

HIGH SCHOOL

MIAA Girls: How depth, maturity buoyed Duxbury to Division 2 redemption



By Patrick Donnelly
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Duxbury celebrates winning the MIAA girls Division 2 state title. (Brian Kelly/NES)

Duxbury wasn't ready to win in 2024.

The Dragons reached the MIAA Division 2 final as the No. 2 seed, after finishing the regular season with one loss.

A high-flying offense that had put up 21 goals in its first four tournament games went quiet in the championship, falling to top-seeded Masconomet, 5-0.

"We were so young," Duxbury coach **Rob Jones** said. "We had four senior captains. They were unbelievable in dragging some of those really young players to the finals."

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Fast forward to the end of the 2025 regular season, and Jones knew he had a special team on his hands.

His squad was wrapping up a two-week swing without a home game, closing the regular season with four away contests.

The Dragons took the first two in dominant fashion with a 7-0 win at Pembroke and a 3-0 win at Plymouth North. The final two opponents, Marshfield and Hingham, gave Duxbury fits earlier in the season.

They fought to a scoreless draw with Marshfield just a few weeks earlier on Oct. 3. Hingham upended the Dragons in a 4-3 result on Sept. 15, a game in which Duxbury led 3-1 just 14 minutes in.

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They had no problem this time around as Jones' side continued to dominate with a 5-0 win at Marshfield and a 4-1 win at Hingham in the regular-season finale.

"Last year, we were like, 'Don't lose a game,' but this year, really, we knew we could come back from a loss," junior midfielder **Lilah MacQuarrie** said. "It's not gonna stop us."

Those two wins, especially the one against Hingham, stood out for Jones.

The Dragons' top player, senior Northeastern commit **Lauren Sutcliffe**, scored in the game, but she wasn't at 100 percent, nor was fellow standout, junior **Liv Coperine**. Duxbury looked to others to step up, with key contributors like MacQuarrie, **Annabel Manganello** and **Regan Donovan** among those coming through.

"The way we navigated our way through (that stretch)... the Marshfield win and the Hingham win sort of told me that they had what it takes this year to go and take it," Jones said. "Then, it's just a case of making sure we got to the big games and making sure we deliver."

Deliver, they did.

The top-seeded Dragons' depth was on full display in those big games. They had nine different goal scorers across five postseason contests.

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In the semifinals, a rematch with Masconomet, Manganello was the hero after Duxbury conceded an early goal. The junior scored her fourth and fifth goals of the postseason as the Dragons avenged last season's heartbreak in a 2-1 win.

"I feel like the win against Masco really showed that we were here for a reason," MacQuarrie said.

The championship against Longmeadow followed a similar script.

The Dragons conceded an early score. Last season, Duxbury might not have recovered.

Instead, Jones' group went to work.

"That was the difference. The maturity and the composure," Jones said. "That was the thing we questioned all season. It wasn't ever talent. We never questioned talent. We never questioned work ethic. We questioned whether they would be able to handle it in big moments. ... We found a way to win because of their maturity, will to win and desire."

MacQuarrie got them on the board with her third goal of the tournament and 20th of the season, just two minutes after Longmeadow opened the scoring. Shortly after, sophomore **Lily Ladieu** gave the Dragons a one-goal lead. It was her third goal of the postseason. Coperine netted her 20th of the year and fourth of the tournament for critical insurance.



Duxbury celebrates its MIAA Division 2 championship over Longmeadow.
(Brian Kelly/NESJ)

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"As soon as (Masco) scored, we were the better team. It was the same (against Longmeadow). It's just maturity. Last year, they weren't ready to do that," Jones said. "Those girls who were sophomores are juniors, and those girls who were juniors are seniors."

"They're just more mature. They've been through it. They're battle-hardened, and they were just ready to win."

The 3-1 win over the Lancers marked Duxbury's fourth state championship. It also completed a long road to redemption after coming up short just one season ago.

"It feels like the end of a journey this year," Jones said. "You had the journey last year, where we were so disappointed. This time, we feel pretty good."

Ladieu said, "It honestly doesn't feel real. It's such a great feeling. We worked so hard, especially for the seniors and after last year."

Duxbury finished with one of the state's better offenses, putting up 91 goals on the season. They outscored opponents 20-4 in the playoffs.

"We've got so many threats," Jones said. "We proved to everybody that we weren't a one-player team. We had different weapons, different animals, who could go create chances and score goals."

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The Dragons have now reached back-to-back state championship games after a 16-year gap. This season's title was their first since 2008.

Jones took over Duxbury four years ago, with the program coming off a 4-12-2 season. They improved to 8-6-3 in his first season and 12-6-2 in his second before last season's 20-2-1 run to the finals. The Dragons were 18-2-3 in 2025.

"I don't know if I'm one for those sentimental things like that. ... It's just our journey. I've been here for four years, and I'm just trying to make the program better every year," Jones said. "It's great for the community and great for the school.

"There are people who were involved when I started, and we weren't quite ready to win, but they set the standard and the stepping stone of how we're going to play. The girls from the past four years, the seniors, all made a little stepping stone into it. These girls just took it on because they had that leadership from other years."

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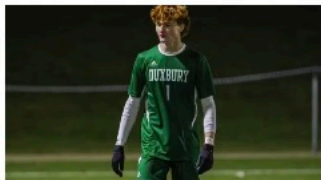
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