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Business

## North Penn answers Crowe, Upper Merion in water polo

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UPPER MERION — Late in the first quarter, Upper Merion High's Conor Crowe scored two goals in less than a minute, pulling the host Vikings to within one goal of heavily favored North Penn.

Crowe woke up the Knights, apparently, who then scored three times in the final 50 seconds of the quarter before adding two more early in the second, eventually taking command and going on to gain a 17-8 victory.

This followed the girls game, in which the Maidens won, 12-7.

"North Penn is a really good team," said Crowe, who scored four goals in the boys game. "Their having like three times as many players on the bench as we do, we hung with them pretty well. Then, I guess the numbers got to us. They have the endurance we need."

They have a lot of skill, as well.

The Knights were led by Jack Else, who scored five times. Pat Dunigan and Sean McDonald had three goals apiece. Else had three of the five goals that took the game from 5-4 to 10-4 in the first half.

"It was very important to get going there," Else said. "We came out slow, really needed to buckle down and get things going. We had to get the ball in the net and get a lead."

North Penn is now 20-2 on the season and a perfect 9-0 in the Suburban One League. The final league game comes next Tuesday against Souderton, with the state playoffs beyond that.

"It's good for us to get that lead," said Dunigan, a sophomore starting for the Knights. "The more goals we could put up there, the more experience we can get for the younger guys on the team.

"We know we can go down the bench and put so-and-so in, and still keep up our level of play. That's really important for us late in the season and in the playoffs."

Eight different Knights scored during the game.

"It's a big advantage," McDonald added. "When someone gets tired, we have solid guys we can sub in. We're never tired in the pool."

The Knights have won two state titles in recent years, but came up short last season. So, the goal for this year has been pretty

simple.

"These last couple weeks, we need to fine-tune our game for states," Else said.

The Vikings stand at 8-10 with a week to go in the season. They are 3-6 in the league, and finish up with non-league Upper Perk on Thursday and then Springfield next Tuesday.

"When you're playing a team like North Penn, they have so many more kids, but you only have seven kids in there at a time," UM head coach Veronica Coyle said. "Our seven really give the effort.

"We have yet to play a team that is smaller than us, and yet we have still won a bunch of games. So if you work hard, you can have some success."

Along with Crowe's four goals, Jason Lamoreaux scored three times and Andrew Attanasio once. Along with Crowe's offense in the odd-numbered quarters, he was UM's deep-end goalie in both the second and fourth quarters.

"The field is so much more work," Crowe said in comparing his duties. "You're swimming back and forth and you're wrestling with the kid the whole time. I really play goal because I need a quarter off.

"The period in goal lets me catch my breath so I can play in the field more effectively."

Clearly, Crowe was effective, scoring three of UM's first four goals.

"It's a game of emotion," head coach Brian Faikish said. "At 5-4, it was a really close game. We were able to rally and put the ball in the net. They were a little hesitant early on.

"Momentum is a big thing. We were able to get it, but (Upper Merion) had it in the beginning."

North Penn found a way to gain the momentum as the game wore on, and the Vikings wore down against the fresh Knights.

"We know we need to play our game," McDonald said. "Sometimes, that does not work out. We know what we need to do each game, we just have to get to that point to play our best."

Both teams played close to their best Tuesday. At this point in the season, that was important in different ways for each side.

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