

Laying Down the Law

Seattle Lacrosse Club's
Hugh Barber stifles
attackers on the field
and in the courtroom

BY JAC COYNE

PHOTOS BY HARRY MAZAHERI

EVERY GOALIE KNOWS THAT SICKENING feeling in the pit of his stomach. The sensation invariably appears when an opposing attackman corrals an uncontested ground ball, with nothing separating him from the nylon net but manicured grass and the goalie's reflexes. The pathos usually lasts about two or three cold seconds, but the sense of dread is always there. Just one bad pass or missed check away.

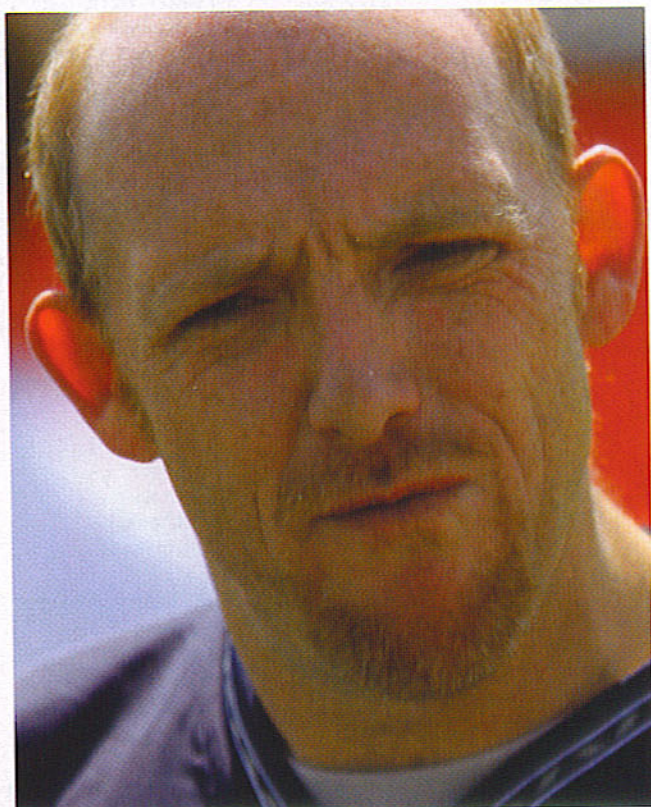
Hugh Barber knows this feeling. As the veteran goalie of the Seattle Lacrosse Club for the past 19 years and a netminder since 1977 when he beat his high school coach in a children's reflex game, Barber estimates he has faced tens of thousands

“There is no question that the range of people you meet in the sport can do nothing but strengthen your life and life experience.”

-Hugh Barber, goalie, Seattle Lacrosse Club

of shots - many of them with no defenders in sight.

But unlike most goalies, the type of anticipation coming from a one-on-one showdown is a welcome feeling. It means he is on the lacrosse field, playing the sport he loves with his closest of friends. Lacrosse is an escape. Barber receives his



stomach-churning moments when his pager starts beeping, often in the middle of the night, and he must do his job.

The awakening of his pager means someone has been killed - someone's mother, brother, child or best friend - and Barber, the senior deputy prosecutor for the King County (Wash.) Most Dangerous Offenders Project, is responsible for finding justice for the family.

That will put a knot in your stomach.

"It's an odd feeling to be woken up at two in the morning in the middle of a great dream and you have to go to a house with pictures of family on the mantel and dead bodies lying on the floor," said Barber, 43. "It is certainly dark. It's pretty gruesome, but extremely rewarding."

The reward comes when the families of the victims gain a measure of justice and closure in the face of a murdered loved one. In Barber's most recent trial, a man attempted to kill his ex-girlfriend and her two young children. The woman barely