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BOYS WATER POLO: North Penn fifth in states

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By KEV HUNTER

TOWAMENCIN — The North Penn boys water polo team would have liked to go further, would have liked to be battling deep into Saturday night and showing their best stuff to the rest of the state.

But with a lot of new faces and plenty to look forward to in future seasons, the Knights could be proud of their fifth-place finish in the state water polo tournament at a packed and loud Rick Carroll Natatorium.

“The guys grew as the year went on, and I’m happy to see that,” North Penn coach Jason Grubb said as the two-day tournament wrapped up on Saturday evening. “We lose some guys next year, but we’ll have the majority of our key players back. It was a good experience for the younger guys.”

Wilson defeated Cumberland Valley 11-9 in the championship final, as the Bulldogs led the whole way but the Eagles didn’t make it easy, getting within a goal several times. Co-Mr. Water Polo, Wes Hopkins, fired in the clinching goal with 1 minute, 50 seconds left to play, and the Bulldogs and their coaching staff jumped into the pool in celebration after the final seconds elapsed.

The Knights had a tough time slowing down Wilson, losing 17-13 in pool play.

North Penn is a program with plenty of championship trophies in boys water polo, but the Knights didn’t quite have enough in two of the contests this time around.

“We had some defensive lapses,” Grubb said.

“You usually don’t win when you give up 17 goals...Governor Mifflin came out and played us tougher than they ever have. We would keep chipping away, but couldn’t quite get there.”

The Knights lost to Mifflin 12-9 after opening the tournament with a 19-11 victory over Cathedral Prep.

North Penn finished 1-2 in pool play, and then earned a commanding 14-8 victory over LaSalle in the fifth-place game.

The Knights' Pat Dunigan earned First-Team All-State honors, and teammates Jacob Sisko (second team), Jason Deana (third team) and Cris Anton (honorable mention) also earned all-state recognition.

Souderton Area went 0-3 in the tournament, losing 15-4 to Cumberland Valley, 15-8 to North Allegheny and 10-8 to LaSalle.

The Indians had a bunch of players earn all-state honors, as Tyler Wenzel and Cody Veit were named to the second team, and Alex Paparella and Michael Hay were named to the third team.

The top three teams in the state were all awarded team trophies at night's end, with Governor Mifflin having defeated North Allegheny 14-10 in the third-place game.

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