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By Mike Cabrey

Staff Writer

SOUDERTON — Local bragging rights were not the only thing on the line when the North Penn and Souderton girls water polo teams took to the pool Tuesday night.

The No. 1 seed at this weekend's State Championships was hanging in the balance as well. It wasn't fully decided until late in the fourth, but it will be the Maidens heading to Cumberland Valley with the seed.

A Julia Penkal score pulled Souderton to within one with just over a minute left, but Shelby Rinker put one of her five goals in the net with 48 seconds left. North Penn held on to the two-goal advantage and top the Indians 8-6 at Souderton Area High School.



"We're a balanced team," North Penn girls coach Bill Barthle said. "They came out, shut down Heather (Fellmeth), there's was no question. Fortunately, our balance ending out today. Shelby did a great job and the girls did a great job finding her."

The win also gives the Maidens (24-2 overall) the season sweep over the Indians. NP won the previously encounter 8-7 on Sept. 23.

In the NP-Souderton boys matchup following the girls game, the Knights scored the final five goals in the fourth quarter to earn a 11-6 victory over the Indians.

The two North Penn wins put a little damper on Souderton's final game at the current high school's pool.

"Overall, it's a frustrating day," said Indians boys/girls coach Bill Hence. "Especially with so much going on here with the last games at the pool."

Jack Else scored four goals for the Knights (18-9 overall), who got even with Souderton for a 11-5 loss to Big Red on Sept. 23.

Two of Else's score came in the fourth, as North Penn put in five straight goals after the Indians tied the game at six earlier in the quarter.

"The beginning on the year, our goal was to improve our basic skills. We're not there yet, but we've made significant improvements from the last time in September," North Penn boys coach Brian Faikish said. "I'm really proud of them. We have still a lot of work to do, but the past two weeks, especially, things are starting to happen for them. They're starting to see results of their hard work."

North Penn is tied with Wyoming Valley West for the State Tournament's eight and final seed. The teams are slated to play Nov. 7 at North Penn.

If Wilson lost to Governor Mifflin last night, Souderton will still be the top seed at the State Championship, scheduled Nov. 7-8 at North Penn.

Lee Stiles lead the Indians with three goals. For North Penn, Nick Ortlieb has three goals, while Craig Hennessey scored twice.

In the girls match, Souderton grab a 3-1 lead in the second quarter after goals by Paige Whitmire and Ashley

Kichline.

The Maidens were able to pull even the gamea three when Rinker scored with 49 seconds left in the half. Kichline, however, gave Big Red the 4-3 advantage the break with a goal 21 seconds later.

North Penn took over the lead in the third, with goals by Rinker and Samantha Deanna. Another Rinker score at 6:47 in the fourth made it 6-4 before Whitmire's second goal pulled Souderton to within one.

Deana, however, would give the Maidens back their two-goal advantage when was unmarked in front of goal and beat keeper Missy Doll.

"When we stole the ball, I just took off right away," Deana said. "I thought I was ahead of my girl that was playing defense on me, so I just kept going and try to get open."

Penkal's score at 1:05 made it a 7-6 game. Rinker answered with 48 seconds left to help secure the win.

In the doubleheader's nightcap, the Souderton boys scored the opening two goals, but the Knights rebounded with three straight scores to go ahead in the second quarter. Stiles found the net with 4:12 left in the half and the game was knotted at three at intermission.

The teams traded goals to open the third, but the Knights took the lead heading into the final quarter when a Ortlieb long-range floater beat Jake Radcliff.

Alex Evers bounced the ball past NP goalie CJ Millonig at 5:05 in the fourth for a 6-6 tie. After that, however, it was all Knights Nevin O'Malley broke the tie at 4:36, then Ortlieb made it a two-score game 34 seconds later when his shot hit the left post and went in.

Two more goal by Else pushed the advantage to 10-6, while Hennessey added another score at 1:27 for the final outcome.

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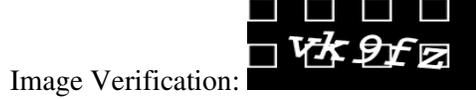
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