Written by Jackie Finlan
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It took Navy some time to find its rhythm in the rain, but the Midshipmen's third quarter put Delaware away. (Barbara Hendricks photo)

The weather frustrated both sides tonight, but Navy extended its two-point half

time lead against Delaware into a 32-17 win and 6-1 record in the College Premier Division.

It was a slow start for the Midshipmen, who in the first 30 seconds, turned the ball over and set up a 60-meter breakaway try for Delaware's first lead. While Navy was the stronger side - especially in the set pieces and on defense - Delaware did well to pressure Navy when the team erred and were able to stay within three points (17-14) at the break.

"They quick-tapped every chance they got, for every mistake we made - whether offsides, not releasing in the tackle - they were right there," Navy coach Mike Flanagan said. "In the first half,

we needed to keep the ball in hand more. We were forcing the issue a bit, throwing ball we shouldn't have thrown, but we adjusted well in the second half."

Navy played more patiently in the second half and waited for the right opportunity to spin it out to the backs. Inside center JJ Stewart put away a brilliant try, making his own space and steaming 60 meters through the heart of the defense.

"We weren't afraid to release it and have fun with it," Flanagan said. "When the situation was right, the backs handled themselves extremely well."

In the third quarter, Navy's forwards stepped up its pressure and set up scoring opportunities for try scorers flanker Sean Siefring, who accounted for two on the day, Thanassi Varvoutis and Chase Burge. Delaware tried to play away from the forwards and played a more horizontal game, but Navy's defense did well to crush the attack around the corner.

Flanagan credited captains Blake Taylor and Sean Rohrs for leading the team with their strong performances, controlling the ball in hand and leading a strong defense.

Happy with the win, Navy is already looking ahead to its regular-season ender against Army.

"Are you kidding," Flanagan responded when asked if they boys were pumped for next weekend. "We're going to enjoy this win, but tomorrow morning, it's: Go Navy, beat Army."

Delaware will finish up its season against Penn State next weekend.