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One thing is for sure: The Women's DII College National Championship was rife with surprise. Whether it was the defending national champion failing to show, or (several) lower-ranked team (s) pulling off an upset, the last two days have been exciting.

For Stonehill College, the only drama the Massachusetts team was celebrating its second trip ever to the DII Final Four. Stonehill defeated UNC Charlotte 37-7.

The first half it was any woman's game. Stonehill only had a 10-0 lead on tries from seniors Ashley George and Deborah Caruso.

"We did not play well in the first half," Stonehill coach Derek Jenesky said. "We were pretty good between the 22s, but for some reason when we got close to their goal line, we would play individually and not as a team, leading to multiple knock-ons and turnovers."

UNC Charlotte, which advanced to the quarterfinals after Washington State failed to travel to Florida for the national tournament, had funneled all of its energy into its lone game of the weekend. But Stonehill wasn't finished either, and needed to showcase its brand of rugby in its final 40 minutes of the match.

"Second half we made some adjustments, and they really started playing more as a team," Jenesky said. "We stopped attacking wide and played down the middle. We stopped making mistakes and played for each other."

And that's when the tries started rolling in. Seniors Brit Roy, Laura Fischer, George and freshman Shannon Etherson all crossed for five-pointers, while Fisher slotted a conversion. UNC Charlotte converted a try in the middle of the second stanza to make it 22-7 at one point, but the North Carolina team couldn't break through the tough Stonehill defense for more of a comeback on the scoreboard.

"It was a tougher game than the final score shows," UNC Charlotte coach Allie Pickett said. "While we played an excellent game technically, their experience won the game. Stonehill is very quick in both hands and ball recovery.

"It was a great learning experience for our team, which has only existed for two years. We will take what we've learned and hope to return next year better prepared."

Stonehill certainly had the edge of experience over its opponent, sporting some players who have played in two previous national championships, including 2009 when the team advanced to the final against Shippensburg (which was eliminated today by dark horse Notre Dame 23-15).

"Our seniors are playing great rugby right now," Jenesky concluded. "They're carrying us on their back."

Stonehill College now advances to the final four in Pittsburgh and will play Notre Dame for a berth to the final.