

H.S. Football Top 10: Offense rules in Class A South

Written by Steven Falk @smfalk
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Red Bank Catholic running back Larry Redaelli breaks through the Manasquan defensive line for a gain in their Saturday afternoon Shore Conference game. / Jerry Wolkowitz/Special to the Asbury Park Press

Two things have become clear the last two weeks of the Shore Conference football season.

Expect the unexpected and action-packed games in Shore Conference Class A South, where there appears to be an excellent talent pool on offense.

Meanwhile, in Shore Conference Class B North, expect games between the teams most scholastic football observers thought would contend for the divisional championship to be defensive slugfests.

Perhaps the weekend's three most eye-opening results came in Class A South as Brick recorded an impressive 47-21 win over Toms River South; Jackson Memorial rolled to a 35-7 win over a shorthanded Brick Memorial team; and Lacey outlasted a Toms River East team that had been outscored 86-0 in its first two games, 45-42.

Class B North produced two more defensive struggles as Ocean defeated Matawan, 7-3, on a late TD and Long Branch defeated Neptune, 13-7, in overtime.

Class A South and Class B North are likely to keep the Asbury Park Press Top 10 Poll in a state of flux all season. Brick is the perfect example of that. The Green Dragons moved into the poll after a win over Brick Memorial in Week 1, dropped out after a tough loss to Middletown South in Week 2 and move back in after the win over Toms River South.

Brick replaces Neptune in the poll.

1. RED BANK CATHOLIC (3-0): Last week: No. 1. Sophomore quarterback Eddie Hahn ran for a touchdown and threw a TD pass to junior running back Mike Cordova and senior running back Larry Redaelli ran for 168 yards and two TDs as the Caseys defeated St. John Vianney, 45-0 to extend their winning streak against Shore Conference opposition to 27. **Next game:** Friday vs. Raritan (0-3).

2. MANALAPAN (2-0): Last week: No. 2. Senior fullback Nelson Rivera ran for a TD and caught a TD pass from junior quarterback Dan Anerella and senior tailback Tyler Leonetti ran for 115 yards and two TDs on seven carries as the Braves defeated Middletown North, 49-14. Next is one of the key games in the Shore Conference Class A North race against a tradition-rich foe Manalapan has defeated three straight seasons. **Next:** Friday vs. No. 4 Middletown South (2-0).

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3. LACEY (3-0): Last week: No. 3. Senior quarterback Tom Kelly threw for 291 yards and three TDs, senior Chris Tutela caught a TD pass and ran for one and Chris Jensen ran for two TDs as the Lions compiled 546 yards of offense and outlasted Toms River East, 45-42, in a game in which the two teams combined for 1,003 yards of total offense. Lacey, which was missing several defensive starters according to coach Lou Vircillo, will have to shore up its defense for its next game. Another high-scoring game looms. **Next game:** Friday at No. 9 Toms River South (2-1).

4. MIDDLETOWN SOUTH (2-0): Last week: No. 4. Senior quarterback Kyle Brey ran for a TD and threw for another and the Eagles' defense allowed just 95 passing yards as Middletown South defeated Howell, 24-7. The Eagles would love to show their next opponent that they are back as the team to beat in Class A North. However, the opponent is extremely talented. **Next game:** Friday at No. 2 Manalapan (2-0).

5. RUMSON-FAIR HAVEN (3-0): Last week: No. 5. Junior running back Charlie Volker ran for 133 yards and two TDs as the Bulldogs defeated Holmdel, 41-7. Next is the "Battle of Ridge Road." This opponent has had a habit of playing Rumson tough in recent seasons. **Next game:** Friday vs. Red Bank (0-2).

6. OCEAN (3-0): Last week: No. 7. Junior quarterback Royal Moore and sophomore running back Tyler Thompson teamed up for a 55-yard TD on a screen pass with 2:56 left to give the Spartans a 7-3 win over Matawan in a defensive slugfest. It was the second straight week Ocean won a defensive struggle. Ocean defeated Neptune, 7-0, one week earlier. **Next game:** Friday at JFK-Iselin (1-2).

7. COLTS NECK (3-0): Last week: No. 8. Junior quarterback Christian Sanchez threw for two TDs and ran for another and senior running back Anthony Gargiulo ran for 136 yards and two TDs as the Cougars made it three straight shutouts with a 48-0 win over Marlboro. It is the first time in its 14-season history Colts Neck has recorded three straight shutouts. **Next game:** Friday at Middletown North (0-2).

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8. BRICK (2-1): Last week: Not ranked. The Green Dragons showed they are a legitimate contender in the competitive Class A South race by thumping last week's No. 6 team, Toms River South, 47-21. Junior quarterback Carmen Sclafani ran for 142 yards and two TDs and threw for 77 yards and a TD, and junior running back Ray Fattaruso ran for 112 yards and two TDs and threw a TD pass to senior receiver Mike Muratore. However, there is no time for the Green Dragons to rest on their laurels in the grind that is Class A South. **Next game:** Friday at Southern (2-1).

9. TOMS RIVER SOUTH (2-1): Last week: No. 6. Junior quarterback Tymere Berry ran for two TDs and accounted for 245 yards of total offense, but it wasn't nearly enough as the Indians were overwhelmed by Brick, 47-21. The Indians will need to play better on defense this week against an opponent that has one of the best offenses in the Shore. **Next game:** Friday vs. No. 3 Lacey (3-0).

10. BARNEGAT (3-0): Last week: No. 9. The Bengals used their mammoth offensive line and the tough running of senior tailback A.J. Opre and junior quarterback Cinjun Erskine to wear down defending Class B South champion Monsignor Donovan and record a 24-18 win in a key Class B South game. Opre ran for 159 of his 162 yards and both his TDs in the second half. Erskine ran for 103 yards and a TD. **Next game:** Friday vs. Jackson Liberty (1-2).