

Team of the WEEK: Villa Maria Academy

for games November 9 - 15, 2015



Our team of the week is Villa Maria Academy. The Hurricanes swept through the competition last week...as they have all season. Villa Maria remains unbeaten at 20-0-1 and has secured the titles of Catholic Academy Champions and PIAA District One AA Champs. Last week, Villa began PIAA AA State playoffs and stormed the competition, beating Boiling Springs 4-1 on Tuesday in Round One, and blanking Moravian Academy 6-0 on Thursday in the Quarterfinals.

"Last week's success can be contributed to our consistency, ball circulation and team work, game after game," shared Dan

Polders, in his second year as Head Coach and Program Director at Villa Maria. "As a team we still grow every game and the players' ambition to develop themselves helps to raise our level as a whole."

Villa's ten goals last week came from seven players; this balanced and powerful attack has driven the team to success all year. Villa Maria leads all Phila-area teams in average goals scored per game – an astounding 6.33. Defensively, Villa held their opponents, on average, to .5 goals last week and .85 all season. Goalkeeper Danielle Acuna was "tremendous today," according to Polders after the quarterfinal win.

The Villa Maria varsity team includes seniors: Megan Vermeil, Emily Wilson, Abby Siana, Caroline Mullens, Nicole Tsiaras, Colleen Rohr and Devi Donthineni; juniors: Jen Finley, Anninna Iacobucci, Bri Bamber, Aliya Kalman; sophomores Emily Doyle, Brianna Deitz, Lindsay Dickinson, Erin Zielinski, Danielle Acuna, Erin Finley and Mean Rohr; and freshmen: Hannah Miller, Adele Iacobucci, Mary Harkins, Maeve Riehman and Elizabeth D'Ascenzo. Polders is assisted by Erica White and Allison Lovejoy.

Villa Maria plays in the PIAA AA State Semifinals today versus Donegal.

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Attackers of the Week: **Megan Keenan & Rachal Toppi**

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When you have two incredible, edge-of-your-seat, powerful, do-or-die games with outstanding performances, you can't choose just one attacker of the week. Such was the case this past week when the West Chester University Golden Rams, led by Rachal

Toppi's golden stick, and Ursinus College, powered by Megan Keenan's 9 points, both won to advance to the NCAA Final Four. Toppi and Keenan are both Attackers of the Week.

For West Chester, a DII contender, the victory came in the 99th minute versus #1 seed Millersville. Rachal Toppi, a prolific scorer, notched not only the first goal in regulation play but also the double-overtime goal to secure the victory. Toppi leads the Rams with 23 goals and 48 points; she is ranked 3rd in goals and 4th in points among all Phila-area players. Even more incredible is Toppi's remarkable comeback from ACL surgery just 8 months ago; she suffered the tear in last year's Final-4 game against Millersville.

Rachal Toppi's first goal against Millersville came off a rebound on a corner. For the game-winner, she was subbed into the game which created a fast break initiated by teammate Alexis Versak, who fired a long drive to Toppi who, in turn, finished.

Head Coach Amy Cohen applauds Toppi and acknowledges a total team effort in the win. The Rams advance to Semifinals on Friday, November 20 versus East Stroudsburg. It is the team's fourth appearance in the Final-4 in five years.

Our second attacker of the week is Megan Keenan of Ursinus College. In the NCAA Division III National Tournament, the Ursinus Bears were just unstoppable. They crushed Stevens Institute 10-0 on Saturday at home (Round 2), and then boarded a bus to New York state where they went on to defeat Rochester University 5-0 the following day (Quarterfinals). The Bears fired off 33 shots in game one, 28 in game two, and allowed only 3 goals against. Six players scored over the weekend, but it was senior midfielder Megan Keenan who again led the pack. Keenan, the Centennial Conference Player of the Year for her second consecutive year, recorded 9 points on the weekend and was the backbone of a powerful team peaking at the right time.

Keenan has been a key factor in the team's success this season and for four years. This year, the Bears – now 19-3 – have averaged 4.70 goals per game and allowed .96. Keenan leads the team in goals (21) and points (62), which also places her in the Top Five among Phila-area college players. She is a formidable force on all parts of the field, on offensive and defensive corners, and a leader as demonstrated in both do-or-die games this past weekend. The Ursinus Field Hockey team travels to Washington and Lee for the Semifinal game against undefeated Bowdoin on Saturday.

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Defender of the Week: Maddie Bacskai / Episcopal Academy

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Maddie Bacskai of The Episcopal Academy is our Defender of the Week. The senior center back has been an integral part of the perennial powerhouse team for four years, including the Minutemen's 19-0 season to date and #4 national ranking. Bacskai was effective on both ends of the field, and involved in offensive and defensive corners, in EA's 2-0 week. On Tuesday, the team defeated Germantown Academy 7-3; Bacskai notched 1 goal, 1 assist, and numerous defensive saves. She recorded 3 assists and more defensive saves in EA's Friday 7-2 victory over Agnes Irwin.

Head Coach Gina Buggy stated that "Maddie is a formidable defender who has great anticipation and high level defensive skills. She is our leader in the backfield and yet she is often time responsible for igniting our attack. Maddie plays an important role in establishing our up-tempo approach to the game on defensive, in transition and on the attack."

Bacskai, an EA co-captain, is committed to play at Princeton University beginning fall 2016 and is also a member of the USA Field Hockey U21 Junior National Team. She will play on Team Freedom in the Senior All-Star Game on Sunday, November 22.

Buggy added: "Maddie is an energetic leader and someone who thrives on the competition. The bigger the stage the better she plays!" And that's a good thing as EA will play in the PAISAA State Quarterfinals later today; the team is defending 2014 State Champs.

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Student-Athlete of the Week: **Claire Murphy / Westtown**

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Our latest Student of the Week is Claire Murphy, the starting center back and captain of Westtown School field hockey. Murphy – stellar both on and off the field -- was named to the 2015 All-League Team (Friends League) and also earned Academic Distinction for her studies.

This year, Murphy is enrolled in advanced classes including Hiroshima to 9/11 (history), Latin 5, Nonviolence and Society (religion) and Calculus 1. She serves as co-editor of the yearbook and is actively involved in Habitat for Humanity, Philanthropy Club, Quaker Leadership Program, and other community service initiatives. In addition to captaining the field hockey team, Murphy is also captain of Westtown's lacrosse team.

Westtown Head Coach, Michele Linder commented: "Claire works hard on and off the field. She is interested both in excelling in what she does as well as modeling a strong example for our younger student-athletes. Claire contributes to the Westtown School community in so many ways."

Next year, Claire will bring her academic and athletic talents to Franklin and Marshall, where she has committed to play field hockey.

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