The final eight teams are set for the men's DII college playoffs, as the first round completed Saturday.

Sierra (#6) defeated Cal State Long Beach 44-13 and #23 Pepperdine handled #9 Rice 30-20. Those two will face off tomorrow in one of the brackets held in San Diego. In the other, #1 UW Whitewater looked as dominant as expected, 46-7 over #24 Cal State Fullerton, while #7 Cal Maritime escaped a determined #4 St. Louis University team 31-10.

"The game was much more competitive than the score makes it look," said Cal Maritime Head Coach Steven Hiatt. "They are a tough team, feisty, and we needed to play hard all the way."

Cal Maritime concentrated on gang tackling, worrying that they couldn't corral SLU one-on-one. The plan worked, and they still had enough manpower out of the breakdowns to mount attacks. Wing Kevin Hawke was the chief recipient, with three tries, while captain and openside flanker Rufus Walker was a defensive machine.

In Kissimmee, Fla., #5 South Florida slammed #18 Bentley 44-13, while Brian Sirkia's excellent goalkicking – five penalty goals accounted for his team's first 15 points – #2 Middlebury put away #8 St. Joseph's 34-5.

Middlebury and South Florida met each other in the national quarterfinals in 2009. Middlebury won that game 32-17 and went on to win the national title.

East Carolina's (#15) outstanding backline looked the business against #19 William Paterson 56-7, while #3 Salisbury defeated a tenacious #20 Michigan State 27-19.

"They had two of the biggest centers I have ever seen," said Salisbury coach Bill Creese. "Our two centers were probably giving up 100 pounds to each of them."

Salisbury flyhalf Nick Kuhl sustained an injury in the first tackle of the game. Kuhl toughed it out for the rest of the game, but he couldn't run with the ball and his kicking game suffered, also. Salisbury adjusted their game plan and hung on to win.

So it's:
Sierra v. Pepperdine
UW- Whitewater v. Cal Maritime
Salisbury v. East Carolina
Middlebury v. South Florida