

Arkansas State had the most impressive day one of any team at Nationals. The Red Wolves never trailed and didn't concede their first try until the sixth-minute of the third game, which they were winning 17-0 over Central Washington at that point.

Until they ran up against ASU, the Wildcats were having a pretty good Friday, too. They got off to a slow start against Arkansas, and if it hadn't been for a held up try, would have trailed the Razorbacks early on. But Central woke up mid-game and emerged with a 32-0 win. Then Central, one of the favorites coming into the tournament, pounded Air Force 28-12.

Arkansas State overcame a slow start, which every team in the tournament seemingly had, to blank Air Force and Arkansas by a combined score of 77-0. The third pool game, against CWU, was supposed to be closer.

"Central Washington, they're very well coached and they're a great bunch of guys, totally classy team," said Arkansas State coach Matt Huckaby, "and we were very excited to play a very good competitor, and a classy competitor at that, so the guys were up for this game."

Arkansas State Class of Pool A

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The Red Wolves stepped on the gas from the opening whistle, and center Paul Benade forced the ball into Central's end of the field. ASU flyhalf Zac Mizell made the first big break when he dummied a pass between his legs, duping the aggressive CWU defense, and raced 40-plus meters for a try in the game's first minute.

Arkansas State kept accelerating, banking tries from Dean Gericke, who tied Saint Mary's' Kingsley McGowan for the most on day one with five, and James Cobble. Arkansas State was winning contact, and maybe more importantly, they were starving 7s All American Tim Stanfill of touches.

"That guy's a stud. My lord, and they're a good, tough team outside of him," said Huckaby. "We had a little bit more possession than they did, and I think that was probably the difference of the game. With 14 minutes, possession's everything. Luckily, this game we had it."

When Stanfill did get possession, his opposite, Danie Swanepoel, was doing a good job of roping the talented wing in.

"I watched him at the All American camp, and that's why they kind of put him against me, because I've been playing 7s since I was nine years old in South Africa, so they kind of just put me on him today. It was a very good battle," said Swanepoel of Stanfill.

"When you play against fast guys like that – I don't want to be boasting or anything like that, but I've got a little bit of gas – I just let him pace me, and then just chase him down at the angle and tackle him at his legs. That's how I've been doing it since I played rugby."

Arkansas scored 14 second-half points to Air Force's 10 first-half points to win Pool A's de facto third-place game 14-10.