St. Thomas are exactly where you'd expect – leading the boys' Texas High School Conference with a perfect record. The back-to-back state champs are looking for their fifth consecutive win against Strake Jesuit tomorrow.

Thus far, St. Thomas have outscored their opponents 175-30, an intimidating point differential in a conference that was reorganized in hopes of leveling the playing field.

"We had built up a league that was for high schools only," St. Thomas assistant coach Brett Mills said. "But there was talk of competition issues, so this year, club teams like Woodlands, Katy and Alliance were brought back in. We disagreed with the decision, but now in Texas rugby, we have a premier division – which is like the Super League of top teams – and two tiers below that."

The Eagles were tested early in the season, as they played club state champion Woodlands in BBVA Stadium following day one of the Houston 7s. After that 32-17 victory, St. Thomas took out Katy 60-0. Their closest match came against Austin Westlake on Feb. 16.

"It wasn't as close as it sounds," Mills said of the 21-13 victory. "We gave up a try with 40 seconds left, but they hadn't been in our end very much. We handled that game well, and Westlake was really upset losing to us. They'll be tough when we see them again."

St. Thomas has really started to hit their stride as round one of league play ends. Opponents have experienced what they've come to expect from the Eagles: defensively, they're

aggressive, blitz-happy, and solid around the breakdown; offensively, they move the ball around the park, hitting up with the forwards then sending it to the backs to find mismatches. But this year's squad has allowed the offense to push some boundaries.

"We probably have one of the biggest packs in the US," Mills said. "And they're very agile, too. We used to have forwards who would come off the edge or the inside shoulder of the 10, and they'd get stopped. Now we have these huge guys making big runs, and instead of relying on the next phase, the tries are coming out of the forwards."

In particular, keep an eye on 6'5" Parker White, and locks Alex Snyder and Reed Hogan. The former two have signed with DI college football programs next year – White with Miami (Ohio), Snyder with Southeast Missouri State – but are making the most of what will likely be their last foray with rugby for awhile.

Also bringing a wealth of experience is two-time, all-state flyhalf Keegan Mills, coach Mills' son. He captains the team and attended USA age grade camps alongside White. The senior has also accepted an athletic scholarship, but he'll be playing rugby at Lindenwood University next season.

But St. Thomas' players are indulging in their post-high school dreams just yet. Tomorrow's game against Strake Jesuit still means something, and the squad's particularly eager to reintroduce their star centers, who were committed to the basketball team until this week.

"I always preach to the kids to respect their opponents. Strake is a big rivalry, so we'll be focused," Mills said. "Jesuit kids are always rock hard, always there to play."

If all goes to plan, the Eagles will exit round one of league play with an unblemished record. The season will culminate at the state championship on April 27, as St. Thomas will be unable to attend the National Invitational Tournament since it conflicts with graduation.

Also playing this weekend are Plano and Katy, and Alliance and Woodlands, all of whom will play on Saturday.