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Rugby Rout! RWU Women Claim Second National Championship

Hawks best Sacred Heart to earn national championship for small college women’s rugby

December 1, 2014  |  Athletics Staff

CHERRY HILL, N.J. – For the second time in school history, the Roger Williams University Women’s Rugby team won the national championship for small college women’s rugby at the national championship tournament.

Last weekend’s tournament featured the best teams from four regions of the country, Minnesota-Moorhead from the West, Sacred Heart from the Northeast, Mount St. Mary’s from the Mid-Atlantic, and Roger Williams from New England.

After crushing all opponents in the regular season and regional playoffs, the Hawks faced a much stiffer challenge from Moorhead in the semifinal on Saturday. Freshman center Jacqui Wyka scored first for RWU, but Moorhead came right back and led 7-5. Sophomore #8 Sadia Crosby then bulled her way into the endzone and the Hawks led once again.

But again Moorhead marched down the field, stealing ball after ball from RWU and punching in for another try. During the first half Hawks captain and senior Alley Dykes was sin-binned for 10 minutes for a high tackle, but despite being a player short RWU was able to keep Moorhead from taking control of the game.
The teams continued to battle back and forth in the second half when sophomore wing Micheli Lynn scored in the corner, giving the Hawks a 17-12 lead. But again Moorhead scored and the game was tied at 17. The match appeared lost when #8 Crosby went to the sin-bin for repeated offides, but RWU kept tackling, junior center Evynne Gartner continued pounding for yards up the middle, and Moorhead did not score.

With just over a minute remaining in the game, Crosby returned to the game, and from the back of the scrum the big #8 stormed over the try line with the winning score. Time expired and the Hawks won 22-17. The win put the Hawks into the national championship game on Sunday against the other semifinal winner, Sacred Heart.

The game started well for RWU, as some excellent passing led to a Crosby try just a minute into the match. But Sacred Heart showed why they made the national finals with some fine passing of their own. Together with some hard rucking and speedy back play, the red and black garnered two scores in the half. Yet two more tries from Crosby made it 17-10 at the half in favor of Roger Williams.

In the second half the Hawks reduced their penalties and intensified their rucking, and soon they took over the contest. Senior flyhalf Cass Friedman continually put RWU in great field position with deep kicks. After a surge forward towards the try line by junior flanker Gabby Reardon ended inches from a score, Friedman took a pass from captain scrumhalf Abbey Scro and dove in for the try. A Gartner conversion made the score 24-10. Senior hooker Shavon Ennis stole the ball from Sacred Heart, passed to her left, and a pass from sophomore prop Sabrina Brown to sophomore winger Nataly Maloney led to Maloney’s long run down the sideline for a score, making it 31-10 Hawks with the conversion.

Yet RWU wasn’t done. Once again working the ball to the wing, freshman center Jacqui Wyka passed to sophomore wing Morgan Quaglieroli, who streaked down the field before touching the ball down between the uprights. Flanker Alley Dykes dove over from five yards out on a penalty play to complete the scoring, and the Hawks became national champions by winning 45-10.

In addition to the national championship trophy, statuettes were handed out to honor those judged best at their positions, with five Hawks were chosen: #8 Sadia Crosby, captain and flanker Alley Dykes, junior center Evynne Gartner, sophomore prop Claudia Giustino, and sophomore wing Morgan Quaglieroli. Crosby was also chosen MVP of the entire tournament. Captain and scrumhalf Abbey Scro won the Heart & Soul award for Roger Williams.