The Chicago Lions won the Firehouse 7s Midwest Qualifier Saturday, to vault themselves into the heart of the Midwest 7s Series standings.

The Lions needed some comeback heroics in pool play against a tough YoungBloodz side, and also in the final, which they won 21-10 over the Chicago Griffins.

Head Coach Aaron Manheimer praised veteran Eddie Bluemel for his leadership and discipline, but also noted some outstanding work from college players stepping on for the Lions for the first time this summer, including Davenport All American JP Eloff, Arizona All American Peter Tiberio, and Cal sophomore Brad Harrington.

“The competition was good and we had to work for it in a couple of games,” said Manheimer. The Lions were also hurt by Scott Peterson going down with a possible concussion, and other players suffering some minor injuries as well. “We are coming together, but while we have a lot of good young players, we haven’t got everyone playing the system yet. It’s not like it was in Las Vegas, where everyone was working together.”

The coach was referring to Chicago’s successful Club Championship Series campaign, which ended with a CCS title in Vegas in February. Looking ahead, Manheimer said he wants better fitness, but acknowledges this first outing for the Lions was a good one. They got players on the

field (as the Lions fielded two squads), and earned crucial Midwest Series points.

Meanwhile the Griffins, featuring brothers Andrew and Roland Suniula, were very strong and did well to reach the final.

In the semis, the Lions defeated 1823 of Columbus, Ohio, 27-7, while the Griffins beat Milwaukee 26-7. Then 1823 beat Milwaukee 21-14 for third.

The Firehouse 7s at the Chicago Blaze fields in Lamont, Ill., wasn't the only Midwest Qualifier tournament held this weekend. In Pittsburgh the Steel City 7s saw the Pittsburgh Rugby Club defeat the Pittsburgh Harlequins in the final. Pitt City was paced by an outstanding performance from Tim Bagatti.

So with five of the eight Midwest qualifier tournaments done, the Midwest standings look (unofficially) like this:

Place	Team	Pts
1.	1823	

16

2.

Milwaukee

7

2.

YoungBloodz

7

4.

Chicago Griffins

6

4.

Chicago Lions

6

4.

Pittsburgh

6

7.

Cincinnati

4

7.

Pittsburgh Harlequins

4

9.

Louisville

2

9.

Metropolis

2

11.

Bremer County

1

11.

Indianapolis

1