Arkansas State topped Pool A Saturday, going 3-0 with wins over Cal, Middlebury and NC State. The Red Wolves walloped NC State 31-5 and Middlebury 38-0 in the first two rounds. Cal started 2-0, too, with wins over The Wolfpack and Panthers to set up a monstrous match in the final round.

Cal opened the final pool match with suffocating possession. The Golden Bears worked the ball from side to side and kept it from Arkansas State for most of the first two minutes. The first couple of times the Red Wolves did get the ball, they turned it over in short order.

Cal capitalized on the possession when Seamus Kelly made a break in Arkansas State's defense and fed Andrew Battaglia for the game's first try. Russell Webb converted.

ASU finally put together a few passes on their next possession, swinging the ball to Dean Gericke on the perimeter. He saw a small gap, hit it and outran Cal's defense to put the Red Wolves on the board. The conversion attempt was unsuccessful, leaving Cal up three, which is how the half would end.

Arkansas State continued to have trouble handling the ball in the second half, but when Cal kicked away possession after a break was pinned in the corner, the Red Wolves strung together enough passes to see Dylan Carrion go weak off of a run, untouched, for the go-ahead try. The conversion attempt was again missed.

"That's when everybody's vulnerable, and that's something that we saw from the film we watched of them from earlier today, thought we might be able to turn them over a bit," said Arkansas State coach Alex Houser. "Just wanted to go for it there when they were fractured a little bit."

Cal, thanks in part to a series of ASU penalties, spent the rest of the game on the offensive inside ASU's half, but stingy defense prevented the Bears from making a break. With time nearly gone and an overload to their right, the Bears tried to move the ball wide, but Zac Mizell shot up quick enough to stop it in the midfield, forcing a knock on. The Red Wolves won the scrum and cleared the ball into touch to end the game.

The win put Arkansas State straight into the Cup Quarterfinals, and wound up eliminating Cal from Cup contention. The Bears finished pool play 2-1 with a plus-40 point differential. Texas A&M and Kutztown, also 2-1, had better point differentials and took the final two quarterfinal spots.

Arkansas State did not play flawlessly on offense and, frankly, struggled to string phases and many passes together. But, their defense was superb and ended up being the difference.

"We made some uncharacteristic mistakes," said Houser. "That's what pressure does to you. We've been training on our defense a lot, and the guys really did well with it."