

Big week for RBC's Totland as she and Caseys win titles

BYWARREN RAPPLEYEA Correspondent

Red Bank Catholic High School junior Taylor Totland is coming off a huge week that saw her win the Monmouth County Girls Golf Championship for the third straight season and then help her team win the Shore Conference championship.

On April 30 Totland battled through a chilly, windy and rain-swept afternoon to record an 8-over-par 80 to defeat Emily Mills of Colts Neck High School by three strokes for the Monmouth County title at the Jumping Brook Country Club in Neptune.

"It was a tough day to play and the weather affected Taylor's game, but she kept her focus and didn't get frustrated," said Caseys coach Bill Kusch, who noted that Totland double-bogeyed the fifth hole. "The greens were particularly tough, yet she found a way to win."



Totland shot a 75 last year and a 78 as a freshman, both in much better conditions, to win her first two county titles at Charleston Springs Golf Club in Millstone. Prior to teeing off, Totland said she felt a bit nervous going for a third straight title, but the butterflies disappeared after the first hole.

"I had some trouble inside 100 yards, so I was trying to avoid bogeys by missing the green in good spots," Totland said of her effort at Jumping Brook. "I thought I chipped well and I was able to kind of grind it out."

On Thursday, Totland narrowly missed winning a third successive Shore Conference crown at Pine Barrens Golf Club in Jackson. This time, Mills, who has emerged as Totland's chief rival, won by a single stroke, holding off a furious comeback by the RBC golfer, who was three shots behind with four holes to play — a situation Totland found herself in last spring when she rallied to defeat Mills.

"I thought I played very well in the Shore Tournament, but Emily [Mills] played lights-out and she deserved to win," Totland said. "Still, it was great that we were able to win the team title. Everyone played well."

"Taylor was so happy that we won the team championship," Kusch said. "It was something she really wanted. You would have never known that she just lost an individual title by one stroke. That's the kind of person she is. She's a great competitor and still she puts the team first."

The Caseys are 7-1 and are in the hunt for a second straight Shore Conference Class B North title, which RBC shared with Rumson- Fair Haven a year ago.

Meanwhile, Totland will be gearing up for the NJSIAA sectionals, which she won the past two seasons. Last year she competed in the Tournament of Champions, where she finished one stroke in back of Scotland Preston of Governor Livingston, who will be looking to close out her senior year by repeating.

Totland, who began playing the game at the age of 5 under the tutelage of her dad, D.J., has already accepted a scholarship to Furman University. Her dad still helps iron out any kinks in Totland's game. At Furman, she plans to study sports management and health while continuing her golf career.

As excited as she is about college, Totland is looking forward to her senior season when sister Nicole joins the RBC team as a freshman.