

Daniel Kelly almost followed his father, uncle and brother to UNC, but he wants to be a Terp

BY GLENN GRAHAM

Much like leaves changing colors in the fall, the same holds true with lacrosse colors in the Kelly family tree. Calvert Hall red is followed by North Carolina blue.

It started when Calvert Hall coach Bryan Kelly followed his older brother David to Chapel Hill in the late 1980s. In this generation of Kelly standout lacrosse players — the sons of Bryan, David and Frank, who played his college ball at Cornell — there's been at least one Kelly on the North Carolina roster via Calvert Hall since 2011. That's five in all: Frankie (2011-12) to Patrick (2013-15) to Stephen (2015-17) to Timmy (2017-19) and Daniel Kelly, Bryan's second of four sons, is bucking the trend. He's



KARL MERTON FERRON/BALTIMORE SUN
Calvert Hall attacker Daniel Kelly controls the ball against McDonogh in 2019.

KELLY

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More red ahead? Yes.

The Cardinals' All-Metro attackman, who Inside Lacrosse rates the No. 11 national prospect in the 2020 class, signed to play at Maryland last month after originally committing to North Carolina.

"I'm super excited to get to College Park," Daniel Kelly said. "It was a different route than what I kind of knew my whole high school career, but the way I've been raised I believe God has a plan for me and his plan was having me go to College Park and make an impact there."

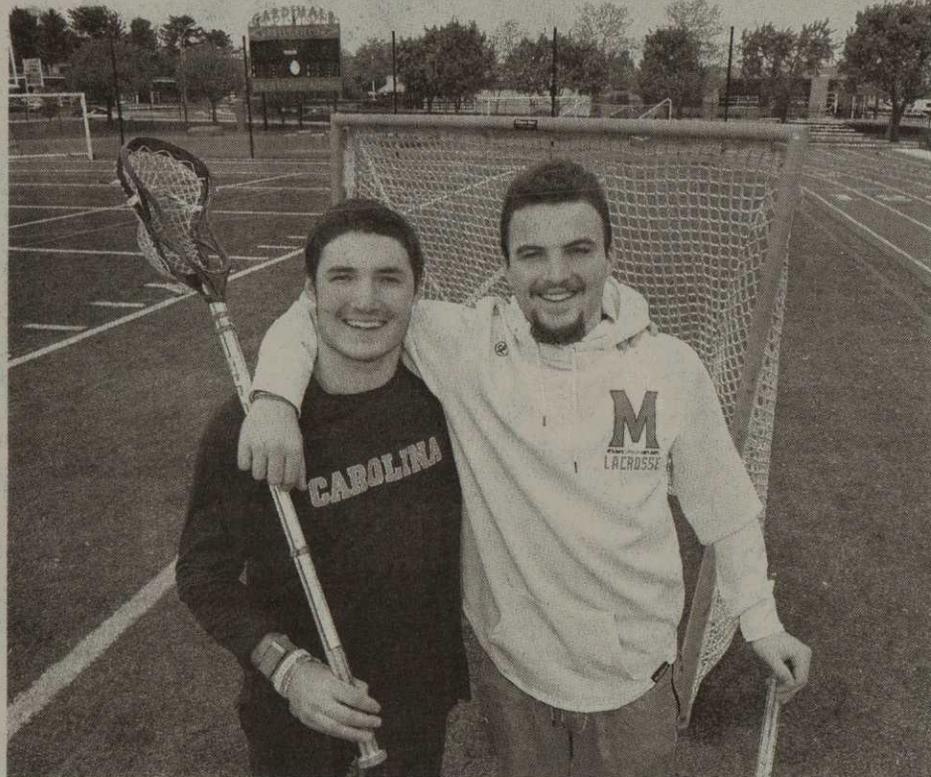
All through their childhood, Daniel and Jacob would sharpen their skills in the backyard. Inside, the Kelly house was filled with North Carolina blue garb. The Tar Heels basketball team ruled the television.

The brothers' plan was to win Maryland Interscholastic Athletic Association championships at Calvert Hall — they teamed up to win two, and Daniel added another crown last year — and secure a national title at North Carolina.

But after committing to North Carolina right before his freshman year at Calvert Hall, Daniel started thinking the unthinkable: Is there another college out there that is a better fit?

Maryland checked off all the boxes.

Daniel was impressed with Terps coach John Tillman and his staff. The academic plan was ideal. He liked the thought of being closer to home, so it would be more convenient for his family to watch him play and he could be close to his two younger brothers. And how cool would it be to win a national championship in your home state?



KENNETH K. LAM/BALTIMORE SUN
Jacob Kelly, left, and Daniel Kelly won two MIAA championships together at Calvert Hall.

"It's definitely different, but my family has been so supportive of it," Daniel said.

"I've always been the kid that just wants to be different than everybody and I think the best way I can be myself and make my own impact is somewhere other than North Carolina. I think that definitely played in my decision, and I think going to Maryland has helped me realize that."

The decision brought a first for his father, too, who found himself buying Maryland Terrapins gear for the family to wear.

"Daniel has always been his own person and I think he's also been the type of kid that ... for him, he's comfortable kind of going against the grain and doing something different. I think he's doing what he thinks is best for him and we are thrilled," Bryan

Kelly said.

"It's going to be different and it's going to be exciting. I'm happy and at the end of the day, I want my kids happy and I want them to be where the best place is for them. And Maryland is the best place for Daniel."

In their two years playing together at Calvert Hall, Daniel and Jacob were a perfect complement to each other. Jacob was the smooth playmaker, the team's quarterback on attack who consistently found the open man. His passes often went to Daniel, who proved to be a potent left-handed finisher.

The thought of not playing together at North Carolina is something they are still getting used to, but it's all good.

"No matter what, I was always going to have his back and support him and I know he is doing the same for me," Jacob said. "He's excited and I'm excited for him and he's definitely got some awesome plans and big things ahead for him."

Before the pandemic canceled the spring season, North Carolina was set to play Maryland in Chapel Hill. The teams will still likely face each other next year.

The Kelly family — a mix of blue and red — will be there in full force.

"We never played against each other in an actual game, so that will definitely be weird and it will definitely be different for my parents and brothers, too, rooting on the sidelines," Jacob said. "I know at the end of the day, they'll want both of us to do well and have fun and produce for our teams."

Daniel can see it now: "When we play North Carolina and he scores a goal there will be a part of me inside where I'll be like 'Good job, Jake.' But then there's a part of me that will say 'That sucks' and now we're down a goal or whatever. Then I'll need to score."

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Former Alabama men's basketball forward Galin Smith commits to Maryland, giving Terps depth after a string of departures **PG 2**

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LACROSSE



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Calvert Hall coach Bryan Kelly's sons are continuing their lacrosse careers in college. Jacob plays at North Carolina. Daniel will be a Terp.

Red over Heels