

## **Ramapo finds a way to foil Wayne Valley**

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WAYNE – Ramapo coach Jeanne Browne was so pumped she couldn't keep her shoes on.

With her team on the verge of stealing the momentum from Wayne Valley in the second foil round, Browne kicked off her heels, paced alongside the strip and cheered loudly in an attempt to will her team to victory. And it worked.

The Green Raiders edged out the Indians, 15-12, in a see-saw battle that featured two of the strongest girls fencing programs in the league.

"I'm a very emotional person," said Browne. "The adrenaline was just running through me, it was just amazing. I can't stop smiling, I'm just so excited."

Ramapo (2-0) came in on high from its ninth-place finish in Sunday's Santelli tournament at Voorhees High School. But even after almost nine hours of tournament fencing, the Green Raiders knew they'd be in for a dogfight.

"You've got two very talented teams on the strip," said Browne. "And you've got solid coaches here. Wayne Valley was definitely the team to beat this year. We worked very hard to get ready for this meet and we came in psyched and ready to win. We did so well [on Sunday] and then to cap it off with a win at Wayne Valley, I couldn't be any more proud of my girls."

Ramapo's Sara Leung jumped out to a quick 3-0 lead on Jessica Russo in the first saber bout, but Russo stormed back to tie it before putting it away at 5-4. From that moment on, every point registered by one team was matched by the other. Even after Wayne Valley's saber squad swept Ramapo in the second round to take a 7-5 lead, the Green Raiders' foil squad responded with a sweep of its own. Their foil squad -- which finished 8-1 -- was led by Jennifer Schiavo and squad captain Colleen Steel, both of whom went 3-0.

"She's phenomenal," Browne said of Steel. "She's one of my key leaders. She's definitely someone that I look to to motivate the girls. It's amazing how calm and how cool she is on the strip. All three of her bouts were key. My foil squad went above and beyond the call in our meet [Monday] and [Sunday]."

Indians coach Chris Awad said the foil bouts made the difference.

"If you lose seven bouts in a weapon, you're not winning anything," he said. "But kudos to them. To sweep a weapon, that's a great advantage."

The loss, Wayne Valley's second in a row, puts the team at 3-2. But on the bright side for the Indians, Jen Kostialik (saber), Caitlin Vassoler (epee) and Russo all went 3-0.

"I can stomach a loss like this," Awad added. "They fenced well and overall, we fenced well."