



Montclair Lacrosse: Mounties best Fair Lawn to advance in NJSIAA Tournament



MHS junior Nanatte Walls-Tarver attacks the net on a penalty shot, one of four goals she had during Montclair's 14-2 win over Fair Lawn.
ANDREW GARDA/STAFF

by Andrew Garda

As far as the Montclair High School girls lacrosse team is concerned, it's good to be home again.

Home, in this case, is Woodman Field, as the Mounties played there for just the second time this season, in this case overwhelming Fair Lawn 14-2 in the first round, of the North Jersey, Section 1, Group 4 NJSIAA Tournament.

The girls lacrosse team was one of several which has been displaced by the track project at the Aubrey Lewis Sports Complex. Now that the asphalt has been laid and settled, Woodman Field itself is accessible again, which allowed the team to finish their home schedule there.

Both games resulted in wins.

"It was a good day and a good way to end the last home game here," said head coach Ann Jennings.

Montclair got off to a hot start and quickly built a massive lead in the first half. Fair Lawn was unable to even get out of their own defensive end for the first seven minutes of the game, and never managed to sustain offensive rushes for more than a few minutes.

Meanwhile, the Mounties piled on ten goals in the first half, led by Nanette Walls-Tarver whose four goals and six overall points would lead Montclair for the day.

By halftime, things began to get chippy and Jennings was pulling her starters and putting her bench into play both because she didn't want to run the score up more and also to protect her team.

"I wasn't going to run up the score like that and [Fair Lawn] started getting dirty and they were very unsportsmanlike and hurting our players," Jennings said. "So we took a lot of our starters out and we got in a lot of girls who haven't played a lot this season."

While the Mounties only scored four times in the second half, many of those bench players contributed. Jennings was pleased to see them step up when they needed to.

"I think they all did well. Izzy [Hall] did well, Katie Kavanagh did well, Laila Webb played down low. All the seniors. I think it was just a good all around team effort."

Montclair now advances to face a tough opponent in the form of Ridgewood. The top-seeded Maroons have compiled a 19-1 record, but Jennings feels the Mounties have a shot.



Junior goalie Jada Auletta makes one of her twelve saves against Fair Lawn in the Mounties' 14-2 NJSIAA win on Friday, May 17.
ANDREW GARDA/STAFF

“Ridgewood has a tough defense, and they run that backer, so they tire you out. We’ve got to keep possession but we’ve got a plan, no we’ll see if we can execute it.”

After a rough early portion of the season, the Mounties seemed to find their footing over the last eight games, winning five of them.

“We’ve tried so many different lineups in so many different situations,” Jennings said. “We dealt with some injuries in the beginning of the season and we had to make some changes. Yael [Gelman] is out from her shoulder, and Abby [Romano] has been injured. I think they’re just now playing because they enjoy to play, and they don’t really feel the pressure.”

Jennings feels the season hasn’t been indicative of how talented the Mounties are, and points out that record aside, they’ve been able to play well against good teams.

“We’ve hung with the top teams, like Mendham, Mountain Lakes. They’re playing well.”

The disruption to their playing field made things hard on the team, exacerbated by the fact that there’s only so much time in the season to get a team to gel.

“Like anything, if you can have this team all year round, it’d be one thing,” said Jennings. “But you only get three months to work with them.”