

Casey girls win SCT lacrosse, get top seed in state sectional

Red Bank Catholic tops Manasquan for SCT title

BYWARREN RAPPLEYEA Correspondent



Red Bank Catholic High School's Grace Fallon (right) tries to gain control of the ball in front of Manasquan High School's Gretchen Fay during the May 11 Shore Conference Tournament final played at Monmouth University. The Caseys scored a late goal to beat the 'Squan, 10-9. JEFF GRANIT staff

The Red Bank Catholic High School girls lacrosse team completed a successful run to the Shore Conference Tournament championship and is now looking to make its mark in the NJSIAA tourney.

Coach Janet Caprioni's team downed Manasquan in an exciting back-and-forth match that ended up at 10-9 to win the Shore tourney for the first time in 13 years. Catherine Luick scored three times and added an assist to pace the top-seeded Caseys' attack while Kaitlyn Cunningham and sophomore Maeve Cowley scored two goals apiece.

The final was played May 11 at Monmouth University in West Long Branch.

RBC set the tone early as Cowley and fellow sophomore Grace Fallon both scored, but the Warriors bounced back to quickly knot things up. After Cowley scored again, Manasquan appeared to gain the momentum by scoring the next three goals. With time dwindling in the opening half, Amanda Casten cut the deficit to one.

The second half was also a seesaw. Luick put the Caseys ahead with back-to-back tallies, and Manasquan scored three straight goals again. A pair of Cunningham goals tied the score before Luick gave her team a one-goal lead that was quickly erased by the Warriors with just under 10 minutes to play.

Both teams tightened up defensively, and the only goal came off the stick of Victoria Brown, who converted a pass from Cunningham with four minutes left in regulation. The Caseys managed to hold on the rest of the way, thanks to solid goaltending by Rebecca Barille, to bring the title to Red Bank.

Caprioni credited her team's senior leadership for playing a key role in the victory, which includes Luick and Cunningham, who lead the team in scoring with 48 and 47 goals, respectively.

"It was a tough game, and there were a couple of times when it looked like things weren't going to go our way," the coach said. "But the girls kept coming back. It was a great team effort. I'm very proud of them."



To get to the finale against Manasquan, RBC had to defeat Shore Regional, the defending champ. The Caseys raced out to a 6-2 lead at the break and withstood a furious second-half rally to win, 10-8. Cunningham scored three goals, Cowley and Fallon both scored twice, and Barille made six saves to seal the win. Fallon and Luick each scored four goals in RBC's 18-8 victory over Jackson in the quarterfinal.

RBC's talented sophomore class, many of whom gained valuable experience a year ago, came up strong for the Caseys throughout the campaign. Cowley scored 35 goals

and added 21 assists, Fallon has 28 goals and 36 assists, and Casten has scored 14 times.

"I don't really think anyone expected us to get this far," said Caprioni, whose team is now 16-1, with the lone loss coming against Rumson-Fair Haven. "We just got better and better, and the girls gained confidence in themselves."

The Caseys are the No. 1 seed in the NJSIAA South Jersey Group II section. They began play on May 14 hosting 16thseed Long Branch.