

'Cuse Downs Cincinnati in DIII Round of 16

Written by Jackie Finlan
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Manassas, VA - In the Men's DIII Championship, #8 seed Syracuse knocked off top seed Cincinnati Kelts 37-16, but the win wasn't the blowout that the score suggests, at least not at the half.

The first 40 minutes was marked by penalties and kept the score tight at 15-9 to 'Cuse.

"We had a lot of little mistakes, not rolling away from the tackle, diving over the ball a bit," Syracuse player/coach Stephen Heywood said. "And we weren't getting possession in first phase initially, making basic errors which handed Cincinnati the ball."

The turning point occurred with 10 minutes left in the first half, when Syracuse scored a try and opened their eyes to the direction of the game.

"We realized that we were getting sucked in and playing at the opposition's pace and at their level," Heywood explained. "We worked it out around the park, started to play our game instead of being ruled by the occasion. At the half, we talked about basic stuff and away we went, nice and easy."

The superb work of the halfbacks pushed Syracuse onward. Syracuse's scrumhalf made some great decisions, kicking ahead when on the back foot and enabling some go-forward ball when the fringe went unprotected.

"Our flyhalf, Jeff Devennie, had a great game," Heywood commended as well. "He broke the line on a couple of occasions and took advantage of an up-quick defense and set up the overlap. That's when we were able to run the tries in. It was great decision-making on his part."

Syracuse's fitness took centerstage as the game progressed, and the team was much more proactive than Cincinnati with ball in hand. The team created a lot more opportunity, which resulted in another 17 points, while the defense held Cincinnati to a try.

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Syracuse now moves on to play Virginia, which outlasted Bragg 25-22 today, in tomorrow's quarterfinals.