

# SPORTS

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## 3-peat mighty sweet

Third OFSAA field hockey title even more rewarding than others

By Steve LeBlanc  
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

Capturing OFSAA gold is nothing new for Lexi Kennedy.

However, the 16-year-old rural Miltonian — the last line of defence for a perennial powerhouse field hockey squad — hardly had a 'been-there-done-that' attitude upon completion of the provincial three-peat in Peterborough.

"In a way, this one actually means more," said the diminutive netminder of the Guelph-area St. John's-Kilmarnock Eagles Sunday afternoon, less than 24 hours removed from clinching yet another title. "I think we came together as a team more this year as opposed to relying on one or two players."

OFSAA's finale was marked with dramatic déjà vu for the two-time defending champs, who once again needed penalty strokes to come out on top — this year eclipsing Burlington's Notre Dame Irish 2-1.

Already being courted by universities on either side of the border, Kennedy surrendered just her fourth goal at the tournament — and ninth all year — on a short corner strike fairly early in the gold-medal game. At that point, she admits, there was some concern that that might be the only scoring done.

"I wasn't quite sure if we could come back," said the 11th grader, referring to the fact that SJK didn't have a clear-cut offensive threat like it did with Canadian Inter-university Sports Rookie of the Year Jessalyn Walkey last fall. "But they picked it up and kept going."

The top-seeded Eagles would knot things up with about 10 minutes left prior to eclipsing the Halton champs in the shoot-out, with Kennedy turning back the final two strokes to bring three-peat hopes to fruition. This followed a stellar second half in which she made at least a half-dozen key saves.

"I think I improved as the tournament went on," said the local netminder, who gave up just one goal in an unbeaten round-robin run before backstopping SJK to a 1-0 quarterfinal win against Goderich and a 4-2 decision over Medway in the semis.

Part of a small independent elementary/secondary school where field hockey is a way of life — long before girls reach Grade 9 — Kennedy admits she's already entertained thoughts of completing high school with a perfect 4-for-4 showing at OFSAA.

"Yeah, I guess the pressure's on for that now."

## Senior Mustangs' OFSAA bid squashed

Ascension of Our Lord too much for Halton champs

By Steve LeBlanc  
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

Disappointing, but hardly surprising. Dominating Halton's Division 2 scene all season long, Milton District's senior cagers knew they'd eventually run into a giant-size obstacle — namely Mississauga's Ascension of Our Lord — to OFSAA.

With home-court advantage and a powerhouse squad ranked among the top 10 in the GTA, the Eagles were simply not going to be grounded on their way to next week's AA provincial championships in Thunder Bay.

Whether that reality served to ease the sting of the Mustangs' 79-40 defeat Wednesday afternoon is open for debate. But one thing's for sure, the lopsided ver-

dict didn't come as much of a shock.

"Did you catch that they're fast?" quipped head coach Steve Oliver late in the third quarter, with his Halton champs down by more than two dozen points.

Armed with raucous fan support, a fierce transition game and NCAA Division I-bound star Christine Hyde, Ascension grabbed an early lead and was relentless in its attack — getting to most of the loose balls and completely dominating their guests in the paint.

Having signed her letter of intent to Syracuse University just a few hours earlier, Mustang cornerstone Kayla Alexander — a member of the junior national team this past summer — collected 25 points, just three less than Hyde.

But the Eagles' supporting cast clearly demonstrated their superiority, with three other players scoring at least a dozen points and neutralizing MD with a highly-effective press and a huge edge in overall quickness.

Said Oliver, "We pretty much knew what to expect today. They've (Eagles) played in all the quad-A tournaments and have a lot of great athletes. They should win (provincials)."

MD looked poised to pick things up in the second half, going on a seven-point run right after intermission. But Ascension answered back with 13 straight of their own to squash hopes of adding any suspense factor to the OFSAA qualifier.

Alexander's younger sister Kesia — normally finishing in double-digits — was limited to three free throws in the fourth quarter, while Meghan Greaves and Brittany Tilstra had four points each.



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