

## New England Showdown in DII Quarters

Written by Jackie Finlan  
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Pool D is ready to name its representative to the Women's DII College national final four, as round-one victors Norwich and Radcliffe prepare to face off in their quarterfinal today.

The two New England teams are quite familiar with each other, having played twice last fall. On both occasions, the Cadets walked away with wins - at the NERFU and NRU championships - but they certainly weren't easy ones (23-14, 29-12). But Norwich is still the favorite heading into this contest, especially after it dismantled Mary Washington 55-5 in yesterday's Round of 16 game. Two things stuck out in Norwich's victory: one, the 55 points didn't start rolling in until the 24-minute mark; and two, freshmen accounted for 40 of those points.

"We dominated possession early, giving Mary Washington little opportunity to attack," Norwich coach Austin Hall said. "For 24 minutes Norwich pounded away at the Eagles, having one try called back, but relentless defense kept the score level. Then the flood gates opened."

Freshman center Rose Bernheim, leading try scorer in fall, opened the scoring with two quick tries. Bernheim made it a hat trick in the second half. Junior flanker Hannah Bushey scored from a quick tap in the 32nd minute, and junior center Katie Hathaway ended the half with a dive-over try. Freshman wing Jackie Derocher slotted three of four conversions for the 26-0 lead at the break.

With a comfortable lead, Norwich opened up play in the second half, focusing less on possession and more on the counter-attack. Derocher opened the scoring five minutes in, after a turnover ball worked wide quickly. Hall tried flanker Meaghan Weppner at inside center, and the switch worked, as the sophomore trotted in for a try. At 23 minutes in, freshman wing Joya Clark finished off Norwich's try of the day, a score that saw eight different players advance the ball downfield.

Two minutes later, Derocher got her second try after beating her opposite and racing 50 meters untouched to touch down, and Bernheim closed the day with her third try, 55-5.

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"I can't remember seeing such an exciting match with a 50 point spread," Hall said. "Mary Washington never looked out of the game. They forced us to work for every try and we put together some good stuff against them."

Radcliffe, although the underdog, should be taken seriously, especially considering that the team upset UW La Crosse, the Midwest's #1 team, 22-0 in yesterday's Round of 16. Led by Shellonda Anderson, Evan Hoese, Emily Yorke and Lenica Morales, Radcliffe's defense was impenetrable. Anderson and Hoese were particularly punishing, on both sides of the ball.

Radcliffe's scrums proved a very effective platform for the team, and Shelby Lin's try helped the Massachusetts team to a 10-0 halftime lead. Unfazed by the Wisconsin team's size, the forwards battled out a very physical game. Anderson was a battering ram and accounted for Radcliffe's two second-half tries.

Radcliffe certainly played the more demanding match yesterday, and in this stifling Florida heat, the quality of fresh legs will make a huge difference. In the teams' prior meetings, Radcliffe has always seen Norwich in the first round, when it wasn't hampered by the aches of a recent game. The Crimson is looking for another upset here, but the odds are against them. Whoever wins will face the winner of Western Washington v George Washington in the semifinals.

"I think Radcliffe is one of the most explosive teams we've played in recent years, with the capability of scoring from anywhere on the field," Hall commended. "In this heat, look for Sunday's match to be a true work-rate battle. The last team still running should win."