

Sports Week

HIGH SCHOOL FIELD HOCKEY

Knights end incredible season with championship

By DAVE KONOPKI
Post Editor

LEHMAN TWP. — It took more than four years before a Wyoming Valley Conference junior high school field hockey team defeated Coughlin.

But Lake-Lehman did it twice in less than two months — including a win in the biggest game of the season.

The Black Knights captured the District 2 junior high school championship with a 2-1 win against the Crusaders. Lake-Lehman also defeated Coughlin earlier in the season when the Crusaders were riding a four-year, 50-plus game winning streak.

"(Coughlin is) a special team. But we're also a special team. I can't be more proud of any team. This is a great group of kids."

Janene Kasarda
Lake-Lehman
Junior high coach

"Coughlin has a powerhouse," said Black Knights head coach Janene Kasarda. "During the season, they scored 54 goals without being scored on. They're a special team. But we're also a special team. I can't be more proud of any team. This is a great group of kids."

The game certainly didn't start out the way Kasarda wanted. In fact, the 10-year coach called a timeout less than two minutes into the contest.

"Our kids were very nervous," she said. "They were excited about playing for a championship, but they were just too nervous. I tried to calm them down."

Things didn't get much better as Coughlin scored a goal four minutes after the timeout to take a 1-0 lead. But Gaby Olshemski gave the momentum to the Black Knights, scoring a goal for Lake-Lehman and knotting the game at 1-1 near the 10-minute mark. Teammate Selena Adamshick added the game-winner five minutes before halftime.

The Black Knights had 45 players on the roster, including four freshmen. Kasarda expects many of this year's eighth-graders to play on the varsity level next season. But that doesn't mean the cupboard is bare.

"We have a lot of skilled younger players," said Kasarda. "They'll get their chance next season."

The district championship is Kasarda's sixth in her 10 seasons as the junior high head coach. Despite the success, she has no aspirations to make the jump to the varsity ranks.

"I'm happy with the junior high kids," she said. "I like to work with the players when they're young and watch them develop and play on the high school level. I never thought I'd be here 10 years. The years have really added up."

And Kasarda enjoys being part of the Lake-Lehman field hockey program, one of the most successful in the state.

"I think the tradition is what keeps us going," she said. "I'm so proud to be a part of it."



Lake-Lehman's Gaby Olshemski, center, is congratulated by several teammates after scoring a goal against Coughlin.



Lake-Lehman's Traci Ragukas, right, moves the ball past a Villa Maria player during a state Class 2A quarterfinal game.

Loss doesn't spoil season

By DAVE KONOPKI
Post Editor

LEHMAN TWP. — Jean Lipski knows when the time will be right for her to step down as the head coach of the Lake-Lehman field hockey team.

"I've always said that when I stop having fun, I'll stop coaching," said Lipski, who took over the Lake-Lehman program in 1981. "I'll know when it's time to go."

This is definitely isn't the time.

With only four starters back from last year's team, the Black Knights recently completed an outstanding year by advancing to the PIAA Class 2A state quarterfinals. The season ended with a heartbreaking 2-1 overtime loss against Villa Maria last weekend at Emmaus High School.

"This group of kids renewed my faith in teamwork," said Lipski. "I really enjoyed being around them, especially the seniors. Every group brings a new experience and each team takes on a personality of its own. It was such a pleasant year. I'm looking forward to next year."

Lake-Lehman overcame a brutal Wyoming Valley Conference regular season and District 2 playoff schedule to post a 16-4 overall record. That includes a second-place finish to Wyoming Seminary in the District 2 Class 2A tournament. Wyoming Seminary was eliminated by Palmyra, 1-0, in the state semifinals.

The Black Knights struggled early in the game against District 1 champion Villa Maria. Lake-



Lake-Lehman's Joscelyn Mahon moves toward the ball as Villa Maria's Lauren Whalen attempts to get it away from the Hurricane's goal.

