

## Looks possible after Thursday



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The work is starting to pay off.

Championships aren't won in the first half of the season, which is a very good thing for the SCM girls hockey team. They weren't ready then. Thursday, they proved they are.

Since the calendar flipped to 2026, SCM has quietly been building steam. Hosting first-place South County on Thursday evening, SCM showed off its championship pedigree and played exactly how a title team should. It wasn't a perfect performance, but the 3-1 win over the Storm was filled with the types of plays you need if you're trying to win a championship.

"We've had a little bit of a tough season with what we've had to work with and we've had a lot of people just not always there," SCM's Goose Brousseau said. "We really pushed through and this was a great showing of that.

"We came out hard and we finished through. This was a big win for us."

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There isn't a team in Rhode Island that has more state championship medals than SCM, a co-op of Smithfield, Coventry and Moses Brown. While there are only a few players who saw the ice during state title runs in 2023 and 2024, several of the players have won titles playing for Moses Brown's field hockey and lacrosse teams.

Having that experience matters when a team is trying to build in the early parts of a season. SCM is young and looked inexperienced in the 2025 portion of the schedule

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It was crucial on Thursday, Jan. 29. South County was the superior team for the first half of the first period before SCM found its footing. SCM couldn't take advantage of a second-period power play, then put itself down a player after a penalty of its own.

Instead of playing to kill the penalty, SCM attacked it, with Lila Stilley getting the puck, skating past the South County defense and beating the goal for a 1-0 lead 12 seconds after the penalty.

"When we're down a player, we knew we had to stay offensive heavy and keep pressing them," Stilley said. "That's how we scored the first goal - by pressing, pressing, pressing."

"... We'll have one person staying on the puck. You just want to score, you don't want it in your zone so it's better having it in the back of the net than your zone."

"On the bench the first thing I saw was we have to build off of that," said Brousseau, one of the team's senior leaders who's won multiple championships in field hockey, hockey and lacrosse. "Lila worked her butt off and Maeve [Stilley] works her butt off, all of our defenders and Chase [Meek, the goaltender] to get that goal."

"It's super hard to get a goal shorthanded and that just really pumped us up."

It was a 1-0 game, but the lead felt larger. SCM gave itself ample offensive opportunities - only to be denied by South County star goalie Maddie Ammatuna - and continued to win between the blue lines.

When the Storm managed to sneak into the offensive zone, SCM was quick to the puck and limited clean shots. When South County got them off, Meek - a freshman - made the plays.

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Brousseau gave SCM the most dangerous lead in hockey with 7:05 left. It was another effort play where the team quickly transitioned the puck up the ice and the senior was able to finish off a pass from Mallory Cavanagh.

“I didn’t know who it was going to be, but I knew we were all working hard and working together,” Brousseau said. “I know when you’re doing the right thing, it’s going to work out.”

Things didn’t work out for South County, but don’t expect that to derail its championship hopes.

The game came the night after the Storm beat La Salle, with those teams meeting up again on Friday. Three games in three days is a brutal stretch, but South County isn’t the type of program that makes excuses.

After having its championship hopes extinguished in the semifinals each of the last two seasons, the Storm will try to learn from Thursday’s loss and get to work at taking the necessary steps to get a title. They’ll have some time off to rest and practice before getting back on the ice on Feb. 6 against East Catholic, a team from Connecticut.

Since losing to South County on Jan. 3, SCM has now won four straight - including a revenge win over East Bay. The season might have started rough, but you’d never know it by watching them now.

The team is ready to win – but it knows what needs to continue in order to win big.

“I don’t think [Thursday’s win] changes how we’re working,” Stillely said. “If anything, it’s going to make us work harder because we want to stay at the top.

“We just don’t want to be the second or third, we want to be the best and we have to play like that all the time.”