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WATER POLO: North Penn girls squeeze past Souderton, Knights complete sweep of Big Red

By KEV HUNTER
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TOWAMENCIN — Every goal was crucial.

Every shot evoked roars from the capacity crowd.

Big stops and steals were made at each end.

And ultimately, four quarters of water polo wasn't enough to decide the outcome.

The North Penn and Souderton Area girls water polo teams battled back and forth Thursday night at the Rick Carroll Natatorium, fighting to a 1-1 tie at the half and a 2-2 tie at the end of regulation.



North Penn's Olivia DiStefano, 9, controls a ball past Souderton defenders for during their overtime contest at North Penn High School on Thursday, Oct. 3, 2013. (Mark C Psoras/The Reporter)

After defenses dominated for 28 minutes of play, it was the Maidens' Kelly Fellmeth who came up with the one goal needed in overtime for North Penn to earn a spirited 3-2 victory over its arch rival.

"It was nuts," said Fellmeth, a senior who is used to these kinds of contests between

the two perennial state powers. "We worked so hard these past few weeks and everybody knew what to do. Everybody had their head in the game. We knew Souderton had very good outside shooters and they also have a very good hole set so we had to be able to step in and take the ball away."

Erin O'Neill came up with a half dozen steals for North Penn (12-3) and also added an assist. The Maidens led 1-0 in the first and 2-1 in the third off a goal each by Leah Brown and Fellmeth, and then Fellmeth connected again in OT.

The Maidens were able to feed the ball into the senior and she maneuvered in close and fired quickly for the 3-2 lead with a minute to play in the first overtime.

"Once we got that, we knew we were in really



North Penn's Kelly Fellmeth, 3, fires a shot past Souderton defenders for the game-winning goal in their overtime contest at North Penn High School on Thursday, Oct. 3, 2013. (Mark C Psoras/The Reporter)

good shape to win this game,' Fellmeth said.

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Kat Perkins made several difficult saves in net and 15 saves in all. That helped hold off a Souderton team that kept pushing until the very end.

"The girls played with a lot of heart," Big Red coach Joe Hay said. "What makes me feel good about the girls is that we've come from not being able to stay close with these guys to it being one break here, one break there and we win. I'm pretty happy about how they played."

April Kichline

and Sarah Hershey each scored for Big Red, who tied things up with 4:21 left to play in the fourth. North Penn's defense once again tightened up and Fellmeth got the one goal needed to cement the victory.

"Any time we face Souderton, you know it's gonna be a battle," said NP coach Bill Bartle, whose team completed a regular-season sweep of Big Red as the Maidens aim for a third straight state title. "It's a rivalry and today's game was played very

well. I think by the time we got to overtime, I think everybody was a little bit out of gas but the girls kept plugging away.'

The North Penn boys had a strong first half on the offensive end and built an 8-3 lead on the way to a 13-9 victory over Big Red in Game Two of the



North Penn defender Thanas Kountroubis, 3, smothers Souderton's Daniel Trout, 3, during their contest at North Penn High School on Thursday, Oct. 3, 2013. (Mark C Psoras/The Reporter)

doubleheader.

"That was the start we were looking for," Knights coach Jason Grubb said. "We've been playing a much better game the past few weeks. We've been playing a lot of top competition and it's really showing. These have been some of our best games."

Seven different players scored for the Knights, including Cole Palumbo, whose three goals helped complete the regular-season sweep of Big Red.

North Penn (11-2) squeezed past Souderton 9-8 in the first meeting but had a more commanding performance this time around, with Kyle Supko, Thanas Kountroubis, Brett Else and Skylar Trautz all scoring twice.



North Penn's Brett Else, 4, steals a ball from Souderton's Jordan Hay, 21, during their contest at North Penn High School on Thursday, Oct. 3, 2013. (Mark C Psoras/The Reporter)

Jordan Hay had a game-high five goals for the Indians, who put together some runs but couldn't overcome the early deficit.

"They got out-hustled for a quarter," said Hay, whose team fell behind 4-1 early. "We knew it was coming. We knew how (the Knights) play. But it took us a quarter to adapt. I feel good about our athleticism and our ability to play. We just have to cut out the mistakes."

Girls Water Polo

North Penn 3, Souderton 2 (OT)

Souderton 0 1 0 1 0 0 - 2

North Penn 1 0 1 0 1 0 - 3

Souderton goals: April Kichline 1, Sarah Hershey 1

North Penn goals: Kelly Fellmeth 2, Leah Brown 1

Saves: Rickilee Hodges (S) 18; Kat Perkins (NP) 15

Boys Water Polo

North Penn 13, Souderton 9

Souderton 2 1 3 3 - 9

North Penn 4 4 2 3 - 13

Souderton goals: Jordan Hay 5, Brendon Loux 1, Lucas Giannini 3

North Penn goals: Kyle Supko 2, Thanas Kountroubis 2, Brett Else 2, Shane Hennessey 1, Skylar Trautz 2, Mike Gallo 1, Cole Palumbo 3

Saves: Ryan Kierstan (S) 20; Jon Krail (NP) 19

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