




Sports

O’Connell field-hockey team second in conference, state tournaments

By **Dave Facinoli**

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The O'Connell team gathers with its second-place state-tourney trophy (courtesy of O'Connell field hockey)

Add more first-time accomplishments earned by the Bishop O'Connell Knights field-hockey team this season.

They have become an annual thing since Megan Sullivan took over as head coach four seasons ago.

This fall the [Knights](#), among other things, reached high-water marks in single-season victories with 16 and advanced to conference and state-tournament championships for the first time.

The top-seeded Knights lost to [St. John's](#), 1-0, in the [Washington Catholic Athletic Conference](#) final, then to No. 2 seed and multiple-time defending champion [Norfolk Academy](#), 3-0, in the [Division I](#) private school state-tourney title match.

The team also was the top seed in the WCAC-tourney final for the first time, and had single-season bests for shutouts (nine) and winning streak (eight). O'Connell amassed a 16-5 overall record.

“It was a great season,” Sullivan said. “To get that close to both championships and not winning stings, but we accomplished a lot.”

O'Connell was the No. 4 seed in the state tourney. It defeated fifth-seed St. Paul VI Catholic, 3-1, in the first round, then upset top seed and previously-unbeaten Trinity Episcopal, 2-1, in the semifinals on goals by Jordan Hardenburgh and Isabelle Vivarelli, with Hailey Flick having two assists.

The loss was Trinity's first of the season, finishing 18-1-1.

In the win, O'Connell managed only four shots but did a good job controlling the ball and managing the clock. It helped that Knights' goalie Sophia Lianos made 15 saves.

“Sophia and our defense did an amazing job — and when we had a chance to score, we did,” Sullivan said. “We just played our game.”

Sisters Madi and Lena Sullivan scored against Paul VI, as did Hardenburgh. Flick had two assists and Lena Sullivan one. Lianos made five saves.

Prior to the state final, O’Connell had allowed no more than one goal in any match.

Lianos made 18 saves in the state final, but “our offense was not on in that game, and we weren’t able to capitalize,” Sullivan said.

The Knights were playing in the state tournament for only the third time this season. Last year, O’Connell lost to Norfolk Academy, 11-0, in a first-round match.

Prior to the state, O’Connell was the No. 1 seed and had a 1-1 record in the WCAC tourney, blanking Good Counsel, 4-0, in the first round. The team was 6-0 in regular-season WCAC play.

“Our goals this season were to win the WCAC and be competitive in the state tournament,” Sullivan said. “The game against St. John’s could have gone either way.”

Flick was O’Connell’s leading scorer, with 17 goals and 15 assists. She will play at Longwood University. Senior Madi Sullivan, who had four goals and 19 assists, will play at Davidson College.

Other top scorers were Lena Sullivan with 15 goals and five assists, Ysens Masson with eight goals and nine assists, Hardenburgh with six goals and Kate Casstevens with four goals.

Flick, Lianos, Madi Sullivan, Lena Sullivan and Louisa Geiger were chosen first-team All-WCAC. Ysens Mason and Elizabeth Guy made second team. Honorable-mention selections were Hardenburgh, Vivarelli and Albane Mason. Megan Sullivan was the WCAC’s Coach of the Year.

Chosen first-team all-state were Flick and Madi Sullivan, and with Lianos second-

team.

About the Author



Dave Facinoli

Dave Facinoli grew up in Prince George's County, Md. and attended Friendly High School. After attending Prince's George Community College and James Madison University, where he covered sports on both college papers, he launched a local newspaper career that included roles as the sports editor of the Alexandria Gazette, the Arlington Sun Gazette and GazetteLeader, and other local papers.

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