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FLAG FOOTBALL

## 200-plus teams play in Wildwood sand

JACOB ERLBAUM  
For The Press

WILDWOOD — If you talked to players, coaches and organizers at the Battle on the Beach flag football tournament on the Morey’s Pier beach Saturday, one thing became clear: There’s an opportunity for everyone to participate.

Boys and girls ages 5 to 17 and adults participated in a tournament filled with more than 200 teams from seven states, including Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania, New York and Connecticut.

Locally, teams from Pleasantville, Egg Harbor Township, Mays Landing, Ocean City and Cape May participated.

The tournament fields several age divisions for both boys and girls and will wrap up with playoff rounds Sunday.

Zakiyah Davis, 15, of Jersey City, started playing flag football just last year and has aspirations to play beyond high school, with the sport rising steadily in popularity for female athletes.

“I think it’s a good opportunity because

a lot of colleges are adding it. People are getting scholarships, and I actually want a scholarship to play in college,” Davis said. “I’m looking to get better. I just, I like playing. I do.”

Among those helping to pave the way for girls flag football is Sean McLaughlin, 41, of Deptford, who started coaching it about seven years ago, he said. McLaughlin is coaching in the event for the first time this weekend.

“To see it grow so fast and get so big is incredible. And, you know, coming to the Olympics in you know, (20)28, is gonna be, it’s gonna be awesome to see, and it’ll give these girls, these young girls, something to kind of look up to and, you know, strive to get to that Olympic level,” McLaughlin said.

Wildwood serves as a perfect location, giving players and their families so much to do beyond just football, said Battle on the Beach vice president John Patella.



MATTHEW STRABUK, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Dominic Fortson, 11, looks for a first down for Team Renegade, based in Mays Landing, during a game against the Shoreline Strikers.

Please see **FOOTBALL**, Page A2

56TH ANNUAL BESCHEN-CALLAHAN MEMORIAL LIFEGUARD RACES

## 2 OUT OF 3 AIN’T BAD!



MATTHEW STRABUK, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Becca Cubbler emerges from the ocean on her way to winning the swim race during the Beschén-Callahan Memorial Lifeguard Races in North Wildwood on Friday night. Cubbler earned two of the Avalon Beach Patrol’s three victories to help secure the overall team championship.

## Cubbler earns 2 of Avalon’s 3 wins to lead her team to overall title

PATRICK MULRANEN  
Staff Writer

NORTH WILDWOOD — The Avalon Beach Patrol won three races and placed second in two others Friday at the 56th annual Beschén-Callahan Memorial Lifeguard Races.

Becca Cubbler accounted for two of Avalon’s wins.

She finished first in the women’s swim and women’s can run to help propel Avalon to the team championship at the 22nd Avenue beach.

Avalon, which had finished second in team scoring behind two-time defending champion Sea Isle City the last two summers, won the title with 25 points. Host North Wildwood won three events and placed second with 23 points. Wildwood Crest was third (17).

“It’s exciting. It’s always fun to win,” Avalon Beach Patrol Chief Matt Wolf said. “I honestly didn’t know we won until the awards.”

At the Cape May County Championships on Monday, Avalon lost the team title to Wildwood Crest by one point. Avalon is the defending South Jersey champion.

“There have been some close ones so far,” Wolf said. “Honestly, we are focused on those South Jersey events (the doubles row, swim and singles row).”

Avalon’s Dave Giuliani and Gary Nagle won the doubles row. Dolan Grisbaum and Ryan Finnegan placed second for Avalon in the men’s swim and the singles row, respectively.

“I know Dolan and Ryan weren’t really happy. We have some work to do. But for tonight, we are excited. I think Becca Cubbler was phenomenal. Her doubling up, that’s what did it for us. She deserves a big piece of this.”

Cubbler won the women’s swim in 10 minutes, 34 seconds. Sea Isle’s Mary Kate Leonard placed

second (10:34), Stone Harbor’s Reece Hetzer third (12:02). Cubbler also won the women’s swim at the Cape May County Championships.

“It’s a great start to the summer,” Cubbler said. “I am hoping we can continue that throughout the rest of the season and onto South Jerseys.”

The ocean was much more calm Friday as opposed to earlier in the week when the currents and waves were strong. However, the swimmers swam against the current, which “wasn’t super fun,” Cubbler said.

“But that’s all right,” she said. “... It wasn’t that bad.

Cubbler won the women’s can run, which is basically a solo and longer version of the surf dash relay. Stone Harbor’s Kiera Liesinger placed second, North Wildwood’s Casey Morgan third.

Please see **AVALON**, Page A2

## Del. Bay could get new name

WAYNE PARRY  
Staff Writer

TRENTON — A New Jersey lawmaker is trying to bring Trump geography to the state, attempting to rename the Delaware Bay the “Bay of New Jersey.”

State Sen. Michael Testa, R-Cape May, Cumberland, Atlantic, recently introduced a bill directing New Jersey to change the name of the body of water on all official state documents, signs and laws, and to ask federal officials to recognize the name change.

Testa is a supporter of President Donald Trump, who insisted earlier this year that the Gulf of Mexico be renamed the “Gulf Of America.”

“They’ve had it long enough,” Testa said. “I think it should be the Bay of New Jersey.

“It’s a little bit tongue-in-cheek,” he said. “I got the idea obviously from President Trump with the Gulf of America instead of the Gulf of Mexico.

“But one of the things I really wanted to highlight is our bayshore communities,” Testa said. “We have this beautiful bayshore community that extends from Cape May County all the way up through Cumberland County and all the way to Salem County, and I don’t believe that they are highlighted enough in the culture that is there.”



Testa

Besides, Testa says: New Jersey has twice as much shoreline along the bay as Delaware.

“We have 52 miles of shoreline on the Delaware Bay, and Delaware only has 28,” he said.

Testa said he realizes the name change, if approved, would only apply in New Jersey. And its chances in a heavily Democrat-controlled state Legislature are remote.

“It would be changed only on our maps,” he said. “Obviously we can’t force other people to do so because it would only be a New Jersey law.”

But it would require changes to a vast number of laws that make reference to Delaware Bay.

“Whenever any reference is made in any law, rule, regulation, contract, or document to Delaware Bay, the same shall mean and refer to the Bay of New Jersey,” the bill’s text states.

The bay has been named after Delaware since 1610, having been named after Thomas West, the third baron de la Warr, who governed the Virginia colony.

Delaware Gov. Matt Meyer’s office did not respond to requests for comment Wednesday.

But the proposal did not go over big in Delaware last week when TV station WBOC questioned people on Slaughter Beach.

“I don’t even want New Jersey to be there, let alone rename the whole Delaware Bay after it,” resident Becky Hart said.

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