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Dingman delivers

BEST WATER POLO PLAYER IN THE STATE DID IT ALL FOR NORTH PENN

By KEV HUNTER, Staff Writer



REPORTER FILE PHOTO NORTH PENN'S Dan Dingman was named The Reporter's Boys Water Polo Athlete of the Year.

Score goals, dish out assists, steal the ball. When it came to the North Penn boys water polo team, Dan Dingman did everything but clean the pool.

The North Penn senior led the Knights to their third state title in four years, during which he ascended to the role of top water polo player in the state.

Dingman, chosen as The Reporter's Athlete of the Year for boys water polo, was the cornerstone of a team that cemented its legacy as a dynasty.

"We came into the year with pretty high expectations," Dingman said. "Obviously, a state title was a goal, but we knew Wilson was a really strong team and had lots of guys coming back. We were able to come through and accomplish our goal."

Dingman scored two goals in the state final win over Wilson, but what really stood out about Dingman's play throughout the season was his versatility.

Asked what came to mind when he thought of Dingman's performance this fall, Knights coach Brian Faikish said "leadership — outstanding leader. Hard work. Dedication. Never satisfied. Those are the words that come to mind."

The Knights didn't finish the season 26-2 for being one-dimensional, and their balanced play at both ends of the pool was personified by Dingman.

The senior led the team in steals with 72, was second in scoring with 54 goals, and was second in assists with 38.

"He's been the heart of our defense for the past two years, playing in front of our goalie," Faikish said. "Equally as impressive is that he's a fast swimmer. He can get up the pool so quickly, and it's rare to find a player that can do both. He was a big spark for us."

Dingman was also second highest on the team in shooting percentage, hitting 60 percent of his shots as one of the most accurate shooters around.

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Chosen as Mr. Water Polo, an award that symbolizes the best player in the state, Dingman helped the Knights lock up their second straight title and third in the last four years.

The only year in that span that the Knights didn't win was in 2005, when they lost in overtime in the state final to Souderton Area.

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Dingman kept upping his game year after year, and was part of a phenomenal senior class that grew together through the years.

"My game became more balanced between offense and defense," Dingman said.

"Freshman year was kind of a learning experience, watching how the upper classmen handled it.

Sophomore year, we contributed pretty big, and then junior and senior years we were a huge part of it.

Year after year, we found a way to get it done. To leave

our mark at North Penn as the most decorated class in boys water polo is saying something."

Dingman plans to play water polo next year, for a prestigious program. He is looking to attend either Harvard, Brown or Bucknell.

"All three of those teams try to compete for the Eastern Championship every year, which earns a spot in the NCAA's," Dingman said. "My goal is to play at the highest level possible."



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