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## WATER POLO PREVIEW: North Penn girls aim for third straight state title

By [KEV HUNTER](#)

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The North Penn girls water polo team is back in the pool and ready to defend its state title of a year ago.

The Maidens will rely on a solid defense, led by senior goalie Kat Perkins, as they make their way through the tough Suburban One League.

"We'll be a top contender for the league title and we look forward to challenging many of the top teams in the state," coach Bill Bartle said.

Perkins was a key part of last year's 26-3 state title team, as she made 281 saves in her 25 matches in net.

The Maidens will have some young but promising players in front of her, as Kelly Fellmeth (five goals in 2012), Emily Brower (seven goals) and Julie Krout (four goals) take on bigger roles this season.

Also out to defend their conference crown are the Pennridge boys, who lost five of the seven starting players from last season to graduation, with three of them going on to play on the college level.

This group of Rams, which includes juniors D.J. Maurone and Colin Russell, continue to push the program in the right direction.

"We are anticipating that Pennridge will be a very competitive team this year but we acknowledge that we may have some struggles against experienced and well-coached teams throughout the state," coach Ken Vincent said. "We have a young team that is relatively inexperienced but is motivated and excited to play. We will see how well the team comes together as the season progresses."

The Souderton boys and girls

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each graduated seven players from a year ago but both aim to make it back to the big tournament. The Big Red boys finished seventh in the state last year while the girls battled all the way to the final, falling 9-3 to North Penn.

The Souderton boys opened the league season in dramatic fashion this week, topping Wissahickon 14-13 in double overtime.

"The conference has really improved over the last four or five years," Indians coach Joe Hay said. "This is the best I've seen it."

Following is a team-by-team look at the area.

### Boys

#### North Penn

**Coach:** Jason Grubb (fourth season)

**League:** Suburban One League

**Last year's record:** 13-18 overall, 11-12 in the SOL

**Key performers lost:** Alex Chasar; Justin Veverka

**Key returners:** Thanas Kountroubis, Jr.; Brett Else, Jr.; Liam Kelly, Jr.; Aaron Sisko, Sr.; Shane Hennessey, Jr.; Jonah Kim, Sr.; Kevin Killion, Sr.; Jon Krail, Sr.

**Overall outlook:** The Knights won 11 of 15 matches during one stretch late last season as they began to mature as a group. The squad returns the bulk of its roster from a year ago, including its starting goalie, and should challenge for top spot in the conference.

#### Pennridge

**Coach:** Ken Vincent (third season)

**League:** Suburban One League

**Last year's record:** 18-5 overall, 10-1 in the SOL; SOL Champs

**Key returners:** D.J. Maurone, Jr., driver; Colin Russell, Jr., two-meter offense; Nick Spehar, So., utility; Callum Malcolm, So., two-meter offense

**Others to watch:** Jake Dearborn, So., utility; Jake Aigeldinger, Fr., goalie; Reilly Dolan, So., driver; Jamie Savage, Fr., driver

**Overall outlook:** The program, in just its sixth year of existence, is rapidly becoming one of the best around. The young Rams should be in the mix to defend their conference title. How well the young guys come along will determine how far they go against the best in the state.

## Souderton

**Coach:** Joe Hay (first season)

**League:** Suburban One League

**Last year:** Finished seventh in the state

**Key returners:** Kevin Musterait, Sr.; Daniel Trout, So.; Lucas Giannini, Jr.; Cordell Armstrong, Jr.; Tristan Loux, Sr.; Jordan Hay, Sr.

**Others to watch:** Brendan Loux, Jr.

**Strengths:** Speed, finesse shooters

**Question marks:** Size

**Coach Hay says:** "Getting back to states is definitely the goal. We'd be disappointed if we didn't make it back."

## Wissahickon

**Coach:** Bart Schneider (first season)

**League:** Suburban One League

**Last year's record:** 9-8

**Key returners:** Mack Hennessy, Sr., goalie; Luke Waechter, Sr.; Alex Bolen, Sr.; Luke Tarzia, Sr.; Robbie Wilson, Sr.; Jake Bering, So.; David MacFarland, So.; Steven MacFarland, Jr.; Danny Noell, Jr.

**Overall outlook:** The Trojans just missed the big tournament last season but their returning nucleus could get them over the hump this time around.

**Coach Schneider says:** "Getting to states is the main goal this season."

## Girls

### North Penn

**Coach:** Bill Bartle (28th season)

**League:** Suburban One League

**Last year's record:** 26-3 overall, 9-0 in the SOL; SOL Champs; Eastern Conference Champs; PIAA State Champs

**Key performers lost:** Jenn Halcovage (Second Team All-American); Becca Hoch; Tess O'Neill (Second Team All-State); Brittney Patterson (Second Team All-American); Aspen Trautz (First Team All State); Karlie Vogt

**Key returners:** Emily Brower, Sr., driver; Jennifer Krout, driver, Sr.; Kat Perkins (Second Team All-State), Sr., goalie; Kelly Fellmeth, Sr., two-meter offense

**Others to watch:** Emily Dunigan, Sr., driver; Steph Galetta, Jr., driver; Erin O'Neill, So., driver

**Overall outlook:** The Maidens lack some experience in some areas and may not have as much overall speed as they had last season, but once again they should be in the mix for a conference title as well as a shot at the state crown.

### Pennridge

**Coach:** Ryan Griffiths (second season)

**League:** Suburban One League

**Last year:** 13-16; fourth in the Eastern Conference; eighth in the state

**Key performers lost:** Julia Nadovich; Rachel Pugnetti; Morgan Allison; Victoria Redmond; Chelsea Weiss

**Key returners:** Maggie Walker, Sr.; Jackie Cios, Sr.; Kayla Muereda, Sr.; Haley Schwartz, Sr.

**Others to watch:** Madison Trauger, So.; Casey Walker, Jr.; Brittany Savercool, Jr.; Kacie Cios, So.

**Strengths:** An exceptional player in Maggie Walker as well as a core group of starters who have been working together

and playing at various camps in the offseason.

**Question marks:** Depth and the bench

**Coach Griffiths says:** "We do have a large junior and senior class. It will be interesting to see if the freshmen, sophomores and juniors can make it their team over the next couple of years and help take us to that next level."

### Souderton

**Coach:** Joe Hay (first season)

**League:** Suburban One League

**Last year:** Finished second in the state

**Key returners:** Kayla Rush, Sr.; April Kichline, Sr.; Gabriella Pagano, Sr.

**Others to watch:** RickiLee Hodges, Sr., goalie; Sara Hershey, Jr.

**Strengths:** Goaltending, good players at the center position

**Question marks:** Lack of experience

**Coach Hay says:** "We hope to finish in the top half of our conference and improve throughout the year. We'd like to make a run at states."

### Wissahickon

**Coach:** Bart Schneider (first season)

**League:** Suburban One League

**Last year's record:** 0-17

**Key returners:** Lisa Kennedy, Sr.; Kyla Wolper, Jr.; Emily Moyer, So.; Julia DeCeceo, Jr.; Gina Niven, Sr.; Grace Fronca, Jr.; Julia Salvadore, So.; Mia Jog, So.; Allison Wagman, Sr.

**Others to watch:** Lilly Xu, Fr.

**Overall outlook:** The Trojans show improvement from last season and are raising their overall skills.

**Coach Schneider says:** "We want to get some wins this year - that's the goal."

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