

SWR avenges loss for 6th title in row

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Shoreham-Wading River's Brendan Gleason raced up the middle of the field looking to make a pass. The senior longstick defenseman simply wanted to unload the ball after clearing it past midfield at a critical juncture of Friday's Suffolk Class C boys lacrosse final at Stony Brook University.

But with Mount Sinai locking down the Wildcat attackmen, Gleason had one option - to shoot. Gleason's unassisted score with 6:04 left sparked a three-goal game-ending run as second-seeded Shoreham beat No. 1 Mount Sinai, 10-7, for its sixth consecutive county title.

"I came up and they just gave me too much of a gap, so I just got through them and I was right in front of the net and just stuck it down," said Gleason, whose Wildcats (10-9) face Cold Spring Harbor in the Long Island final at 3:30 p.m. Tuesday at Hofstra. "I only had a couple of shots this whole season, and I haven't made one. This was the first of my career, so it was a really big one."

The Wildcat longpoles weren't done, as defenseman Matt Vernam fired home a rocket from the right flank to provide the final margin with 1:15 left.

"If it's a longpole, the shot is coming up from the sky, and you kind of lose it sometimes," said Mount Sinai goalie Dave Erdman, who made 15 saves - many of the point-blank variety - to push his four-year career total to more than 750. "It's a big momentum shift when a defenseman comes down and runs through the middle [and scores]."

Shoreham took a 4-1 lead on the second of Brett Drost's three goals with 17 seconds left in the first quarter. But Charles Hoeg's rocket shot into the upper-right corner 1:40 into the second quarter sparked a 4-0 run for Mt. Sinai, ending with Jimmy Langton's goal off Chris Ritchie's assist to give the Mustangs (14-4) their first lead midway through the period.

But Ritchie, Suffolk's all-time leading scorer with 393 points, was shut out in the second half by the double-team of Vernam and Mike Sopko. Sopko is one of five Shoreham starters who missed substantial time because of injury this season before returning for the playoffs. Ritchie had six goals when the Mustangs beat SWR, 9-6, on May 10.

Said Shoreham coach Tom Rotanz: "Ritchie's a hell of a player, and I told him after the game I felt bad ... for a second."