

writing sample:

[Daily Collegian Field Hockey article](#)

Penalty corners take center stage as Penn State field hockey beats Delaware for 3rd straight win

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Following their 2-0 home win over Villanova on Friday, Penn State field hockey aimed to make it three straight victories against the Delaware Blue Hens on Sunday.

The Nittany Lions did just that with a 2-1 victory; however, the win was defined by more than the final score. Penalty corners became the biggest factor in the game's flow, giving Penn State repeated opportunities to generate offense while also forcing its defense to withstand the Blue Hen attack.

Penn State was awarded three penalty corners in the first quarter, with two taken by junior forward Ella Gaitan and another by sophomore defensive back Lilly Holmes. None found the back of the net, but the early opportunities established a pattern that continued throughout the afternoon.

With 13 minutes left in the second quarter, Gaitan finally converted one of those opportunities, giving Penn State a 1-0 lead. The Nittany Lions earned two more penalty corners before halftime, taken by Gaitan and sophomore forward Joji Purdy.

Gaitan's goal remained the only score before halftime, but Penn State's ability to create chances from penalty corners helped keep pressure on Delaware. The Nittany Lions also limited the Blue Hens to just two penalty corners in the opening half.

Delaware came out of halftime with a response. Junior goalkeeper Aby Deverka blocked a shot just 45 seconds into the third quarter, but the Blue Hens eventually found the tying goal through fifth-year midfielder Alexa Michielsen with just under 14 minutes remaining.

For Deverka, the key was remaining composed after giving up the goal.

“Just knowing that my teammates expect something of me and I expect something of myself,” Deverka said. “Just staying grounded with that, staying composed. When I had that one goal against, I was immediately okay, next one, so what can I do to help us with this game.”

Penn State's penalty-corner opportunities continued to provide an answer. After another chance by Holmes came up empty, Gaitan found the net again with 12:14 remaining in the third quarter, giving the Nittany Lions a 2-1 lead.

The goal proved to be the difference.

Delaware continued to challenge Penn State defensively and earned several penalty corners of its own, but Deverka and the Nittany Lion defense repeatedly prevented those opportunities from becoming goals.

Within the last 10 minutes of regulation, both teams were awarded two penalty corners. On the defensive end, Deverka and sophomore defensive back Cooper Cutchins came up with crucial blocks inside the circle. On the offensive end, Gaitan and Purdy were unable to convert their opportunities, leaving Penn State with its one-goal advantage.

“We knew that Delaware was just a very competitive program, it’s a new team this year. We didn’t know a lot going into them,” Deverka said. “We saw that they beat No.18 Monmouth, and we’re like okay, we need to put respect on their name. Just going into this, we had our gameplan and we just stuck to it.”

Coach Hannah Prince emphasized the importance of players like Deverka making those late-game plays.

“[Deverka] got recognition after our last game for our hard hat hero award just for being really solid with her intensity, with her presence, stepping up in clutch moments so can’t say enough good things,” Prince said. “[Deverka] works her butt off, she demands from her teammates, she’s just one of those kids that isn’t afraid to say the hard things that is hard to hear but is inevitably going to help us.”

The win gives Penn State three straight victories and provides another example of how the Nittany Lions can use penalty corners to create opportunities while relying on their defense to protect narrow leads.

Penn State will now welcome No. 2 Princeton to Happy Valley at noon on Sept. 13.

“I think for the first couple days, we’re gonna focus really on us,” Prince said.

“Having a full week before our next game allows us the opportunity to really go back to the drawing board of what we need to do first and then the adjustments we need to see in our own play regardless of our opponent.”

For the Nittany Lions, the focus heading into the week will remain on improving the details of their game while maintaining the identity that has helped them win three straight.

“There’s the X’s and Os, and there’s the fitness component and the penalty corner component of the game, but to us, being true to our values, staying humble, being a blue-collar team,” Prince said. “This year, we’re an underdog; we’re not ranked, but we have the ability to compete with any team in the country.”

Up Next

The Nittany Lions return to action at home next Sunday with Youth Day & Alumni Day, as they host Princeton. Start time is slated for noon.

Please write 150 words about how you have demonstrated an interest in sports journalism or sports communications/public relations or how you plan to get involved in those fields at Penn State:

I started writing for the daily collegian as a junior. I was given the assignment of covering the Penn State field hockey team during the fall semester of my junior year here at Penn State. It was an up and down few months for me. I wrote and published a bunch of game coverage stories including a couple features, however a few of my drafts were never published due to writing/grammar issues, timeliness, and being too long. After a meeting with my editors, I was ultimately left off the staff for the following spring semester. I am now currently covering the field hockey team again as a senior this fall semester. All of my articles have been published so far, my editors are happy with my work, and my knowledge of the business has improved greatly. This second chance is a building block for what I want to pursue post college.