

PRESS RELEASE

April 12, 2012

ESSEX COUNTY FREEHOLDERS HONOR THE COLUMBIA H. S. GIRLS FENCING TEAM AND HALEY HART FOR THEIR STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS



The 2012 New Jersey State Champion Columbia H. S. Girls Fencing Team was honored by the Essex County Board of Chosen Freeholders during its Wednesday, April 11, 2012, meeting held at South Orange Village Hall. Pictured above are members of the team and their coaches, as follows: (front row, diagonally bottom right to top left) Celia Accardi, Najiyah Clark, Rachel Viqueira, Nicole Mee, Holly Barszcz and Assistant Coach Jason Kohn; (second row, diagonally bottom right to top left) Deborah Davis Ford (Freeholder Clerk and South Orange Village Trustee), Chloe Fogelson, Haley Hart, Alexis Auer and Assistant Coach James Lambert; and (back row, right to left) Freeholder Carol Y. Clark of East Orange and Coach Daryl White. (Photo by Glen Frieson)

(Newark, NJ) – During its Wednesday, April 11th, meeting held at South Orange Village Hall, the Essex County Board of Chosen Freeholders honored the Columbia High School Girls Fencing Team for winning the 2012 State Championship, as well as the senior team captain, Haley Hart, for winning the 2012 Individual Epee State Championship.

The Girls Fencing Team captured its state championship on February 28th by defeating Montgomery High School, 14-13, thereby completing its 2011-12 season with a record of 16-1. This year's state championship also marked the 10th won by the Columbia High School Girls Fencing Program since 1998, tying the record for the most state championships won by an individ-

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ual school all-time. The program's legacy of success is also exemplified by the gaudy overall dual meet record of 181-12 it has compiled since 2001, and by the fact that *every* 4-year member of the team since 1998 has graduated having won *at least* one state championship.

The Columbia High School Girls Fencing Team is comprised of the following members: Seniors Holly Barszcz, Haley hart, Sarah Hilton, Nicole Mee and Rachel Viqueira; Juniors Alexis Auer, Marie Guarino, Titlayo Osho and Liz Zona; Sophomores Sarah Backstrand, Najjyyah Clark, Samantha Ewing, Chloe Fogelson, Joelle Santos, Helen Soleck, Dasia Vaughn, Alex Viqueira and Lane Williams; and Freshmen Celia Accardi, Charlotte Cramer, Katie Hilton and Blessing Olaode. The team is coached by Ibtihaj Muhammad, who was named the "2012 Girls Fencing Coach of the Year" by *The Star-Ledger*, Daryl White, and Assistant Coaches James Lambert and Jason Kohn.



2012 New Jersey State Individual Epee Champion Haley Hart (left) of Maplewood, a senior at Columbia High School, was honored by the Essex County Board of Chosen Freeholders during its Wednesday, April 11, 2012, meeting held at South Orange Village Hall. Freeholder Carol Y. Clark of East Orange (right) presented her with the Board's Commendation. (Photo by Glen Frieson)

Haley Hart, a senior at Columbia High School, won her second straight Individual Epee State Championship on March 4th at Montgomery High School, thereby becoming the state's first-ever two-time epee champion. During the 2011-12 campaign, she compiled an impressive overall record of 72-14, and a record of 30-3 in dual meets, thereby helping to propel her team to its 16-1 record and state championship. Haley was named the "2012 Girls Fencer of the Year" by *The Star-Ledger* and was also named to the First Team All-State by the NJ Interscholastic Fencing Association and *The Star-Ledger*.

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A four-year varsity letter winner, Haley Hart will graduate from the most successful fencing program in New Jersey as one of the most decorated fencers in school history. In the fall, Haley will continue her studies and her fencing career at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois.

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