

# PLAYING TALL

*Despite his small stature, Carrboro High junior Jake Melville is leading the Jaguars in scoring*

**By Ben Coley**

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Checking in at 5 feet 5 inches tall and 125 pounds, Carrboro High School boy's lacrosse player Jake Melville is used to being one of the smallest players on the field.

But the junior attacker is also used to slashing through lacrosse sticks and swerving through open space. He's used to tricking defenders and tormenting goalies. In the 2016 season, Melville has scored 24 goals and dished out 13 assists, making Carrboro's smallest player one of the team's biggest offensive threats.

"I think a lot of teams underestimate us at first when they see our attack line because our tallest guy is around 5 feet 7 inches," Melville said. "They underestimate our whole line because they think they can take advantage of our size, but we have good stick skills and speed and we're able to play around it."

## 'Fire in his belly'

Melville — a resident of Chapel Hill — has played all three years at Carrboro, and none have been better than his junior season.

The Jaguars are 8-0, the best start in school history, and despite his diminutive frame, Melville leads the team in shots on goal, goals, and points.

"A big disadvantage (of my size) is having bigger defenders pushing me out of the paint a lot," Melville said. "But one advantage is that it's easier to dodge sometimes. And you get a lot of easy penalties when they hit you on the head on accident."

Melville's father, Gregg Melville, said Jake's height does not hold him back on the field.

"He's got that passion and fire in his belly," Gregg said. "It doesn't matter how tall or big these other guys are. He always thinks he can still beat them."

Carrboro coach Ron Mitchell said that he isn't surprised Jake is succeeding with his small size.

"If he gets into a situation where he's getting knocked around a little bit, he's not going to take any crap from any-



**At just 5 feet 5 inches tall, junior Jake Melville is leading Carrboro boy's lacrosse to its best season in school history. (Staff photo by Ben Coley)**

body," he said.

## A long time coming

This season, Jake was voted as one of the captains. he said his responsibilities include running the attack line, making sure everyone knows the plays and maintaining players' focus during practices and games.

"(Jake) is not that vocal in that he's not out there giving big speeches," Mitchell said. "I really prefer that the captains lead through example, and he does that."

Jake said the team owes its success to last season's 8-7 loss to Chapel Hill High School in the second round of the 2015 state playoffs.

"When we lost our last game last season, players that were returning started practicing a week after," he said. "So we've been preparing for the season for a long time."

The Jaguars avenged their playoff loss by defeating Chapel Hill 9-6 on March 24. It was Carrboro's first ever victory over Chapel Hill in boy's lacrosse. Jake had three goals in the win.

## NEXT GAME

Carrboro travels to Cary Academy to take on the Chargers at 7 p.m. on Friday

## Might over height

Jake said that a coach has never told him he is too short, but whenever he hears someone tell him to bulk up, the junior attacker said he is reminded of what his middle school basketball coach once told him.

Don't worry about things you can't control — like getting taller.

"It is nice to be tall and all, but height doesn't really matter in most sports," Jake said. "It also matters on your skill level."

"If you're short and you have a really good skill level, then most people will take you over a person who's tall and doesn't have good skills."