great match-up and we're all really excited for it.

You have a fascinating backstory. You grew up in Palo Alto, California. The Bay Area is not generally considered a hotbed for lacrosse. At what age did you pick up a stick for the first time? And who introduced you to the sport?

I started playing in the sixth grade. One of my good childhood friends picked it up. And we were just throwing back and forth across the street and I thought it was pretty fun. And I happened to stumble into a friend group in high school that had a bunch of highly motivated lacrosse players that really pushed myself. And we all push each other to thrive for the best so I was really fortunate.

Were you aware of the Emery brothers, Rob and Matt, who-- they're from San Francisco. They played at UVA.

Absolutely. And I learn more about them every day. But that's absolutely a great family.

So you were, and are, a talented basketball player. You're 6 foot 7. Did you consider pursuing hoops in college?

Absolutely. In all honesty, I thought I was going to play college basketball. It was my-- it's been a dream since I was a young kid. I started playing basketball before any other sport. And it's such an amazing sport. I have so much fun playing. And I think I was really fortunate to go through the recruiting process for both basketball and lacrosse in high school. And basketball is just a different beast. It's an amazing sport. I really would have enjoyed the playing college. And I have aspirations to hopefully play with a fifth year. I don't know if you know Pat Spencer is but--

Yeah. Yeah.

Yeah, he has an incredible path to keep playing hoops. And I would love to do something like that eventually.

Are you Golden State fan? A Warrior fan?

Yes, sir.

Of course. At what level-- what interest did you get from basketball? Were you a high major guy, mid-major guy. And one of my colleagues pointed out that if you go to your Twitter timeline, you would never know you were a lacrosse player because the only videos on there are of you dunking.

Yeah, it's funny. I think I always identified myself as a basketball player. And I'm so fortunate to have ended up here and playing lacrosse and I've absolutely loved it. But I wouldn't call myself a high major player by any sort. But I was definitely gaining a lot of attention from a bunch of IV League schools and some schools out in California, some UCs. And it was an incredible experience to get out and visit some of these schools. But at the end of the day, when Virginia came in for lacrosse, I knew it was something I couldn't pass up.

Yeah. How did-- I mean, I know Virginia is obviously a prominent program that can recruit nationally. How did you get on their radar or UVA on your radar?

Yeah. I think my process was a little bit different than most. But UVA was the first school that I visited. And it was early September, after my junior year or during my junior year. And I left here thinking like, wow, this is an unbelievable school but I don't know if I have what it takes to play at this level. And I was super lucky to come and visit it in the first place. In all honesty, I didn't hear it from UVA for a while, probably until maybe March.

But at the time, I was so focused on basketball and trying to do whatever I could to get recruiting basketball. I wasn't thinking about a whole lot. And as soon as basketball season ended in my junior year and I got back into lacrosse, I started to gain a little more interest and started talking to the coaching staff a little bit more. And I think they just wanted to see that I was more than just a basketball player playing lacrosse and they could harness that potential in me. So yeah, it was a good experience for me.

Where do you get your height from?

I get my height from my mom's side of family. She's about 5'11". My dad is about 6'1" but all of her siblings are extremely tall. 6'4", 6'5". She has three brothers that are 6'4", 6'5", and 6'5". So all from her side.

So you're a long way from home. Anybody else from your high school here?

Yes, there are. There are a couple of people from my high school, a couple of people from the Bay Area in general. And it's always nice to have that familiar community around grounds.

So in football, during practice at football, the ones don't always go against the ones. Like the first team offense versus the first team defense. Lacrosse is probably different in that regard. Do you find yourself covering Connor Shellenberger, Matt Moore, Griffin Schutz, Payton Cormier, and the offensive guys in practice?

Absolutely.

And what is that like?

It's unbelievable. It's something that I had never experienced before coming in here last year. I think a tribute to a lot of how I started to feel comfortable and grew as a player because I was going against those guys every day last year, and especially this year figuring out my strength as defenseman. But going against those guys is unbelievable.

They each bring so many different incredible traits to lacrosse. Schutz obviously a pretty physical guy. Shelley can be physical if he wants to. He's extremely quick. Matt, same type of attributes there as well. And they're amazing guys to go against. But we have a whole lot of guys like that on the team so we're really lucky to have that.

I mean does it-- I don't want to use the word easy because I know the games are never easier. But when you get in the games, I mean oftentimes you're not facing players as talented as the guys you mentioned. So at the very least, I'm sure it prepares you well for games.

Absolutely. Yeah. They prepare us extremely well. I mean, we go against so much great competition. But continuing to go against that grain competition in practice makes it all better.

You only started four games last season but they were the four games in the NCAA tournament. What was your learning curve like as a first year? Was there a major adjustment just coming from West Coast lacrosse in high school lacrosse and club lacrosse to the college level?

Totally. Yeah, I mean everyone would always tell me that you're just going to feel the speed of the game change. And definitely it was true for me. It was absolutely an adjustment. But I was really fortunate to have amazing pair of coaches in high school and some great club coaches. So I felt pretty confident in that aspect.

But just coming to the college level was a big adjustment. And I had a lot of guys on the team help me out, Cade, Kyle from last year, Jarrett as I said, Q, Scottie. They all mentored me and helped me out and made me feel a lot more confident and comfortable out there.

So at the Final Four in East Hartford, in the semifinals, North Carolina had a chance to tie the game in the final seconds. Chris Merle ends up on Chris Gray. Forces him into a bad pass. You, I guess, had officially the final action of the game. You knocked the ball away and the clock ran out. What were those final moments like? Did it pass in a blur or was it in slow motion?

