San Diego State beat Cal Poly 36-12 Sunday in the final of California 7s in San Luis Obispo, Calif. to win an automatic bid to the 7 National Championships Nov. 30-Dec. 1 in College Station, Texas.

The Aztecs went 3-0 on Sunday, following a 3-0 start on Saturday, beating UCSB in the quarterfinals and Long Beach in the semifinals. Cal Poly sneaked into the championship match with a two-point win over St. Mary's in the other semifinal, which was a thriller.

Cal Poly scored to go up 26-19 near the death and tried to grubber the restart out of bounds to end the game, but a St. Mary's player emerged from the resulting mess of bodies with the ball and raced for a try to make it 26-24. He was forced to touch it down in the corner, though, and the difficult conversion was missed.

The final was close throughout the first half and into intermission, but Cal Poly picked up two yellow cards in the second half. San Diego State scored two tries during the first sin bin and another during the second.

“Cal Poly came out firing in that first half and it was really level,” said SDSU captain Mike Shea. “That second half came around and we really stepped up our defense and our rucks, and they got in a little trouble with the ref. We really capitalized on the man advantage.

“It was a real level game. They played solid. They have a really explosive attack when they get those offloads going, but that second half we just focused on swarming on defense. I think everybody across the board really stepped up.”

"We had some solid performances out there this weekend, particularly against our two quality opponents late in the day. Center Max Tacket and forward Bobby McNeal made some damaging runs through the middle of the park, and center/forward Jake Gersh showed great strength and speed to score two tries in the final," said Cal Poly coach Dave Burnett.

"It's a shame we couldn't finish the job today in the final. SDSU are a quality side, and I suspect they will upset some big names in Texas later this month. The Poly players and I are confident our performances over the past month have given the at-large selectors enough to ensure our inclusion."

Wing Noah Maypole led the Aztecs in tries in San Luis Obispo. “He played outstanding the whole weekend,” said Shea. “I think he had like close to 14 or 15 tries but a lot of that’s just good teamwork, working from sideline to sideline and him just rounding people on the end.”

Shea also lauded the play of freshman Steve Tomason. “He played great. He’s really stepped up, fitting into the 7s squad very well.”

But SDSU is a senior-led bunch, with numerous fifth-year seniors, like Jamie Kelm, and a couple of four-year seniors, like Shea, looking to finish their college 7s careers with a bang.

“We’ve got a lot of guys who’ve put in a lot of work and effort here at SDSU. We’d like to check them out as National Champions,” said Shea. “That’s always been the goal. We went last year and we laid an egg, so it kind of left a bitter taste in our mouths and we’re looking to fix that this year.”

Day Two Scores

Cup Play-ins: Santa Clara 26-24 Cal Poly B
Cup Play-ins: UCSB 19-5 SBCC
9th/10th: SBCC 29-19 Cal Poly B
Quarters: Long Beach 29-5 USD
Quarters: Cal Poly 15-10 UC Davis
Quarters: St. Mary's 36-0 Santa Clara
Quarters: SDSU 38-7 UCSB
Cons. Semis: UC Davis 19-14 Santa Clara
Cons. Semis: USD 17-0 UCSB
Semis: Cal Poly 26-24 St. Mary's
Semis: SDSU 29-0 Long Beach
7th/8th: Santa Clara 22-17 UCSB
5th/6th: USD 19-17 UC Davis
3rd/4th: St. Mary's 38-7 Long Beach
Championship: SDSU 36-12 Cal Poly

Day One Scores

St. Mary's 47-5 Cal Poly B
Cal Poly 12-17 SBCC
SDSU 43-0 Santa Clara
Long Beach 14-29 USD
St. Mary's 29-12 UC Davis
Cal Poly 45-5 UCSB
SDSU 36-7 SBCC
Cal Poly B 0-36 Santa Clara
UC Davis 19-10 UCSB
USD 5-22 St. Mary's
Long Beach 34-0 Cal Poly B
Cal Poly 31-0 Santa Clara
SDSU 41-10 UCSB
USD 24-10 SBCC
Long Beach 21-19 UC Davis