

# CB East knocks O'Hara out of PIAA playoffs

PHILADELPHIA –As she was about to fall, Central Bucks East sophomore Kenzie Lever got off a shot against Cardinal O'Hara late in the first half of the PIAA Class 3A field hockey tournament opening-round game at Benjamin L. Johnston Memorial Stadium Wednesday afternoon.

She might not have seen where the ball went, but she knew by the reaction of her teammates that she had scored a goal.

About 45 minutes later, when the horn sounded to end the second half, Lever's tally remained the only goal, and with its 1-0 victory, East (20-3) had qualified for a quarterfinal matchup with District 11 powerhouse Emmaus, while the O'Hara players saw their season come to an end.

The Lions (13-6), who earned the District 12 title on the same field Saturday afternoon, two days after dropping a 2-0 decision to Archbishop Carroll in the Philadelphia Catholic League final, fared much better in this state playoff game than in the one in which they bowed to Owen J. Roberts, 10-1, a year ago.

"It wasn't fun up here last year," said senior Erin Welde, who helped the Lions' defense to an outstanding effort against a team that began the playoffs as the top-seeded team in District 1. "This season has been so much more fun. Our main goal when we started out was to win the (Catholic League), but Carroll was a good team and we didn't beat them. Today we played very hard, and it was just great to be able to play one last game with all of my teammates, who had an amazing game."

Welde, senior Kasey Methven, and junior Sami Randazzo were among the Lions defenders who had first-year head coach Carlie Spaeder calling their efforts "very strong."

“And my goalie (Gianna Travia, who had 10 saves and faced 11 penalty corners) is just a sophomore. She was just super tonight.”

The only play on which the O’Hara defense couldn’t hold off East came 1:39 before halftime, when Lever flicked the ball over Travia despite tough marking by the Lions’ defense.

“Our coaches wanted us to keep the ball in the middle,” said Lever, a James Madison University commit. “I was on the reverse side but I got the ball toward the goal and it went into the back of the net.”

That enabled C.B. East to move on in the state tournament. Last fall, Penn Manor ended the Patriots’ season with a PIAA quarterfinal victory.

For Spaeder, it was tough knowing that her nine senior players would be moving on. She did have time to look ahead.

“I coached the JV team last year,” the former Rider University standout said. “I knew these players, and they were happy to hear I was going to be their coach. We wanted them to be successful and to have some fun, which is what they did.

“Now we’ll get those who will be coming back to keep playing and help us get back up here again next year.”