

O'Connell girls field hockey team enjoying a strong 10-1 start

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No matter what happens from this point, the Bishop O'Connell Knights already have achieved a season of firsts.

Through 11 games, the girls high-school field hockey team stands 10-1, with that number of wins being the most in a single season for the private-school squad.

Its triumphs include a first-time victory over Washington Catholic Athletic Conference rival and perennial power St. John's by a 2-1 score on the Knights' home field.

With that success achieved, more goals are being set — even making a run at winning conference and state tournament championships for the first time.

O'Connell began this week ranked fourth in the Division I private-school state poll.

Megan Sullivan has been O'Connell's head coach for four seasons, overseeing the program's improvement. She believes the team has the talent and skill to achieve even bigger success.

"We know we have a team of great players on paper, so we know we can beat good teams," Sullivan said. "We've been getting better each season, but we've never done anything like this, and we keep expecting to win now."

The O'Connell field hockey program began in 2013.

Some of O'Connell's top players are leading scorer Hailey Flick, with 13 goals through 11 games; senior Madi Sullivan, with two goals and 11 assists; freshman Lena Sullivan, with nine goals; senior Kate Casstevens, with two goals and two assists; junior Caitlin Mussolino, with two goals; senior Jennifer Nguyen, with two goals; senior Albane Mason, with a goal and three assists; freshman Ysens Mason, with five goals and four assists; and sophomore goalie Sophia Lianos, with a 10-1 record and multiple shutouts this fall.

Other starters in the Knights' most recent victory, 3-0 at home against the Washington-Liberty Generals, were Jordan Hardenburgh, Elizabeth Guy, Isabelle Vivarelli, Louisa Geiger and Laren Gatti.

Against Washington-Liberty, Ysens Mason scored two goals and Flick one on a right-handed rocket shot from just inside the penalty circle. Hardenburgh and Lena Sullivan had assists.

Lianos made a couple of saves in goal against a Washington-Liberty team that entered the match playing well with a 9-3 record.

“We have a fantastic goalie, a super-talented freshman class that fits in and makes us better, and you can’t do better than that,” Megan Sullivan said.

The shutout was the fifth for Lianos.

In the win over St. John’s, Anelia Werner and Ysens Mason had the goals and Flick added two assists. Lianos made three saves. In another big win over WCAC and Northern Virginia rival St. Paul VI Catholic, Flick, Mussolino and Lena Sullivan had goals and Ysens Mason and Madi Sullivan had assists.

O’Connell is 4-0 in the WCAC, outscoring those opponents 12-1.

Washington-Liberty’s starters against O’Connell were Kelly McIntyre, McKenna Kee, Elizabeth Brown, Abigail Bodnar, Ella Hewitt, Apollo Crenshaw Sophie Bourgeois, Margaret Erwin, Kaitlin Madison and goalie Kaitlyn Nowinski.

The Generals bounced back to blank the Herndon Hornets, 2-0, after losing to O’Connell, improving to 10-4 overall and 4-1 in the Liberty District, with three shutouts against league rivals.

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.