Written by Jackie Finlan
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Lisa Henneman can stick a tackle. (Marvin Dangerfield)

Sadie Anderson lauched the attack. (Marvin Dangerfield)

Philadelphia - Even though the upset of the day came at Penn State's expense, no one can deny that the team is a high-class outfit. It's the type of squad with the type of talent that appears like it could score at will, and with a couple of exceptions, that's how it worked out for PSU during day one at the women's USA 7s Rugby Collegiate Championship. The day ended with a 2-1 record, and while the majority of the field would be ecstatic with such a record, no one likes to lose, especially a former DI national champion.

Penn State is blessed with four players who've played for the USA 7s team in the last two years, but they also have a lot of young talent, some of which never played in a 7s match until this a.m.

"I'm glad that we got play against another team," PSU scrumhalf Sadie Anderson said after the 34-0 Temple win, "and I really think we're coming together. Our defense was one thing we've been working on, and that was a good, little taste of what we're doing well and where we can improve."

Virginia proved a more difficult opponent in the second game, but tries from Henneman, Anderson and Lauren Barber helped secure a 2-0 record heading into the final round.

There's no denying that former/current Eagle 7s players Anderson, team captain Lisa

Henneman and Deven Owsiany, all recurring try-scorers, are the most influential players on the field. Henneman was a demon on defense, and made several long breaks down the sideline, hitting her support just before getting tagged herself; Anderson has such great field vision, a step that freezes defenders and solid boot; and Owsiany is a work horse, tough to take down and get around.

But the team leaders have upped their role on the team. Like Army, Brown and Virginia, Penn State has had only a couple of weeks to transition from 15s to 7s. But at timees, they've found themselves without their head coach to aid in the switch. Pete Steinberg, PSU head coach and Women's National Team coach, was called away to San Diego last weekend for the Women's National All Star Championship, so the players held a scrimmaging and conditioning session on their own.

"The people who have played 7s before are really sharing all the knowledge we have and trying to get everyone up to the same level," Anderson said. "Lisa, Deven and I were giving feedback during a lot of the session, but we kinda like it that way. We're always willing to listen and give advice, so it works for us."

But even the best of the best are susceptible to error, and that in part is what helped Brown to a surprise 12-10 win during the final round of play. Brown was on point and scored two quick tries to frustrate Penn State. Anderson was sent off after a non-wrapping tackle flung Shakeela Faulkner into touch, and PSU proved that any team is vulnerable.

That said, Penn State has too many good things going for them, and should still progress deep into Sunday's playoffs.