

### Sports

#### UA girls stop Thomas, earn berth in state tournament

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By PHILLIP KING

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Upper Arlington senior Caroline Blosser remembers it quite well.

She's the only member of the Golden Bears girls lacrosse team remaining who played with UA's 2004 state champions.

"I really want to get back to that feeling, there's almost nothing on earth like that feeling when you've won the state championship and all your hard work has paid off," the defenseman said.

After the South-Central Division I regional finals game at Dublin Jerome Wednesday, May 21, against Thomas Worthington, all of her classmates have a chance to share in her emotion.

Using an attack that simply gave the Cardinals no room to breathe, the Golden Bears (19-2) pulled away from a close first half to win 19-12.

Nothing personal, Blosser said.

"We love Thomas, they are great sports and really nice girls and they always put up a hard fight," she said. "They're one of our favorite teams to play."

The Cards certainly put up a solid performance through much of the contest before UA lightning struck near the end of the first half.

After spotting the Bears a 7-2 advantage, Thomas (15-6) rode three consecutive goals by Tara Benninger that cut the margin to 9-5. But in the last two minutes of the first half, UA found the back of the Cardinals net three times, the last goal with 10.5 seconds left before intermission to lead 12-5.

"Arlington came out strong," Cards coach Ally McCarthy said. "They do a great job of doubling. We found some opening, were able to get several goals, but we had to keep adjusting to that pressure."

McCarthy said those three quick scores just before the half were big, but not necessarily crushing blows.

"It's hard to come back from three unanswered goals," she said. "But the girls know we have to keep going strong from the first whistle to the last, it doesn't matter at what point they score."

Upper Arlington's Erin Junk may've played the game of her life thus far, as the junior came through with four goals in the first half, and six in all.

Also leading the Bears' offense were Kelly Mason (four goals), Caitlin Oberlin and Lindsay Goddard (three apiece) and Nancy Baker (two).

Pacing the Cardinals were Benninger and Megan Strasser (three goals each) while Hannah Tikson scored twice.

UA coach Lynda McCandlish said there had been no intricate or sweeping game-plan adjustments for beating the Cardinals.

"I think it was more about sticking to our game than it was adjusting to theirs," she said. "I think we really just came out and focused on how we were going to play."

The Bears will play Hudson in a state championship semifinal May 30 at Medina.

"I'm excited and they're excited; as a coach it's my first time heading to the state tournament," McCandlish said. "We know our potential and we're really looking forward to it."



SNP photo by Phillip King  
Upper Arlington's Caroline Blosser (4) and teammate Marissa Henderson defend against Thomas Worthington's Tara Benninger during the South-Central Division I Regional finals at Dublin Jerome Wednesday, May 21.

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--*Caroline Blosser*

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