

## WCR Wins Pac Coast Championship

Written by Jackie Finlan  
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It's been years in the making, but now Women's Cougar Rugby can join the very short list of teams that can say: Stanford isn't invincible. Unless you're Penn State, which has split the last six DI college titles with the Cardinal, it seems that Stanford competes in an elevated tier of play, and is everyone's rival on the West Coast. But now WCR can officially consider itself a peer of the California powerhouse, having defeated Stanford 24-7 yesterday for the Pacific Coast Championship.



"It was two really good teams going at each other," WCR coach Tom Waqa said. "It was one of those games you'd expect at the end of the [national] tournament. Stanford has never been a bad side, but we came out to play. We contested every play as if it was our last. Full credit goes to the girls for responding to the adjustments needed from yesterday [against UC Davis]. The team gave it their all; there were no individual efforts."

Heading into the final against Stanford, WCR knew it could not make the mistakes it made against UC Davis. UCD surprised the Cougars at the beginning of the game by scoring first, and a lack of consistency in retaining possession resulted in a jarring game. UC Davis had the edge in the forwards, while WCR had the edge in the backs, and a lot of pressure was put on its speedy backline to score points when spurts of momentum presented themselves.

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Saturday was a different story. Ten minutes in, Chanel Arts barreled over the try line. Kristi Jackson further stressed the home team with another try shortly afterward. The scoreboard took a break for awhile, before Rebekah Siebach put another five-pointer on the board. Star Bollinger slotted two extras for the 19-0 halftime lead.

"Historically, we've been in the lead at halftime against Stanford, and it isn't until the final five to 10 minutes that we lose the game," Waqa remembered last year's 19-12 loss at the Pacific Coast tournament. "I challenged the girls to prevent that from happening this time. Forget about the Sweet 16s for now - this is the game we want to win heading into the national tournament."

Stanford started to battle back in the second half, as expected, and put its seven points on the board with a well earned converted try. But the Cougars answered immediately and lock Kayla Ellingson extended WCR's lead to 24-7 with her second try of the weekend.

There was still enough time on the clock for the Cardinal to mount a comeback, but WCR's defense wouldn't let up.

"Our forwards really came through for us and defended really well," Waqa said. "Our fringe defense was great, and Stanford scored only one try - and that says a lot. We wanted the game so bad."

With that win, WCR will head to Blaine, MN, as the Pacific Coast top seed and play Southern California's #2 seed, UCLA. Stanford will travel to Buffalo, NY, and take on Northeast #3 seed Dartmouth.

UC Davis will also be heading to the national tournament, having defeated Chico State in the third place match. UCD will see Virginia in Bowling Green, Ohio.