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Sports

WATER POLO: North Penn sweeps past Pennridge (video)

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By KEV HUNTER

PERKASIE — The Pennridge water polo teams showed how much they have improved, and the North Penn water polo teams showed that, well, they are still North Penn.

The Maidens played stifling defense and shut out the Rams for three quarters before going on to a 7-4 win, and the Knights followed by cranking up the offense, pulling away from Pennridge in the second half and going on to a 16-9 victory at a packed Pennridge Natatorium on Tuesday evening.



Mary Morris helped lead the Maidens' strong defensive play, coming up with a game-high four steals.

"That's the team's strong point," said North Penn coach Bill Bartle, whose team improved to a stellar 17-1. "In order for us to be successful, our defense is going to have to come through. We've always relied on that. And as the season has progressed, I think the team has done a better job of picking up the slack and communicating with each other."

The Maidens built a commanding 5-0 lead by halftime, added a goal in the third to boost it to 6-0, and got two goals from Brooke Else and one score each from five other players in a balanced attack.

"We've been working on a few variations of our normal offense, and I think they've started to understand it fairly well," Bartle said. "We're coming down to the final few weeks of the season, so we're expecting to have some surprises. The girls seem to be getting the hang of it and are doing quite well."

North Penn was able to get some younger girls some experience in the fourth quarter, and the Rams kept battling, getting goals from four different girls and a pretty solid effort from goalie Julia Nadovich (four steals/seven saves).

"North Penn is an excellent team, and I think we kind of came out a little flat," Rams girls coach James Bauman said. "But we played our best in the second half. And North Penn didn't have any counter attack goals. With their speed, that's a pretty good accomplishment by our girls to not give up any scores on the counter attack."

Pennridge, now 7-9, looks to maintain its fifth-place spot in the division standings — the top six from each division get spots in the league tournament, which then sends four teams to states.

The North Penn boys have been a fixture in the state tournament, and on Tuesday the Knights fought through what was a tied contest at multiple times in the first half, and opened up a four-goal lead in the third quarter.

"They snuck some shots by our goalie (Jeremy Smith), but then he started turning it on towards the end of the game, blocked some of their outside shots," North Penn boys coach Jason Grubb said. "We definitely stepped it up a bit in that second half. It is much easier to shoot deep end, and we had that for the last quarter or so. Pennridge is an up-and-coming team, and they always have some good outside shooters, so we tried to take away their best shooters. Their hole set is good, they have a couple outside shooters, and we shut those guys down."

Pat Dunigan fired in five goals for the Knights (14-5), who also got a hat trick from Kevin Dunigan in their fifth highest scoring output of the season.

Pennridge (5-10) stayed close in the first half, getting a pair of goals each from John Speher, David Zurmuhl and John Swartz in the loss.

“The kids are improving,” Rams coach Ryan Griffiths said. “From top to bottom, this is the most talented team we’ve had (in the three years of the program). They’re getting better at making quick decisions, and getting better with their passing and placement.”

Both contests were more competitive this time around as compared to when the two squads opened up against each other back on Sept. 7 — the Maidens won 11-3 that day, and the Knights cruised, 17-3.

Girls Water Polo

North Penn 7, Pennridge 4

North Penn 3 2 1 1 — 7

Pennridge 0 0 0 4 — 4

Goals

North Penn: Katherine Munning 1, Aspen Trautz 1, Brooke Else 2, Mary Morris 1, Brittany Patterson 1, Lindsay Musoleno 1; Pennridge: Deanna Maurone 1, Gabi Rinaldi 1, Victoria Redmond 1, Chelsea Weiss 1.

Saves: Katie Patterson (NP) 6; Julia Nadovich (P) 7.

Boys Water Polo

North Penn 16, Pennridge 9

North Penn 2 6 3 5 — 16

Pennridge 1 4 2 2 — 9

Goals

North Penn leaders: Pat Dunigan 5; Kevin Dunigan 3; Jake Sisko 2; Pennridge: John Speher 2; David Zurmuhl 2; Torin Miner 1; Justin Swan 1; Sean O’Neill 1; John Swartz 2.

Saves: Jeremy Smith (NP) 13; Nick Lowery (P) 3.



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