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WATER POLO: North Penn girls, Souderton boys win in doubleheader

By KEV HUNTER
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North Penn Girls Water Polo Coach Bill Bartle(L) and his team celebrate at the conclusion of their come from behind victory over Souderton on Thursday, September 13, 2012. Photo by Mark C Psoras/The Reporter

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FRANCONIA — Racing hard towards the Souderton goal, North Penn's Brittney Patterson swam all the way up the pool, got control of the ball with a defender tightly guarding her, and then fired the go-ahead shot past Indians goalie Kara Stegman.

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The Maidens were just nine seconds away from a victory, and also nine seconds away from finally being able to take a deep breath.

"I was going crazy," Patterson said. "We were up, we were down — it was an emotional roller coaster."

Patterson's fourth - and most dramatic - goal of the contest lifted North Penn to a come-from-behind 8-7 win over Big Red at a packed and raucous Souderton Natatorium Thursday evening. An overwhelming Souderton attack would key a 14-10 victory in the boys contest, as Big Red earned a split in the Suburban One League doubleheader.

The Maidens trailed 6-4 and 7-6 in the fourth quarter but kept coming back.

"They dug down deep," coach Bill Bartle said. "I don't know where they got the energy. I'm thrilled for them. They deserve it for what they've done."

Patterson lofted a shot into the far corner for the tying goal with 33 seconds to play, making it 7-7. After a defensive stop, North Penn had just enough time left in regulation for one more offensive surge. Execution was key.

"It was awesome," said Patterson, a senior. "My teammate (Kelly Fellmeth) backed up into the (defender) so that I could get around. I couldn't have done it without her."

Souderton, seeking its first win over North Penn since 2008, scored five consecutive goals to turn an early 4-1 deficit into a 6-4 lead in the fourth quarter. Sarah Hershey (two goals) gave the Indians their last lead at 7-6.

"It's upsetting, but luckily we get to see them again," Big Red coach Chris Hemmerle said. "We know what we need to fix and we know what we did wrong. They never gave up. They kept fighting."

Jenn Halcovage split the scoring with Patterson for the Maidens, scoring four goals. Also key in the victory were the 10 saves by goalie Kat Perkins and the five steals by Aspen Trautz. Bronwyn Smith's pair of goals and six steals for Souderton made that late North Penn rally necessary.

"The last quarter was awesome because now we know we can come back," Patterson said.

The Souderton boys were impressive in their win over the Knights, primarily on the offensive end, as Matt Evers and Holden Kudla each scored five times.

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Photos: astronaut WASHINGTON Armstrong,

“There’s a lot more there - we’re still not at our potential yet,” Hemmerle said. “We’re not the biggest team but we play as a team and that makes all the difference.”

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