

## Visiting Red Hawks lacrosse team will face HU Pirate Nation

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*By Kayla Wimbush*

Forty-eight hours before the big game Saturday against Roberts Wesleyan College, the Hampton University men's lacrosse team practiced indoors at the Student Center. The buzz around campus was sparked by the highlight of senior **Darrel "DJ" Kidd**. Just one week before, ESPN went behind the scenes to get a deeper look at the Hampton men's lacrosse captain and his life.

Walking up to the third floor of the Student Center the sun shined through the windows and cast light on the history that was just hours away from being made. Slowly but surely the team members made their way up the stairs and greeted each other like old friends back from a long vacation.



DJ wouldn't have guessed that a suggestion from a friend in high school would lead to a love and passion that would bring him to this point. Not knowing what the future would hold heading to Hampton U. in the fall of 2012, throwing his lacrosse stick in the car gave him a bond that is about to hit televisions across the country. It wasn't an easy road to take this club sport and make a group of guys a **Division I NCAA varsity team**.

"It hasn't been easy," said the bundled-up captain from Westchester, New York. "It's been a lot of late nights and early mornings, and it can be overwhelming at times with the media, but it's been a great experience. I'm grateful."

Kidd's calm and humble demeanor draws you in. You can feel his passion that forces you to want to support the team.

As the rest of the players file in, the elevators open to a strong voice gathering the young men. The coach has arrived.

Immediately the guys fall into place as the captains lead the stretches and old school-music plays across the room. In passing, one would not guess the men's Lacrosse team was preparing for a nationally televised game, as the sultry tunes of **Otis Redding's** "Try a Little Tenderness" accentuates the mood. It doesn't feel at all like practice, the usual dread of running and going through drills. There's a family reunion feel that breaks the barriers of

strangers, brought together by a common love for a gentlemen's sport. With the smooth old-school jams and good laughs, the only thing missing is a spread of good food.

"Some people on campus have been really receptive and excited," said Kidd. "I've gotten a lot of good luck texts over the last few days. Some people still don't know we have a team, but after ESPN came and shot 100 days [senior's countdown to May graduation] it definitely helped."

DJ is very aware of his opponents and the leg up they may have with their cohesiveness and years of competition at the collegiate level, but the senior captain said he is not worried. The Pirates' bond can be contributed attributed to their Sunday team dinners, and their confidence in what they do well. Kidd's role as captain is to keep the guys humble and grounded. They are skillful players with a heart to work hard and win.

When the Roberts Wesleyan **Redhawks** cross over into Pirate Nation, it will be their team versus this family.

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