

La Salle Outlasts Bay View in Thriller

SOUTH KINGSTOWN — Ask La Salle guard Torey Jones to describe her final basket in last night's Girls Division I final of the 2007 Credit Union Basketball Championships, and she draws a blank.

"I don't remember nothing. It's like a dream," the sophomore said. "Jameilia (Dillon) tipped it. I got it and it was like, 'I have to make this shot.' I was determined to make it."

That's OK. Whether Jones remembers it or not, the basket still counted. And there are more than a few joyous Rams fans who will undoubtedly be glad to recount over and over again to Jones that short jumper she made with five seconds left to lift undefeated La Salle to a thrilling 61-60 come-from-behind victory over defending champion Bay View in front of a Ryan Center crowd of several hundred.

"My teams have been to seven (championships). We've won four of them. This is by far the most exciting and I think most rewarding because we came so far," said La Salle coach Sean Reddy, who has coached the Rams to the Division I state crown three out of the last five years and previously coached North Smithfield to a Division II title. **"Last year, we lost in the semis, and from that day on, the kids never stopped working. They worked hard all summer. They went to individual workouts with [former Rhode Island high school basketball stars] Shannon Perry and Christina Batastini. We had two summer league teams; they showed up every single night. And their goal was to get here and win, not just to get here."**

Indeed, La Salle's win was a result of a team effort with Cynthia Gaudet leading four players in double figures with 16 points.

"She's just everything you could want in a player," Reddy said of the Rams' lone senior, who also had four steals and five assists and was named the tournament MVP.

Meanwhile, Kelsey Dillon contributed 14 points, and Monica Bharoocha and Willeen Capehart each chipped in 10, while Jones and Jameilia Dillon combined for another 17. And the Rams needed every one of those points in a contest that was filled with momentum swings.

With her team down, 10-9, Jones, who was selected as her team's Player of the Game, scored her first two baskets of the night in sparking a 14-2 La Salle run, which Jameilia Dillon capped with a field goal to put the Rams up, 23-12, with 7:28 remaining in the first half.

But Kashaia Cannon then knocked down back-to-back 3-pointers to kick off a 17-6 run, which Brittany Wilson capped with a basket that left the teams tied at 29-all with 1:56 to play.

After Gaudet sank a driving layup for La Salle, Wilson answered with a 3-pointer. But the Rams' Willeen Capehart sank a jumper with five seconds left to send her team into the break with a 33-32 advantage.

Bay View then stormed out in the second half, firing up four of their nine 3-pointers (two by Cannon, two by Jessica Battista and another by Wilson) in the first seven minutes during a 21-7 run that put the Bengals on top, 53-40.

But the battle was far from over. Monica Bharoocha powered up for two, sending La Salle off on a 17-5 run. Gaudet scored off her own steal and converted a three-point play to get the Rams within one, 58-57, at 2:38.

Wilson and Bharoocha traded baskets to make it 60-59 with 15 seconds left.

Flanked by Rams players, Bay View then inbounded the ball under La Salle's basket, where Dillon tipped away a pass, which Jones quickly retrieved and took to the hoop for the game-winner.

"We're aggressive enough where we feel we can get a really good trap to make them turn it over, and that's just what happened," Reddy said. "(Dillon) tipped it. It landed in Torey's hands, and Torey made the toughest shot in the game of basketball — that 3-footer from the side, which is, like, impossible to make."

Wilson, Bay View's Player of the Game, paced the Bengals with 23 points, while Cannon and Battista had 15 and 14 points, respectively.

"We definitely matched their intensity," said Bay View coach Doug Haynes. "We came out and played aggressive defense, whether we were in a 2-3 zone, whether we were in a man. I thought offensively we attacked the basket a little bit better, and we started knocking down the 3-point shots. We were down by one at the half, and the way we came out in the second half, I thought we were going to be in good shape."

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