

# Pine-Richland's Jessica Albertson presses fast forward on field hockey career

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Pine-Richland's Jessica Albertson poses with her sister Rebekah after a game.

Four years ago, Jessica Albertson found her passion with field hockey.

Now she's found her position on the field.

Albertson moved from midfield to forward for [Pine-Richland](#) this season and has been filling up the cage.

She's had a five-goal game, a four-goal game and a hat trick.

It's been a breakout year for the junior in her first season as a full-time varsity starter for the three-time defending Class 3A champion Rams.

“Moving from midfield to forward, I found my position that works,” Albertson said. “I think that’s why I’ve been excelling this year. I also have great support from my teammates.”

Albertson started playing field hockey in the eighth grade after the sport was suggested to her by her friend and current teammate Mikayla Saversky.

She started experimenting with shooting on goal over the summer and felt pretty comfortable. Once she got to training camp, she said Rams coach Donna Stephenson asked her what position she’d like to play. Albertson responded that she’d like to try forward and has taken off from there.

Rylie Wollerton, who graduated last year as the Rams’ all-time leading scorer, was a good mentor for Albertson. Wollerton is currently playing for Louisville.

“I learned a lot from Rylie,” Albertson said. “I remember the first time I saw her play, she would do moves I had never seen before. I wanted to learn how to do them, so I practiced for hours until I finally got them. Rylie was a big motivator for me to get better.”

Albertson’s five-goal outburst came in an 11-0 win over Hempfield. She scored four in a 6-0 win over [Mt. Lebanon](#) and her hat trick was in a 6-1 win over [Penn-Trafford](#). She also scored the game-winner on a penalty stroke in a 2-1 overtime victory over [North Allegheny](#) on Sept. 27 in [Pine-Richland](#)’s toughest test to date.

Albertson credited her workouts at Elite Sport & Fitness in [Mars](#) with helping her gain speed and strength to become a more well-rounded player.

The chemistry throughout the entire team is another factor she points to helping her flourish.

“We’ve been working really well together as a team, especially moving the ball up the field,” Albertson said. “Emma Westerhoff has assisted on most of my goals. Georgia (Rottinghaus), Madeline (Mill) and Mary (Wymard) all bring the ball up well. If it wasn’t for them, I wouldn’t be scoring goals. Danielle Deer does a great job on defense and moves the ball upfield. Everyone on the team has been doing well.”

Albertson attended various college camps over the summer and hopes to one day play at the next level.

Right now, though, she’s focused on helping the Rams achieve a fourth consecutive district championship and feels they have the team to accomplish their goal.

“We lost five seniors, but half of our starters were back,” Albertson said. “We had a lot of players that were ready for full varsity games that were moving up. Coach (Stephenson) has pushed us to be the best we can and we have been able to stay the same as last year with a lot of teamwork.”

*Jerin Steele is a freelance writer*

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