Written by Alex Goff Friday, 16 December 2011 20:24





Cal was true to the hype and won their two pool games to easily waltz into Saturday's quarterfinals of the 2011 Women's College 7s Championships Friday.

Led by the try-scoring Marical Quirindongo-Crespo, the Bears disposed of UNC-Charlotte 24-0 and Santa Clara 17-5. (UNC-Charlotte discovered just before leaving for the tournament that some of their players were not carrying enough of a course load to qualify as full-time students; they are playing, but their games all ended in forfeits.)

Cal Women Look Solid on Day One

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"I am really happy with how the players played today," said Cal Head Coach Ellen Owens, who has brought Brandon Sparks in to coach the team in 7s. "Not only for Cal, but also for women's rugby. I think it was very important to have a women's bracket at this event and the standard of play was good."

Owens said the team has been working hard on skills all fall and she urged her players to just use those skills.

"We talk about the tools we have to use," added Sparks, who helped coach the Berkeley 7s team over the summer. "When we look at a game we talk about what tools we have in our toolbox to counter them."

Sparks said he knew the level of athletes he had to work with at Cal, as many had spent the summer playing 7s with the Berkeley club.

"I was really looking forward to working with them," he said. "We came together and said we wanted to play exciting, interesting rugby. We wanted people to watch us play and think 'I'd like to be on that team.' We also wanted to play with a certain confidence, a certain swagger."

Added to that, Sparks said, Owens has done a superb job making the players students of the game.

"With a lot of teams it's tough to tell them how to do something and avoid having to tell them again and again; these players pick it up the first time," he said.

Cal will face off with Boston College in the quarterfinals Saturday at 9:40am local time at Texas A&M's soccer stadium.