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Radcliffe's 22-7 victory over Norwich during the Women's DII College Championship quarterfinals is a reminder that anything can happen in the playoffs, especially when a national title is within reach. Radcliffe advanced the round of 8 after toppling Midwest #1 seed UW La Crosse 22-0, while the Cadets ran up a 55-5 win over Mary Washington (MARFU #3) on Saturday. History favored Norwich, which defeated Radcliffe twice during New England and Northeast championships last fall, but Radcliffe used that underdog mentality to produce another upset in Florida.

"We were really pleased with this game," Radcliffe forwards captain Janelle Lambert said. "We went into this game knowing that we could win and just had to carry out the game plan. We knew this game was all about defense, particularly near the breakdown, so we put a lot of effort into that and it paid off."

Fullback Alexandra Brown's boot did a good job clearing pressure and returning her squad into Norwich's territory. She continually tried the Cadets' back three, and did well to chase down her kicks and make the tackle. After a couple of lineouts and drives into Norwich's 22 meter, a very physical game kept the team there, and the hard-nosed flyhalf, Evan Hoese, finally cracked the scoreboard with a try to take the lead, 5-0.

Norwich did well to capitalize on a series of lineouts inside Radcliffe's 22 meter, and the Vermont team took its lone lead with the final first-half try, 7-5. It was an important score for both teams and would be the turning point for one of them.

It was the turning point for Radcliffe. The Massachusetts team, led by Hoese, Brown, Lambert around the contact point did well to shut down the middle attack, while backs Megan Verlage, Amy Uber and Lenica Morales-Valenzuela were able to rein in the potent Norwich speedsters.

Radcliffe kept the ball in Norwich's half, thanks to the hard work Verlage and Marlee Morris, and eventually set up Hoese's second try of the day. Two more scores from Brown and wing Morales-Valenzuela, who had some nice breakaway runs and support lines, both dotted down, while Norwich struggled to finish on its scoring opportunities.

And that was all she wrote. Radcliffe is heading to the national final four for the first time since 1998, when the team won the DI championship. Radcliffe will play Western Washington, which defeated George Washington 20-12 in today's quarterfinal, at the semifinals in two weeks time.