

All-around effort keys Red Bank Catholic victory

By Sherlon Christie

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MIDDLETOWN — The Red Bank Catholic girls basketball team displayed a balanced approach on offense as five players scored at least seven points led by Grace Fallon and Alex Alfano with 10 points each.

The top-seeded Caseys jumped out to a first quarter lead and never looked back en route to a 46-29 victory over No. 4 seed Middletown South in a Shore Conference Tournament semifinal game at Brookdale Community College on Tuesday night.

Fallon scored six of her 10 points in the third quarter when Red Bank Catholic (23-1) held a 35-22 lead after three quarters.

"I think the third quarter was the biggest moment in that game. Middletown South is a very cagey team. They can hit a few 3-pointers and be right back in the game," Fallon said. "So, coming

out in the third quarter and getting separation like that and giving ourselves a cushion was huge going forward in the game because Middletown South could come back at any moment."

But the Eagles (19-3) didn't mount a comeback. After trailing, 26-16, at halftime, the Eagles only scored nine and then six points in the third and fourth quarter, respectively.

"My main concern with Red Bank Catholic was their offensive rebounding and they demonstrated that almost to perfection tonight," Middletown South coach Tom Brennan said. "They were stronger and they took it to us especially scoring in the second half because it seemed like it was very difficult for us to score in the second half."

Middletown South's Jackie Dluhi was the key offensive source for the Eagles in the game. She scored all seven of her

team's points in the first quarter on three field goals, one of them being a 3-pointer. She added four more points in the second quarter and scored 11 of her game-high 15 points in the first half.

"We had adjustments that we at least tried to make but I want to give credit to my kids for trying to do some things," Brennan said. "Red Bank Catholic was a little stronger."

Overall, the Caseys had six players score and five of them had seven or more points with Alfano and Fallon leading the way.

"We were concerned about rebounding. There were times when we watched them on film and they had five kids in the lane and they are very athletic and very long," Red Bank Catholic coach Joe Montano said. "I was pleased with our rebounding and I thought they were stuck on 22 points for a long time and I thought that was really

important."

Red Bank Catholic's Caroline Corcoran scored all eight of her points in the second quarter and Alex Barazotti scored four of her eight points in the fourth quarter and Mary Kate Caverly added five of her seven points in the fourth quarter.

"Grace Fallon really drove the ball to the basket and she's a tremendous defender," Montano said. "She rebounds for us and she helps Mary Kate handle the ball against pressure. We've been after her to play offense and she needed to get to the basket."

The Caseys will get another chance to show their balanced offensive approach on Saturday in the Shore Conference Tournament final. It will be No. 3 seed Point Boro vs. No. 1 seed Red Bank Catholic at 1 p.m. at Monmouth University.

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