

Suffolk Class C Final

## **Shoreham-WR wins seventh straight Babylon hangs tough in 13-11 defeat**

BY JEFF GOLD.jeffrey.gold@newsday.com

June 3, 2007

Yes, it's old. At the Suffolk boys lacrosse championships, one of the three games always ends with Shoreham-Wading River celebrating another title.

So anything short of a county title for Shoreham would be tough to take.

Top-seeded Shoreham-Wading River's remarkable run continued Saturday as it beat No. 3 Babylon, 13-11, in the Class C championship game at Stony Brook University. It is Shoreham's seventh straight title.

"Had we lost this game, it would have been hard to swallow. That's what keeps on pushing us," senior Matt Vernam said. "There are new kids on the team every year and it's always a big thing winning this. It's still big to us. We know we have to work for it."

"This is a truly special group," coach Tom Rotanz said. "It doesn't care about any individual accolades. It just wants to win."

Shoreham-Wading River (15-3) plays Nassau champ Cold Spring Harbor in the Long Island championship at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday at Stony Brook University. Shoreham lost to CSH in last year's game.

Saturday it looked as if Shoreham might cruise. It had a 4-2 first-quarter lead entering the game, which began Friday but was suspended because of lightning. When the game resumed, Shoreham was sharp as it scored three of the first four goals to go up 7-3 with 8:49 left in the half.

But Babylon (10-9) responded, ending the half with a 4-0 run to tie it at 7. Greg Griffio scored three of his game-high four goals during Babylon's run.

"Babylon had great athletes. They were explosive. Up 7-3, we thought we could potentially put it away, and then they bang four goals," Rotanz said. "We needed to get into the locker room and get some things straightened out."

Shoreham's ball movement and offensive game were stellar in the second

half. Players found open teammates cutting to the net for highlight-reel goals.

Shoreham scored the first three goals in the third to go up 10-7 and took a 12-8 lead into the fourth quarter. Nick Madden, John Austin and Kyle Sopko each scored three goals.

Still, Babylon was feisty, scoring three of the next four goals to make it 13-11 with 8:04 left.

"I couldn't be prouder. We really competed," said Babylon coach Steve Edmonds, whose team played in the county final in 2003. "The score might have looked like it might be getting away from us, but I believed in this team so much that I knew we'd keep coming back."

But the comeback stopped at 13-11, and Shoreham counted down the final seconds. When the win was secured, the players reveled in the joy of the program's seventh straight title.

"I think no one likes winning more than Shoreham," Austin said. "When we do it, everyone gets into it."

### **SUFFOLK CLASS C TOURNAMENT**

Final - at Stony Brook University

Shoreham-Wading River -- 4 - 3 - 5 - 1 -- 13

Babylon -- 2 - 5 - 1 - 3 -- 11

Goals - B: G. Griffo 4, M. Griffo 3, Reynolds 3, Sutherland; SWR: Madden 3, Austin 3, Sopko 3, Drost 2, DeFranco, Delia. Saves - B: Martinez 20; SWR: Malandrino 13.