

They never saw us coming.

Right up until the final buzzer, Reading believed this was their tournament. They had led the league throughout the season and didn't think anything would stop them.

Nashoba knew better. Nashoba knew that with hard work, smart hockey and 100% effort, hustle and heart, no one could beat their TEAM. Nashoba knew something else -- Reading had never really played against Nashoba. We had played them three times, but never with our whole team in attendance. They never saw us coming.

Nashoba controlled the game for the first period. Reading rarely got the puck into our zone. We kept up the pressure and kept them on their heels. They got their feet back under them and pressed back in the second. We had a little bit of panicky hockey and they got a goal. What impresses me so much about our girls is that I didn't hear a single moment of worry or doubt from anyone. This game wasn't over and we weren't giving up. They never saw us coming.

We regrouped between periods, took a deep breath and got our focus back for the third. Leah Carfagno evened it up in the first half of the third period and then the teams battled for the championship. Kerry Pouliot was outstanding between the posts and refused every attempt by Reading. Not another puck was going in! With just under five minutes left, one girl asked about overtime. I assured her it wouldn't be necessary -- we were going to win in regulation. Renee Twogood proved me right with 2 1/2 minutes left in the game. Reading then called a timeout to discuss their strategy and we did a quick overview of how to protect a lead.

We then played another twenty minutes or so of hockey although the clock indicates it was only a couple of minutes! It was excruciating. Reading unleashed an offensive onslaught and we simply turned them away. They pulled their goalie and kept the pressure on us in our zone, but somehow we always got a stick on the puck and kept moving the puck back toward their end, even if only a few feet at a time. I watched our girls play their best hockey of the season during that third period, but somehow they dug deeper and found even more for those last few minutes. It was inspiring. I only allowed myself to relax when we had the puck on their blue line with three seconds left. They were awesome!

Reading never saw us coming. I think they see us now.

Thank you, girls.

Amy Lowe