



## Slam Dunk To The Beach Day One, Session One Recap

It took **11** years, but Slam Dunk to the Beach is back. The annual high school basketball showcase returned to Cape Henlopen High School on Saturday for the first time since 2003. In Day One's opening session Lake Clifton (MD) beat Caesar Rodney (DE), 60-43, Christ The King (NY) topped Gonzaga College High School (DC) 63-51, in a battle of nationally ranked foes and St. Georges (DE) defeated Cape Henlopen (DE) 49-41.

Lake Clifton provided quite the opening salvo for the event. **Herman Harried's** team scored the game's first nine points and held Caesar Rodney without a field goal in the opening quarter on the way to an **18-4** edge. That lead would extend to as large as **19** before the Riders finally found their footing. C.R. put together a **13-3** run of their own, which culminated on **Jameir Sudler's** corner-three, bringing Caesar Rodney back to within single digits **1:15** before intermission.

But Lake Clifton would get the final basket of the half and then carried that momentum over to the third quarter, which it opened on an **11-4** spurt.

"When we play defense like that it just makes everything that much easier," Harried said. "The way we defended the first few minutes of that opening quarter is exactly what we're looking for. We didn't allow them to do what they wanted to do, which helped us create some turnovers and got us out to a big lead, which was huge. We then got back to that approach after the half."

Caesar Rodney would get as close as **10** late in the third period, thanks in large part to a pair of tough finishes by reserve **Kashwon Davis**. But Davis would pick up his fourth foul on the ensuing possession, which propelled the Lakers on a **14-2** stretch, ending the game's competitive phase.

"I was proud of the way we kept fighting and were able to scrap our way back into it there," said C.R. head coach **Freeman Williams**. "We were able to get out in transition a little bit and forced some turnovers. It really all starts with key stops. We got some, and that led to some confidence and some momentum. It's just hard when you build the kind of deficit we did, because you just expend so much energy trying to get back into the game."

**Garry Jefferson** played a magnificent game for Lake Clifton, needing only **10** shots to lead all scorers with **21** points. He also earned nine trips to the foul line and plenty of praise from his head coach.

"I have been challenging Gary Jefferson a lot to have games like he did today," Harried said. "He flat out brought it. And you know what? I'll be challenging him as soon as we get back on the bus to do it again. I'm demanding and he certainly responded like we were hoping he would today."

Caesar Rodney got **13** points from **Jaquan Hooks** as well as **12** points and eight boards from **Tristan Patterson**.

The opener served as a pretty good appetizer for a main course that featured the Nos. 5 and 23 teams in the nation. Christ The King pulled off the upset thanks in large part to its defense, which held Gonzaga to 37 percent shooting from the floor and only 17 percent from beyond the arc.

"I thought it was defending the way we were supposed to," Arbitello said. "We were missing shots, and they were out in transition in the first half and we were not getting back on defense. I told them that in the second half we need to pick up the intensity and play the way we've been playing the whole season, and they responded and we were able to get the win."

It was actually Gonzaga's defense that was stifling early. The Eagles held Christ The King to only three field goals in the opening period on the way to a 16-8 advantage after one quarter. That lead was trimmed to 28-25 at the half thanks in large part to **Rawle Alkins**, who had nine points, six rebounds and three blocks before the break.

His presence only intensified in the second half. The 35th-ranked junior in the country, according to ESPN.com, finished the day with 18 points and 18 rebounds. His dominance on the glass turned Gonzaga into a one-and-done offense and his three second-half steals helped get Christ The King out in transition.

"I'm used to it by now," Arbitello said. "Eighteen points, 18 rebounds, you know, that's what makes him tremendous. He can do everything, and that's the difference between him and the other elite players in the country. He can just do so much more. He's not just a scorer, he's a facilitator, he's a rebounder, he's a cheerleader on the bench. You see him up cheering. He's a really, really good kid to coach, and this is what I've come to expect from him."

Meanwhile, Gonzaga's best player endured a tough shooting day. **Bryant Crawford**, the Wake Forest commit and 16th-ranked point guard in the class of 2015 according to ESPN.com, missed 11 of his 14 shots from the field, and was held to just eight points for the game.

"It's not just one guy, [Crawford's] not the only one, it's a group," said Gonzaga head coach **Steve Turner**. "We're a team, it's not just about one guy staying on script, we need five guys staying on script and tonight, there wasn't five guys playing on the same script, and that's why we lost."

Christ The King did not do everything right. The Royals won despite committing 26 turnovers. Arbitello, who also appeared in Slam Dunk to the Beach as a player in 1994, was imploring his team to remain calm, providing a perspective that aided his cause.

