

Field Hockey Top 10: Undefeated and balanced Churchill enters rankings



The Churchill field hockey team (11-0) remains undefeated heading into Tuesday's regular season finale at Wheaton. (Cay Miller)

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Four players scored for Churchill field hockey in Friday's 4-0 shutout of Einstein. Such balance is common for the undefeated Bulldogs, who have had a dozen players have find the net this season.

Churchill entered the year with a veteran team led by 10 seniors, all returning varsity players. Yet the Bulldogs find themselves on the verge of a perfect record heading into Tuesday's regular-season finale at Wheaton because they have received contributions from throughout their lineup.

Churchill has 12 non-seniors, nine of them new to the varsity squad. That dozen has combined for 22 of the team's 30 goals; the senior class leads the way with 18 of 26 assists.

The seniors have stressed team unity since the start of the season, Bulldogs Coach Cay Miller said, and their efforts go beyond the score sheet.

Miller schedules one-on-one talks with players throughout the year. Early on, a few players mentioned cliques and divisions within the larger team.

"That happens in high school, based on classes and friend groups," Miller said. "But as the season progressed, that disappeared."

Senior captain Lucia Alem has provided a steady temperament and sound judgment to go along with her team-leading eight assists as the center midfielder.

"She leads by example," Miller said. "She doesn't ask anyone to do anything she's not already doing herself."

Perhaps the best evidence of Churchill's united front comes in the team's three underclassmen, freshmen Grace Jennings and Lexie Levitt and **sophomore Lizzie Baggett.**

"Initially, all three of them were pretty quiet," Miller said. "They seemed to be taking it all in. But all of them seem to be finding their voice and gaining confidence."

Jennings has six goals, and Levitt and **Baggett have two apiece.** As the Bulldogs head into the postseason, they will continue to look for contributions from up and down their roster.

(Records through Saturday)