

## HIGH SCHOOL SOCCER: Koemans, Pace, Desmond win area honors

By Keith Lair, Staff Writer

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Whenever the Flintridge Sacred Heart Academy soccer team needed a big offensive play, there seemingly was one player who always managed to be at the right place at the right time: Breeana Koemans.

The sophomore forward didn't score the most goals in the west San Gabriel Valley. That honor went to Alverno's Jessica Capra, who had 30 goals.

Koemans didn't even lead her team in scoring. That honor went to sophomore Katie Johnson, who had 23 goals, second in school history.

When the Tologs needed a goal or a big play at a crucial moment, though, Koemans had the knack for coming through.

She scored 19 goals, tied for fifth in school history, and had 16 assists, eclipsing the 1999-2000 record of Meghan O'Kane, who had 14. Her

54 points was the third-best single-season mark, and she has 81 points in two seasons, good for fourth place.

For her efforts, Koemans is the Star-News Player of the Year.

"It was a great year," Koemans said. "It was so much fun. We worked so hard."

When the season appeared over, though, it wasn't so much fun. The Tologs, for the second time this season, had played Beckman to a tie. The first time they met, in the finals of the Tologs' holiday tournament, Koemans scored the winning goal on penalty kicks. In the second meeting - in the CIF-Southern Section Division 2 semifinals - Koemans scored a key goal, but Beckman prevailed on penalty kicks to advance to the championship game.

The season apparently was over.

"We were so depressed," Koemans said.

"Coach (Kathy) Desmond said that we had to get past it and look at all the hard work we had done."

The Tologs' efforts, however, weren't overlooked by CIF State soccer officials. The Tologs were invited to the Southern California Division IV tournament and dropped two divisions because of enrollment standards put in place by the state. Koemans scored the winning goal in a 2-1 victory over Francis Parker of San Diego for the

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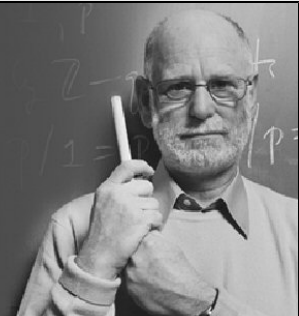


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school's first CIF title in any sport.

She stole the ball from a defender, then easily placed the winning shot over the Parker goalie's head.

"I just knew where she was going," Koemans said of the steal.

That's something that was not surprising to her coaches, Frank Pace and Desmond, who are the Star-News Coaches of the Year.

"She's a soccer gym rat," Pace said.

"She knows where the ball seems to be going."

Koemans had four goals and an assist in the state playoffs. She had five goals and three assists in the CIF-SS playoffs.

The Tologs went 22-1-4 and finished ninth in one national poll. Among their achievements: defeating three CIF champions, beating seven league champions and setting single-season school records for goals, assists and points.

"That extra year of experience helped," Koemans said. "It made it easier for Katie and me. We knew where each other was. We have so many good girls."

Johnson was selected to the Star-News first team, along with defenders Natalie Zeenni and Sarah Teegarden.

Zeenni, a junior, had a big game against Parker. When goalkeeper Dominique D'Oro went out to stop a corner kick, Zeenni immediately went to the goal line. D'Oro didn't get to the ball and it was Zeenni who made a huge save by stopping a point-blank shot.

Then, with the Tologs' midfield sputtering, Pace and Desmond moved her to midfield. Her play set up the Tologs' first goal.

It wasn't the first time Zeenni performed such heroics. She played midfield in the second game against Beckman and nearly led the Tologs to a regulation victory. Her shot barely went over the net.

Zeenni more often made the move up front because of the play of those such as freshman Teegarden.

San Marino went through Rio Hondo League play undefeated, in no small part because of juniors Carlee Beckler and Annie Wenzlau.

Beckler, a goalie, was selected the league's player of the year. Wenzlau began the season at midfield and also played at forward, but when Titans coach Jaime Acuna decided the defense needed shoring up he moved her to the back line, where she excelled. She was selected the league's defender of the year.

The Titans contained La Cañada's Megan Siepler, a junior who was fourth in the west Valley in goals with 25. Alverno had the top three scorers.

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Maha Abdallah made things easy for Alverno forwards Jessica Capra and Celina Minassian. The junior has one of the hardest kicks in the area and is deadly in free-kick situations. Several times throughout the season, she scored on 40-plus- yard free kicks.

Abdallah controlled the midfield and essentially kept opponents from getting a shot at goal, which was especially beneficial because the Jaguars lost their starting goalkeeper to injury before the start of the season.

Abdallah had 13 goals and 14 assists. She also was on last year's team.

Junior Nancy Nunez was Ramona Convent's go-to player. She had 14 goals, more than double any of her teammates, and led the Tigers to the second round of the CIF-SS playoffs.

Arcadia took third place in the Pacific League and lost both of its games to Crescenta Valley and one to Burbank.

Vania Robles, however, made sure the Apaches were a factor in the playoffs. The junior forward led Arcadia to an opening-round win against Palmdale before falling to Saugus in the second round. She too was on last year's first team.

It was a tough season for La Salle, but junior defender Lori Cuerington helped the Lancers to the playoffs, where La Salle lost in the first round to Pacifica on penalty kicks.

Chadwick won the Prep League title, but Pasadena Poly was in the hunt for the title and goalkeeper Hannah Dunham earned defensive player of the year honors.

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