

Shore Conference Football Top 10

By: [Scott Stump](#) | 2 weeks ago

It was a stable week in the top 10, with the top nine teams winning and last week's No. 10 team losing to a team ranked ahead of it.

There are several intriguing match-ups coming up this week that could result in some changes, but right now the Shore Conference's elite seem relatively set. Two top 10 teams, Southern and Red Bank Catholic, have yet to allow a point this season.



Lacey and quarterback Tom Kelly solidified their top-five spot with a 37-20 win over Toms River North. (Photo credit: Bill Normile)

We'll see if Neptune can shake off any rust for not having played in two weeks after receiving a forfeit because of a skin infection issue at Ocean this past week. The Scarlet Fliers face Long Branch on Saturday in a pivotal Class B North game that should go a long way toward deciding the title.

All Shore Media Top 10

1. Red Bank Catholic (2-0) – Last week: No. 1.

The Caseys picked up a hard-fought, 10-0 win over Manasquan for their third straight shutout victory dating back to last season and their 16th straight win against Shore Conference competition. The 1-2 punch of senior Jesse Flaherty and sophomore Mike Cordova has done a great job with junior tailback Larry Redaelli nursing an ankle injury. RBC's depth and size on both sides of the line has been tough for any opponent to match. Junior tackle Quenton Nelson added offers from Penn State and Ohio State on Monday and has been part of the Shore's most formidable offensive line. The Caseys host St. John Vianney (1-1) on Friday night in a Class A Central game between old rivals. They will look to send a message about which parochial program is the best in the Shore.

2. Neptune (2-0) – Last week: No. 2.

The Scarlet Fliers essentially had a bye week after they won by forfeit over Ocean because of a skin infection issue for the Spartans. You can look at it two ways. You can say they have had two weeks to prepare for a tough game against Long Branch (2-0) on Saturday in Class B North, or that they could be rusty after such a long layoff and will have to quickly get back in the swing of things against a tough opponent. The good news is that they will be on their home turf in a game between old rivals that is always a physical, emotional game. Neptune has the Shore Conference's longest current winning streak at 12 games.

3. Manalapan (2-0) – Last week: No. 3.

The Braves cruised past Freehold Township, 33-0, as the passing game continues to detonate opposing defenses. Senior quarterback Mike Isabella was a perfect 10-for-10 and senior wideout Anthony Firkser had another two touchdown catches. He has four touchdown grabs in two games, putting him on pace to potentially take down the Shore Conference record of 17 touchdown catches set by Howell's Michael Clark in 2010. This week, they travel to Middletown North (0-1), which lost to Brick Memorial in the season opener but showed flashes of offensive improvement. Manalapan has now won 13 straight divisional games.

4. Southern (2-0) – Last week: No. 4.

The Rams registered their second straight shutout to start the season when they blanked Toms River South, 19-0, in their home opener, helped by a pair of touchdowns from running back Abe Gonzalez. Now comes their first stern test of the season when they welcome Toms River North in a big Class A South game on Friday night. The Mariners are coming off a tough loss to Lacey and will be looking to get right back in the division race by taking down the defending champions. This will be the biggest test yet for the Southern defense.

5. Lacey (2-0) – Last week: No. 5.

The Lions roared to an impressive 37-20 win over last week's No. 10 team, Toms River North, to give head coach Lou Vircillo his 250th career victory. Vircillo joined Warren Wolf and the late Vic Kubu as the only coaches in Shore Conference history to reach that mark. Senior wideout Bill Belford had three touchdowns, including a 99-yard kickoff return and a 62-yard touchdown catch, to help lead the way. Senior Kyle Spatz and junior Chris Jensen each added touchdowns on defense. The Lions head to Toms River East (0-2) on Friday night and should expect a battle from a team that is in desperation mode after falling into an 0-2 hole. Lacey needs this one to stay right at the top of the Class A South standings as a collision with Southern looms in the distance.

6. Brick Memorial (2-0) – Last week: No. 6.

It was the Mike Basile Show this past week as the Mustangs junior had all five of their touchdowns in a 36-21 nondivisional victory over Middletown North, then drove the team bus home before whipping up a five-course postgame meal for the team. Basile had two rushing touchdowns, two receiving touchdowns and an interception return for a touchdown in the win. The Mustangs will be in for a dogfight when they head to Jackson Memorial on Friday night. The Jaguars gained confidence with a 16-point win over Toms River East and always play Brick Memorial tough. They will be eager to show that they will be a contender this year despite graduation losses, so this is an important hurdle for Brick Memorial to cross in a Class A South division that features three teams ranked in the top six.

