Friday teams that qualified for the men's DI college playoffs many months ago will attempt to pick up where they left off to make it to final four glory.

Run down somewhat as perhaps the weakest bracket in the DI Round of 16, Harvard v. Northeastern and Buffalo v. Southern Connecticut might well be a grouping with something to prove.

Northeastern comes into the playoffs having played just a couple of warmup matches (Rhode Island, Middlebury, Bentley) in preparation for this clash. It is perhaps enough, as they Maddogs were able to hone their tough, aggressive style.

They take on a Harvard side that has played a lot more.

Coach David Gonzales took the squad on a tour of Berlin and Prague, which took the players out of their comfort zone and, said the coach, helped enormously in building match fitness.

"The friendly matches have been useful for tweaking our systems and have allowed us to put some new concepts to the test," said Gonzales. "We have an experienced and balanced squad who are prepared mentally and physically for the challenge and we are looking forward to playing the MadDogs."

Harvard was significant among all the Ivy League teams, in that they didn't have a go-to scorer. Harvard finished 3rd in the League with a 5-2 record. Dartmouth didn't move on to the playoffs because they are a College Premier program, and Harvard bypassed Columbia (also 5-2 that season) to win the play-ins.

Most teams had a top try-scorer with at least five (and sometimes many more) tries. Not Harvard. Jonathan Cummins, Jeff Overall and Jaime Zabel de Ayala all lead the team with three, while four others notched two, showcasing Harvard's team style of play. It should stand them in good stead this weekend.

In the other match in the Buffalo bracket, hosts UB play Southern Connecticut. SoConn beat UConn and lost to Middlebury in their preparation. They are a tough-minded squad that will have their hands full against Buffalo.

Buffalo will probably boast the smalled pack of forwards in the bracket, and that could be a factor on a relatively narrow field. Still they like to move the ball around, and with the field at Kunz stadium being turf, that could be an advantage for them.

Heavy rains in recent days forced the games to be moved from the UB varsity soccer fields and practice football fields to Kunz Stadium. Rain was so heavy that posts could not be installed and bleachers could not be moved there. The University of Buffalo administration offered the use of the stadium, and, with no reasonable alternative available, the host commission forwarded the offer to USA Rugby. Kunz is short – 91 meters – with the posts at the back of the end zones.

The field is narrow (less than 55 meters) but within regulations.

Several organizations that had scheduled time at Kunz voluntarily gave up that time for the playoffs. The result will be that the games (Friday and Sunday for the men) will go off. How the size of the field will affect the teams – and whether anyone will run through in-goal and not touch down – remains to be seen. Everyone, however, will have the same challenges.