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Peddie, Lawrenceville field hockey tie, share Prep 'A' title

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By **Anthony Coleman/The Times**

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HIGHTSTOWN — As the players lined up and shook hands after the game, Gabby Palumbo had to reach across her body and display good sportsmanship with her left hand.

In the closing minutes of double overtime in the NJISAA Prep 'A' Tournament championship game, the senior back on the Peddie School field hockey team took two shots to the right hand. Obviously in pain (and still so during the postgame interview), Palumbo made two spectacular plays yesterday which help salvage the 1-1 tie with Lawrenceville.

"No, I was not coming out," Palumbo said. "I would not come out. Unless they threw me off the field because I was bleeding, I would not come off the field."

Play No. 1 stopped Lawrenceville from scoring the game-winner. Goalie Danielle Rette came out to challenge a shot from the top of the circle, just to her left. After hitting sticks, the ball ended up on the right side of the cage and behind her with her down on her side. Rette was at the mercy of her defense. Palumbo went down on all fours and stopped the shot and got the ball out.

"I just knew I had to get the ball out," Palumbo said. "They had one girl coming down.

She kicked it and missed it, and the ball ... I have no idea what was going through my head. I just had to get the ball out and not let that girl shoot into an open net."

Play No. 2 was unusual. Rette came well out of the circle to clear a harmless ball with the Lawrenceville offense charging. Rette's kick apparently gave the ball rotation, and it spun backwards and behind her. Palumbo just happened to be trailing the play.

"Thank God I kept running," Palumbo said. "Usually in a game when she is playing the ball, I wouldn't run behind her like that. But because she came out so far, I had to go back. I was the only one back, and I saw the ball behind her. I was like, 'How the heck did that happen?'"

Nikki Rivera scored for Lawrenceville, which captured its first state title since 2007, with Eliza Becker and Emily Hu assisting with 22 minutes, 21 seconds remaining. Peddie, now a three-time state champion, tied the game on Maddie Copeland's tally at 10:28.

MaryRose Croddick-Molyneaux and Morgan Crowe assisted.

"We won it, but we didn't lose," Palumbo said. "I am happy. They are a good team to share it with. They deserve it too. I would rather much have won it three straight years in a row (outright), but we didn't lose."