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Sports

VIDEO: BOYS WATER POLO: North Penn nabs Eastern Conference Championship

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SOUDERTON – For the second year in a row the North Penn water polo team left the Souderton natatorium with a plaque in hand stating it is the Eastern Conference Champion on Saturday.

The 20-15 win over Governor Mifflin saw five different Knights register a goal. The boys are doing it with experience, with eight seniors, but it goes further than that. These polo players have been playing longer than the four-year stint in high school.

The Dunigans, brothers Patrick and Mark, as well as cousin Kevin Dunigan are the perfect examples of why the Knights have been at the top on a yearly basis.

“We’ve been playing for almost a decade,” Patrick, a senior two-meter said. “Kevin got me to play and we started playing the same year. We were already swimming for the North Penn community team.”

Growing up in a swimming family and a few blocks down the street Patrick and Kevin have been involved with water polo for nearly a decade now thanks to North Penn’s attempt to grab polo players at an early age.

“Our aunts and uncles were swimmers,” Patrick said. “Swimming is just in our family and I love it. I love playing with my brother and my cousin. It’s a lot of fun.”

The Dunigans are cousins, their fathers are brothers, but they have become best friends and a one-two combination in the pool that gives headaches to opposing teams. The tandem teamed up on multiple occasions and the quick flick by Patrick became a tough stop for the Mustangs’ goalie.

“I think the quick release is really effective,” Patrick said. “It gives the goalie less time to react. It works for me. My cousin and I and the rest of the seniors really want to win a state title. We expect to win.”



While the Dunigan family has been swimming adjacent to one another for years, so have a handful of the other players on the Knights. Patrick led the offense with seven goals and Kevin chipped in with five scores.

"We had really good drivers and a really good center game," Knights' coach Jason Grubb said. "Our two centers (Patrick) and Jack Morris (four goals) really took over today. If you're not doubling the hole, it's to our advantage."

The Knights opened up a seven-goal lead by half and just stayed afloat from there. Goalie Jeremy Smith made 12 saves and even though the Mustangs outscored them 10-8 in the second half, the senior captain made the stops when it mattered most.

"Jeremy played a good game," Grubb said. "At the end of the game they had a few counter attacks, went one-on-none, and you should score on that. He had a few saves on those too, but you can't block them all."

The Knights set their goals high and now that they have achieved an Eastern Conference championship in back-to-back seasons, the next thing to do is win a state championship next week at Cumberland Valley, where the host team will be the Knights' stiffest competition. It would be their first state championship since 2007.

"This is the first step in the postseason and getting that state championship," Grubb said. "We played (Cumberland Valley) twice this year and lost both times only by one goal, so we're shooting high. We want to win."

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