Lehman couldn't take advantage of several scoring opportunities and trailed the Hurricanes, 1-0, early in the second half.

"We're a young team," said Lipski. "I think early in the game the kids started to realize where they were. They knew if they won the game, they'd be in the state semifinals."

Senior Traci Ragukas, who will attend Michigan State on a field hockey scholarship next fall, scored a goal to tie the score at 1-1 and send the game into overtime. But when a Lake-Lehman player was given a red card,

the Black Knights had to play the extra period with one less player than the Hurricanes. A goal less than two minutes into overtime ended Lake-Lehman's season.

"I'm very proud of how far we went," said Lipski, who expects all seven of her seniors to play on some level in college. "To get back in the state playoffs was great. I didn't realize how much we missed it. It's like a new season. There's a new energy. I'm going to miss being around these players."

Not only is Lipski looking forward to next year, she's excited

about the program's long-term prospects, as well. The Lake-Lehman junior high team recently won the WVC and District 2 championships.

"It was a terrific year for Lake-Lehman field hockey," she said. "I saw the junior high kids play a couple of times and I was so impressed with their stick skills and maturity on the field. It didn't look like junior high field hockey at all."

"Our numbers were down for a few years, but now they're back up. We're excited about the future."

Patton, Verazin, Berley, Lombard lead teams to wins in DYB action

Tyler Patton scored 19 points as Digital Print Services defeated Quad Three Group in Dallas Youth Basketball's seventh and eighth grade boys action. Dustin Siperko scored nine points to lead Quad Three.

• Gary Verazin scored 18 points to lead Bishop Photo to a 51-41 win against D.J. Charlie Hayes. Tyler Shutlock had six points for the losing team.

• D.J. Berley scored 19 points as Offset Paperback edged

McCarthy Tire 48-31. McCarthy was led by Austin Carr's 17 points.

• Nick Lombard had 14 points to lead Karchner Refrigeration over Dr. Jack Ellis, 35-29. Ryan McAndrew scored 14 points to lead Dr. Ellis.

• Chris Dailey scored 20 points as Digital Print Services topped D.J. Charlie Hayes. Stephen Zapoticky led DJ Hayes with 19 points.

• Chris Ellis tossed in 21 points

as Dr. Jack Ellis edged Quad Three, 46-43. Jimmy Brown led Quad Two to a game-high 26 points.

• Tony Bevevino scored eight points as Karchner Refrigeration posted a 40-20 win against McCarthy Tire. Kevin Gilbert led McCarthy Tire with seven points.

• Hunter Englehart scored 19 points as Bishop Photo topped Offset Paperback, 49-41. Griffin Adams led Offset with 16 points.

In previous action that wasn't

published because of computer problems:

• Hunter Englehart scored 25 points as Bishop Photo defeated Dr. Jack Ellis, 38-24. Ryan McAndrew led Dr. Ellis with 15 points while Chris Ellis added five.

• Joey Murray scored 14 points and Mike Diaco added seven as Offset Paperback edged DJ Charlie Hayes, 33-30. Marc Noyalis led DJ Hayes with 19 points.

• Chris Dailey scored 22 points and Tyler Rice added 6 as Digital

Print Services topped McCarthy Tire 52-37. Brandon Harding scored four points for McCarthy Tire.

• D.J. Berley scored 16 points and Eric Cannon added 12 as Offset Paperback defeated Karchner Refrigeration, 37-28. Nick Lombard had 14 points to lead Karchner.

• Jacob Simon scored 13 points and Stephen Zapoticky added eight as DJ Charlie Hayes edged McCarthy Tire, 42-40. Travis De-

Bona led McCarthy with 19 points, while John McCarthy added six and Chris Clemson had seven rebounds.

Tyler Patton scored 15 points as Digital Print Services edged Bishop Photo, 38-34. Gary Verazin led Bishop with 12 points while Adam Vercinski recorded six steals.

FIFTH/SIXTH GRADE

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