

GIRLS LACROSSE

PRACTICE PAYS OFF IN RECRUITING PROCESS FOR UA

By **PAUL BATTERSON**

ThisWeek Staff Writer

Lindsay Godard knows playing women's **lacrosse** for a Division I college will not be easy, but with the preparation the senior midfielder has had at Upper Arlington High School, she's confident she can do it.

In practice with UA, she faces some pretty skilled players. She has committed to Pennsylvania, joining attacker Nancy Baker (Brown), goalkeeper Katie Fisher (Cincinnati) and defender Caitlin Oberlin (Lehigh) as Golden Bears who have made verbal commitments.

They can sign their letters on intent Nov. 14.

"We've always had strong players competing on our team," said Godard, whose team finished 17-4 last spring after losing to Cincinnati Sycamore 9-7 in the Division I state championship. "Basically, the level of competition is amazing every day in practice, and then you add to that going against some of the best teams around like Columbus Academy and Cincinnati Sycamore. When you're matching up against skills like that, you know you're going to get better."

Upper Arlington had three players commit to Division I programs last year -- graduates Molly Everett (Virginia), Tori Conway (Brown) and Chelsea Kuznik (Central Connecticut). Everett was ranked as the 11th-best incoming freshman by Inside **Lacrosse** Magazine. There were no other players from Midwest ranked in the magazine's top 20.

Godard believes she found the perfect fit in Penn. The Quakers had been ranked second for most the season behind eventual national champion Northwestern. Under the guidance of coach Karin Brower, who was named the national Coach of the Year by Intercollegiate Women's **Lacrosse** Coaches Association, Inside **Lacrosse** Magazine and womenslacrosse.com, Penn finished 16-2, won its first Ivy League title in 25 years and earned its first NCAA berth since 1984. The Quakers lost to Northwestern 12-2 in a national semifinal.

"When I visited down there I just fell in love with the campus," Godard said. "My goal is to some day live in New York so I was looking for a school that was next a big city. Penn has an excellent school of business and school of communication. I loved the coaches and the atmosphere there. It was just perfect for me."

In college, Godard will face Baker, who scored 30 goals and had 10 assists for UA last year, and Conway.

Brown, which is coached by 1996 Columbus School for Girls graduate Keely McDonald, was 4-12 last year. The Bears' roster also contains Cleveland Heights graduate Melissa Logan and Shaker Heights' Hathaway Brown graduate Melissa King.

Fisher will be part of a growing program at Cincinnati, which will play their first season in the spring. Coached by Lellie Swords, an assistant at Johns Hopkins for the past five years, Cincinnati will take on an ambitious schedule. The Bearcats will play six teams that were ranked in the IWLCA top 20 at the end of last year and five teams that competed in the NCAA tournament.

Local products at Cincinnati include Hilliard Davidson graduates Lindsay Marshall and Sarah Thompson, Thomas Worthington graduate Karen Skelton and Watterson graduate Jenna Wade.

Oberlin said she has wanted to play for Lehigh since her sophomore year when she competed there with the Great Lakes team in a tournament. She also considered Colgate, George Washington and Vanderbilt.

Last year Lehigh was 8-9 overall and coach Liz Ota was named the Patriot League Coach of the Year.

"I visited there about four times before I verbally committed and it just felt like the perfect fit," Oberlin said. "It had great balance of academics and athletics."