

Sports

GIRLS WATER POLO: Else did it all for North Penn

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The North Penn girls water polo team had probably its most balanced squad in the program's history this past fall, and you'd be hard-pressed to find a player more balanced than the Maidens' Brooke Else.

Chosen as The Reporter's Athlete of the Year for girls water polo, Else's variety of skills and leadership were vital to the Maidens' state championship season.

"We worked so hard for that all year and we got it," the senior said of the title, which came by virtue of the Maidens' 9-7 win over Wilson. "I'm so happy for the whole team."

North Penn finished undefeated against Pennsylvania competition this past season, going a perfect 27-0, and the Maidens finished 28-1 overall.

They simply overwhelmed opponents, averaging over 10 goals per contest.

At the heart of this potent attack was Else, whose 67 goals led the team. Her dominant play in the postseason helped earn her the honor of being named PA's Miss Water Polo.

Coach Bill Bartle called her simply "an outstanding player," and one that makes things easier for her teammates.

"Teams really have to focus on Brooke," Bartle pointed out, "which leaves individuals open on the outside."

An amazing total of eight players scored 10 or more goals for the Maidens this year, evidence of Else's impact on an opposing defense and also telling of North Penn's superior passing and ball movement.

Else contributed 28 assists in helping to set up her teammates.

"Everyone shoots really well — not just from the hole," Else said of the Maidens. "Everyone shoots well from the outside."

And the Maidens weren't just about offense this year.

Thirteen times throughout the season, North Penn limited its opponent to five goals or less. Else was second on the team with 52 steals.

That defense keyed some important victories, including the Maidens' 11-8 victory over Souderton Area in the Eastern Conference Final.

"I think we really started to focus on defense more than offense, and coach Bartle definitely put that in our minds," Else said afterwards. "Once we started getting going, we were getting back on defense and we were working a lot better together."

Else has moved onto the winter season and is once again winning races for the Maidens.

In North Penn's Suburban One League Continental Conference opener against Hatboro-Horsham, Else showed off her speed and stamina by taking first in the 50 free and the 500 free, helping the Maidens to come out on top.

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