"I try to explain to these guys that it's just a high school basketball game and I truly believe that," Arbitello said. "Nobody is going to die, we've got to stay together. I don't get crazy, and I feel like if the coach isn't going to go crazy then [the players] aren't going to go crazy and we can all be together. The worst possible outcome is a loss, it's not the worst thing that is ever going to happen to anyone, so I think they take that attitude, and I think that's why they remain as poised as they do."

A dominant second half was the story of the opening session's finale. Despite taking a 24-16 deficit into intermission, St. Georges won going away by holding Cape Henlopen to just four third-quarter points.

"They jumped us in the second half," said Cape Henlopen head coach Stephen Re. "We played a really strong opening half, but we said they were going to really come at us in the third quarter. Unfortunately, our young team just didn't handle it the way we would've wanted to."

St. Georges got a game-high 20 points from **Kyson Rawls**. His four steals were a big part of the 23 turnovers the Seahawks forced for the game. Those takeaways led directly to 21 points and were the difference in the contest.

"Our defense in the second half is what won us that game," said St. Georges head coach **Rod Griffin**. "In the first half I thought we were a little timid, and I didn't think we played our game. In the second half we just played with passion, which led to turnovers and those led to some easy baskets in transition. When we get those easy buckets off of defense it makes us an awful dangerous team."

Slam Dunk to the Beach continues on Saturday night, as the second session will feature three premiere matchups. Gill St. Bernard's (NJ) and Ss. Neumann-Goretti will get the evening started at 6 p.m. Then Midwestern power Sunrise Christian (KS) squares off with Mount St. Joseph (MD) at 7:30 p.m., followed by a First State showdown as Sanford and Salesianum do battle in the nightcap at 9 p.m.

#### **THEY SAID IT:**

##### **Caesar Rodney Head Coach Freeman Williams**

"Coming in, we tried to explain to our players the prestige of this tournament. This event meant a lot to a lot of people, whether it be the community or the players who participated in it. So that's definitely one of the things we talked to them about, how proud and excited we are to be a part of this. We are very appreciative to be the team they picked to restart this great tradition."

"The importance of getting off to a good start cannot be underestimated. I was proud of the way we kept fighting and were able to scrap our way back into it. We were able to get out into transition a little bit and forced some turnovers. It really all starts with key stops. We got some of those which led to some confidence and some momentum. It's just hard when you build the kind of deficit we did, because you just expend so much energy trying to get back into the game."

##### **Lake Clifton Head Coach Herman Harried**

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I'm excited [Slam Dunk to the Beach] is back. At one time it was one of the best events nationally, and I know with the group of people that's running it now, it'll get it back there. Plus, I think once more people realize it's back again, everybody will want to attend. Yeah, it's going to be back in no time.

##### **Lake Clifton Senior Guard Gary Jefferson**

"We just executed really well tonight. We took what coach wanted to accomplish to heart and we followed the game plan exactly how he wanted."

"It all starts with defense. We dug in and played really hard on that end. We can play better, but overall we kept talking about how important it was to play hard and get stops, which we did."

"It was a great atmosphere today. Everybody was into the game. I liked it and I know my teammates liked it too. I'm glad we were a part of [Slam Dunk to the Beach]."

#### **Christ The King Head Coach Joe Arbitello**

"It was great. I played here [at Slam Dunk to the Beach] in '94, actually, as a player. The people are great, it's a well run event. They do a really, really good job. The atmosphere is much better than a lot of the tournaments that we go to, and the amount of people was really good."

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"When you're playing in the playoffs back home, you're going to have to play to win and you have to be able to play the next night, so we have to learn to wash this one away and get ready for the next game."

"I think we shot too many threes, personally, but missing free throws, missing layups, didn't help. Overall, it was not handling adversity. A lot of calls were called against us, and I thought our kids have to learn to grow up and handle those types of situations and not allow it to get underneath our skin."

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"We want to thank the Delaware Sports Commission for selecting us to represent the state on a national stage. We can say many, many things about it, but thank you is probably the most appropriate. We're still very young, we only have one senior and we are hoping the best is still ahead of us."

#### **Cape Henlopen Head Coach Steve Re**

"They jumped us in the second half. We played a really strong opening half, but we said they were going to really come at us in the third quarter. Unfortunately our young team just didn't handle it the way we would've wanted to."

"We've gotten great buzz with [Slam Dunk to the Beach] coming back here. People are excited about it and so am I. It was one of the big reasons that I pushed so hard a couple years ago to come here. The kids didn't really know what this thing would be all about. They're too young, and I purposefully didn't tell them. So we came into practice yesterday and the gym's all set up and the decals are on the floor and their eyes got wide. I told them, 'yeah this is a pretty big deal.' This will be a great experience for them."