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WATER POLO ATHLETE OF THE YEAR: Patterson clutch for state champ North Penn

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North Penn's Brittney Patterson (17) scores a goal past Souderton goalie Kara Stegmann during their contest at North Penn High School on Thursday Oct. 4, 2012 (Photo by Mark C. Psoras\The Reporter)

All year long, North Penn's Brittney Patterson was there when the team needed her most.

A clutch player from beginning to end, Patterson, chosen as The Reporter's Athlete of the Year for water polo, helped lead the Maidens to a 26-3 overall record and a state championship season in the pool.

Patterson, a senior, put in an amazing 70 goals for the Maidens, who dominated the state tournament out at Cumberland Valley High School and earned a 9-3 win in the state final over arch rival Souderton Area.

Patterson delivered a pair of goals in the state final win and scored 11 total in the tournament, also helping North Penn to victories over Cumberland Valley and Governor Mifflin.

To get to states, the Maidens put forth a tremendous effort at the Eastern Conference Championships, rallying past Souderton to win 8-7 in the final.

Patterson was at her best.

"In the first quarter and the fourth quarter, we really brought it as a team," said the senior, who finished with a game-high four goals. "(In the fourth), we got the ball moving around fast. Our spirits were definitely up. We just had to score in order to stay in it."

Patterson was also instrumental in the Maidens' 8-7 regular-season win over Souderton, which helped the Maidens earn the Suburban One League title.

"I was going crazy," said Patterson, who scored four goals in the win, including the game winner. "We were up, we were down — it was an emotional roller coaster."

“They dug down deep,” coach Bill Bartle said of his team after the win. “I don’t know where they got the energy. I’m thrilled for them. They deserve it for what they’ve done.”

Patterson is right back in the water again for North Penn this winter, and has helped the swim team begin the season 3-0. In a win over Mount Saint Joseph, Patterson contributed well on the relays, swam her fastest ever butterfly for a December meet and also won the diving.

Versatility was also something she displayed all throughout the water polo season, as she added 21 assists and 58 steals for the Maidens.

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