Yeah. It was unbelievable. I was-- I remember we came out of the timeout and I was looking for my guy. And all of a sudden, he was picking up the ball on the sideline. It was like, wow, they're coming out of here right now. And yeah, I guess it makes a lot of sense. I'm least experienced guy out there. But yeah, it went by in a blur. And Merle made a great play of defense, did a great job. And I just happened to be in the right spot at the right time.

Wasn't there-- I mean obviously the-- I'm trying to remember the final sequence in the championship game against Maryland. It was similar in that Maryland had a chance to score and Rode made a save. Did you get your stick on the ball again like the final-- and this time you didn't--

Yeah, this time I didn't--

Went down the field, right?

That's right. And leave it up for chance. Yeah once again, right spot at the right time. Rode made a great save and it popped out right in front of me. Just took a few steps and knew I was going to throw it as far and as high as I could.

So to be part of an NCAA championship team as a freshman in any sport is something few players ever get to experience. Looking back on that, what was the season like and the postseason run? And now that you've got one title, does that make you hungrier to win more as you go forward?

Oh, absolutely. It was an unbelievable experience to be a part of. And I really-- I think it really motivates all of us to try and get back there, especially with these first years coming in. They're such a valuable part of our program and we want them to feel the success that we felt. And I think it is so motivating.

I really felt like people approaching the-- I mean maybe because it was COVID last year, but people approaching this off season in the fall in a different manner. Like everyone was working in their own ways and doing whatever it was best for them. But I think everyone's very motivated and very hungry.

At the defensive end of the field, there are a lot-- you lost a lot of mainstays of the program and Alex Rode and Kyle and John Fox and other guys. What's your sense of this year's defense? You've got a first year in gold. Matt Nunes has been playing great. I know Cage has been out a little bit. You've got some new defensive midfielders. What is your take on this group?

I think those guys just did such a-- the guys that had graduated did such an unbelievable job, paved in the path for us and taking us under their wing and really helping us understand how to have a unified unit as our defense. And I think everyone who has come in and stepped up has done an unbelievable job.

And in all honesty, it wasn't something I was really worried about. I knew that there are so many people that are capable of stepping up and they've done a real great job. And all the first years that are contributing are fantastic. All the other people that are contributing have done unbelievable. So we have a really good thing going.

So you wear jersey number 39. Is there any significance to that or did you just pick that last year?

Yeah, no. There definitely is a little bit of significance. My two high school coaches, Cort and Blake Kim, they're unbelievable. Two mentors of mine. Fantastic lacrosse coaches and just unbelievable people. They played lacrosse at Albany and they wore three and nine their whole career so try to wear it for them.

You arrived-- you enrolled in college in the middle of a global pandemic. What was the first year like for you away from lacrosse? Were all your classes online and are you back in the class this year?

Yeah. So it was definitely-- it was really different. The majority of my classes last year were online. And there are some advantages and some disadvantages to that. I would say though, so far this year, being back in person has been fantastic. Getting to experience UVA for everything has to offer and get to know some of the incredible people that go here and the rest of the student body has been a great experience for me and getting to interact with the incredible professors as well.

Have you decided what you're going to major in?

Yeah. I'm majoring in commerce. I'm in McIntire School of Commerce.

Oh, you got in, huh?

Yes, sir.

Yeah, congrats.

Thank you.

So I will circle back to basketball since I'm sitting here in John Paul Jones Arena. I know from talking to people on the basketball side and lacrosse that the plan at one point was for you to walk on to the team, join the team as a walk on, Tony Bennett's team. Did your schedule-- did that get derailed just because of conflicts with your classes?

Yeah. I was super honored to even be considered for that in the first place. And I really appreciated both Coach Tiffany and the lacrosse staff and the basketball staff being so flexible trying to work that out. But yeah, when it came down to it, just trying to work around my class schedule and trying to do a full course load with very minimal amount of time in the middle of the day was pretty difficult.

So have you played pickup ball with the guys over here or--

I've not actually played with the guys. I've played pickup ball around campus every once in a while. And I think normally when I get home this summer, the first thing I do is always go back to my high school and get some shots up and have fun playing.

So who-- I'm going to put you and just assume you're in the group. But who are the top five basketball players on the men's lacrosse team?

Oh, wow. There's some pretty solid players for sure. Wow. That's a tough question. Regan Kwan is a really good player. He played point guard in high school. He's really good. Jeff Connor, he's also a pretty good player. Let's see. Matt Moore. Last fall when we weren't playing a whole lot of lacrosse, we had a lot of time to play pickup and he was learning how to shoot and he was getting a little dangerous. So he was real good.

Let's see. A couple of first years. Thomas Mencke, he's pretty good. I know he played back in high school. Yeah. I mean, I think we got some good players.

Good. Are you able-- I know you've got a busy schedule. Are you able to follow other teams at UVA and either get out and watch them in person or watch them when they're on TV?

Absolutely. And yeah, that's something that I think we're all looking forward to doing a whole lot more of this year. But yeah, I love the athletic community here.

Good. Well, I know you've got to get back to lacrosse right now and away from-- put basketball on the side for a little bit. But thanks for your time today. Good luck up in DC. You know how much the UVA family enjoys beating Maryland in any sport so good luck making that happen this weekend.

Absolutely. Thank you very much.

All right. Take care. We'll see you, Cole.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

And that's a wrap for this episode. Thanks again to Emma and to Cole for joining the show. We started this podcast back in 2013 and this was the 297th episode. Listeners, support is crucial and we would appreciate your taking a minute to rate and subscribe to this podcast. Previous episodes are archived under the Media button on the front page of [virginiainsports.com](http://virginiainsports.com), which is our official website. You can also find them on searching your podcast provider for Wahoo Central Podcast.

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