

NJSIAA GIRLS GOLF

Totland runner-up to future teammate

By Stephen Edelson
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MONTGOMERY — As Montgomery's Alice Chen's 20-foot, downhill birdie putt on the 17th green dropped into the bottom of the cup at Cherry Valley Country Club, Red Bank Catholic's Taylor Totland found herself one shot down to her playing partner with one hole remaining at the NJSIAA Tournament of Champions.

Finally, the state championship played out on the final 18th, where Totland, the defending champion, was unable to make her birdie putt, and Chen slammed home a six-foot par saving putt for a round of 1-under-par 71.

Afterwards, Totland was happy with her even-par 72, although disappointed at a second-place finish

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RBC's Taylor Totland took second at the NJSIAA girls golf Tournament of Champions on Thursday. JASON TOWLEN/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



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Scan this QR code to watch Tyler Totland discuss her second

The 600 has always "unique," Kenseth

starts 17th.

TOTLAND

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to close out her high school career. But she was also happy that if anyone was going to beat her that it was Chen, who will be her teammate next fall when the two are freshman at Furman.

"It was just a great match out there," said Totland. "I couldn't be happier for her that she won. Furman is representing well in New Jersey."

As for the team title, it was Ridge finishing on top at 325, with Red Bank Catholic in second at 341, their second straight runner-up finish behind Ridge. Totland's sister, Nicole, a freshman, fired an 82, while fellow freshman Arianna Palmeri shot 92. Molly McHugh rounded out the scoring with a 95.

Colts Neck's Emily Mills closed out her junior season with a strong performance, posting a 77 to finish tied for fifth individually.

For Totland, it marks the conclusion to a spectacular career, that saw her win the Shore Conference Tournament three times, while winning four straight Monmouth County Tournaments.

"(Wednesday) was the last day of school so it's crazy that it's all over," she said, "but I've enjoyed these four years so much. I had a good run. It was a good time."

"It doesn't seem like four years," said RBC

coach Bill Kusch. "Taylor is just a wonderful young lady and a great captain for our team. She was more worried about the team when she came off the last green. That pretty much sums it up. Just very unselfish."

With each of the eventual top four finishers playing in the same four-some, it was a back-and-forth match from the outset.

By the time they made the turn on the 5,750-yard test, Chen and Cindy Ha from Demarest were tied for the lead at even-par, while Totland and Ridge's Hana Ku were two shots back.

Chen promptly grabbed a one-shot lead with a birdie on the par-5 10th hole, but Totland got it right back with a birdie of her own on No. 11.

Still trailing by two shots, Totland got one back when Chen bogeyed No. 15, missing an eight footer to save par. Then, on the par-5 16th hole, both Totland and Ha made birdie, while Chen could do no better than par, putting the three into a tie for the lead at level par.

After all four players hit the 17th green in regulation, it was Chen who provided the winning margin by rolling in the deciding birdie putt, a 20 footer down the slope.

"I thought it was a great putt," Totland added.

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