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Souderton girls advance to state semifinals

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PIAA
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Saturday,
March
18,
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at
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LOU
RABITO
/
Staff

by **LOU RABITO / STAFF**

Souderton's Kate Connolly blocks the shot of Plymouth Whitmarsh's Taylor O'Brien in the second quarter of a PIAA Class 6A state girls' basketball quarterfinal Saturday, March 18, 2017 at Spring-Ford. Souderton went on to win, 43-32.

by **Kate Harman**, STAFF WRITER [@ka_harman \(http://twitter.com/ka_harman\)](https://twitter.com/ka_harman)

Kate Connolly's first block came early.



SLIDESHOW
http://www.philly.com/philly/sports/high_school/20170319_Souderton_girls_advance_to_state_semifinals.html

Souderton 43, Plymouth Whitmarsh 32

(http://www.philly.com/philly/sports/high_school/20170319_Souderton_girls_advance_to_state_semifinals.html)

It was smooth, swift. The kind of play that the Souderton junior often makes, one done with such ease that you wonder how much effort it takes.

Other blocks came later - seven more, to be exact - and they were all done in that same way as Souderton defeated Plymouth Whitmarsh, 43-32, in a PIAA Class 6A quarterfinal Saturday at Spring-Ford.

Some of the blocks were on driving PW players, hoping to get to the basket for two points, a try at the free throw line, or both.

Others were on three-point attempts, where Connolly used her 6-foot-2 length to stifle the Colonials (27-3) from long range.

None was bigger than the one with 7.7 seconds left in the third quarter, when Connolly rejected a final shot from the Colonials and then went on to beat the buzzer with a three-pointer from just beyond midcourt.

It changed the course of the game - a five-point lead suddenly became eight - and the sequence was the jolt Souderton needed.

"She had eight blocks, is that right?" coach Lynn Carroll said, looking at the score sheet. "Oh, man."

"Her timing is perfect," Carroll said. "I mean, really, it's perfect. Whether it is a three-point shot, somebody driving to the basket - and nobody does it better than Taylor O'Brien - but she just times it so, so well. She can make up ground so quickly because of her length, and nobody likes getting their shot blocked, so when it happens once, as a player, you start to get a little more timid."

The first half was highlighted by four three-pointers and tough defense by Souderton (22-7) but the second half was the Connolly show, as the Drexel recruit finished with 14 points and 10 rebounds after having only 2 and 2 through the first 16 minutes of play.

"In Souderton history, we have never even made it to the state playoffs, so just to make it this far, I don't think it necessarily has sunk in yet," Alana Cardona said.

"It's hard to take it all in because it's almost like, how is this happening? I can't believe we are doing this."

With five seconds left, the student section could.

"Final four," they chanted. "Final four."

Plymouth Whitemarsh 10 10 9 3 - 32

Souderton 7 14 16 6 - 43

PW: Taylor O'Brien 13, Lauren Fortescue 6, Lauren Coscia 6, Ali Diamond 4, Laurel Suchsland 3 S: Kate Connolly 14, Alana Cardona 8, Megan Bealer 8, Sami Falencki 6, Megan Walbrandt 6, Tori Dowd 1

kharman@phillynews.com (<mailto:kharman@phillynews.com>)

[@ka_harman](https://twitter.com/ka_harman) (https://twitter.com/ka_harman)

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