

## H.S. Soccer: High Point girls win HWS crown on miracle finish

By JJ CONRAD  
jconrad@njherald.com

VERNON — As the ball took flight off the foot of Jamie Christensen from 43 yards out, High Point's talented senior defender didn't think it had a chance.

In the second minute of overtime in Saturday's Hunterdon Warren Sussex Tournament final, Christensen's long-range, high-arcing shot ascended upwards toward the snow-threatening sky and began making a move from right to left as it began its descent.

"When I saw it curving, I was like 'There's no way this is gonna happen,'" she said.

Belvidere goalie Kelsey Barofski started backpedaling toward the net, leaped, and came up empty.

Christensen's championship-winning miracle blast in the 82nd minute managed to sneak its way past Barofski and into the top-right corner of the net, igniting a wild celebration after the Wildcats' thrilling 1-0 victory gave them their second HWS title in the last three years.

Call it "The Shot Heard 'Round Wantage."

"Seeing it find the net really hit the heart," said an emotional Christensen, now a two-time HWS Tournament MVP after earning the award as a sophomore during High Point's 2009 title run. "It was a whole team effort (today). We really worked hard for this. With this being my senior year, it's nice to know I was there for my team."

Christensen was not only there for the Wildcats in a figurative sense, but the shutdown defender made her presence felt in a literal sense as well, making plays all over the field while leading a phenomenal defensive performance that led to High Point's 11th shutout of the season on the biggest stage up to this point in the year.

"She's such a stellar player," Wildcats' coach Jason Potzer said. "She's one of the key pieces for our team. Not only because of what she brings to the field, but her attitude and constant motivation to everyone around her. She makes a huge impact back there."

The Wildcats' stout back line consisting of Christensen, Brooke Derin, Erica Millazzo, Lauren Johnson and Janine Hlavaty made things relatively simple for outstanding goalkeeper Breanna Blair (six saves), who notched her 10th shutout during the Wildcats' school-record 14-game (and counting) winning streak.

Potzer said that despite his team's slow start in September (0-2-2 after four games), he still expected to be in this position late in the year, as High Point tried to emulate what Vernon accomplished in 2010 (22-0-2 overall, HWS champs).

"I think we all expected this kind of season," Potzer said. "We knew what kind of team we had early in

the year despite what our record showed. The slow start cost us the conference, but it served as a wake-up call. Lately, we've picked it up and really turned it on."

High Point threatened several times in regulation, including its best opportunity just six minutes into the contest on a breakaway from leading scorer Lauren Hayes after a beautiful lead pass from Brianne Woop. But Hayes' shot rolled just past the right post.

The Wildcats outshot Belvidere, 15-6, most of which came from Hayes, Woop and Emily Ritter, three players with a nice rapport with each other.

**NOTES:** Christensen seems to have a flair for the dramatic and is no stranger to scoring from long range, as she provided the game-winner last week in Vernon on a similar-type shot, coming on a free kick from 35 yards out, which broke a scoreless tie again in double-overtime. ... High Point was without its second leading scorer, Lexie Brennan (7 goals, 9 assists), who tore her ACL last week vs. Vernon. And Saige Aikens left the game after an on-field collision in the 15th minute. She did not return. ... Hunterdon and Warren counties may be regretting allowing Sussex County entry into their tournament after a three-year run dominated by High Point ('09, '11) and Vernon ('10). ... Fourth-seeded Belvidere, this year's Skylands Conference Valley Division champion, will enter the North 2, Group 1 tournament as the two seed.

### **High Point 1, Belvidere 0 (OT)**

B 0 0 0 — 0

HP 0 0 1 — 1

**Goal:** HP — Jamie Christensen

**Saves:** HP — Breanna Blair 6; B — Kelsey Barofski

**Team records:** High Point 14-2-2, Belvidere 14-4-1