7. Rumson-Fair Haven (2-0) – Last week: No. 7.

The Bulldogs roared to an impressive 35-13 win over St. John Vianney to show that they will once again be a factor in Class A Central after winning the title last year. Senior quarterback Danny Roberto threw three touchdown passes, two to wideout John Ryan, and Michael Clarke added a sensational punt return for a touchdown as Rumson jumped all over the Lancers early and didn't look back. A very interesting game comes up this week as the Bulldogs host Holmdel (2-0), which is playing with a lot of confidence right now. The Hornets have not allowed a point this season after going 1-9 last year, and they gave Rumson all it could handle last season. However, Rumson has owned Holmdel. It's been over a decade since Holmdel beat Rumson.

8. Matawan (2-0) – Last week: No. 8.

The Huskies escaped the upset bid of Freehold with a 21-14 overtime victory thanks to junior quarterback Kashaun Barnes. He ran for a 5-yard touchdown with only 19 seconds left in regulation to help tie the game and then ran for the game-winning touchdown in overtime. He also threw a touchdown pass in the Class B North

victory. The Huskies now face a tough game this week against Ocean (1-1) in B North. It's been a turbulent 10 days or so for the Spartans, who had to forfeit a game to Neptune because of an impetigo outbreak. They have had plenty of time to prepare for this game, although they missed several practice days because of the skin issue. They will be eager to put that behind them and serve notice that they will be a contender in the division with a win.

9. Middletown South (1-0) – Last week: No. 9.

The Eagles kicked off their season in workmanlike fashion, methodically rolling past Brick with a 28-0 win in a nondivisional game. Senior Jake Ripnick ran for a pair of touchdowns to help power the victory. Their home opener comes Friday night at The Swamp, where they will host struggling Howell (0-2) in their Class A North opener. This will be their last tune-up before a monster showdown with two-time Class A North champion Manalapan in Week Four.

10. Long Branch (2-0) – Last week: Unranked.

The Green Wave make their debut in the top 10 after an emotional, 27-0 win over Monmouth in a nondivisional game on Saturday. Running back Deon Williams went over the 100-yard mark and scored a touchdown only three days after his two older brothers were killed in a car accident. This week is their chance to show they are back to being a force in the Shore Conference when they travel to No. 2 Neptune on Saturday in a huge Class B North game. The Green Wave have won seven straight, and they face a Neptune team on a Shore Conference-best 12-game winning streak so it promises to be an epic meeting.

Dropped out – Toms River North: The Mariners lost 37-20 to fifth-ranked Lacey, but can leap right back into the top 10 with a victory over No. 4 Southern on Friday night. The bad news is that starting center Nick Silva is lost for the season after breaking several bones in his left leg in the loss to Lacey. That's a tough blow for a team that runs a shotgun spread offense. This team still has the potential to be a factor in the Class A South race.

Other teams to watch:

Holmdel (2-0): The Hornets have two straight shutouts to start the season, including a solid win over Barnegat. They are coming off a 28-0 victory over Middlesex and can make their biggest statement in years this week when they face No. 7 Rumson-Fair Haven in Class A Central. The trio of Rob Cantelli, Frank Conditto and Brett Lambert have been the core of a revitalized team that has already doubled last year's win total.

Shore (1-1): The Blue Devils posted an impressive 37-12 win over defending Central Jersey Group I and Class B Central champion Asbury Park to get an early leg up in the division race. The defense forced four turnovers and had three interceptions for the second straight week, including one that was returned for a touchdown. Senior fullback Jack Kelly added a pair of touchdown runs. Next up is a nonconference game against Metuchen (0-2) as the Blue Devils try to build momentum for a postseason run.

Point Beach (2-0): The Garnet Gulls blasted another opponent with a 41-8 win over Dunellen and have outscored their first two opponents 89-16. The starting defense held Dunellen to 33 total yards, including zero yards rushing, in the win. Danny Tighe exploded for a career-high 230 yards rushing and three touchdowns to lead the offense. The Garnet Gulls host a Spotswood team that just lost 48-35 to Keansburg, so Point Beach is a heavy favorite to get off to a 3-0 start.

Point Boro (2-0): The Panthers rolled to a 55-6 win against an overmatched Pinelands squad to stay at the front of the pack in Class B South. Now comes an important divisional game when they head to face a Central (1-1) team that is eager to get right back in the race after a tough loss to Jackson Liberty last week.

Jackson Liberty (2-0): The Lions are off to their first 2-0 start in the six years of their program history after a

hard-fought, 7-0 win over Central for a key Class B South victory. It marked just the second shutout in Jackson Liberty history, the first since 2007 and the first against a Shore Conference opponent. The Lions travel to Manchester (0-2) Friday night and look to keep it going to remain in the hunt for their first division title in school history.

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