Written by Jackie Finlan
Saturday, 30 April 2011 17:33

Pittsburgh, PA - It's been quite the dream season for the Notre Dame women. During their first competitive season, the team's poised for to compete for the DII College National Championship tomorrow against Radcliffe, an opportunity that arose after its 22-10 win over Stonehill College this afternoon.

But although the team is thrilled to be in the final, the players were less than thrilled with today's game.

"It's not that we didn't play good rugby, but we didn't execute our game plan the way we would have liked," Notre Dame president Christina Konkey said. "We set high standards for ourselves, and we fell short on attitude at times. Usually we're in very good support of each other, but we caught ourselves slowing down or not hitting as hard. I'm not sure why there was a mental block, but there was one."

Missteps aside, Konkey felt the two teams were well matched, and it was that desire to play in tomorrow's championship that made the difference. "I was most proud of our opening try," Konkey said. "We went out there and forced Stonehill to play our game and by our rules. We just marched down the field."

The backline worked extremely hard to create scoring opportunities, and outside center Ashley Okonta made sure that effort wasn't wasted, running in three tries on the day. Kathleen Stanley also converted her team's work into a five-pointer, and Megan Scheitlin added a conversion.

"We didn't clearly dominate Stonehill in any aspect of the game," Konkey said. "During later points in the game, we got sloppy and lost some of that urgency that we usually have. It all boils down to mindset."

Notre Dame also struggled with their penalty count, and it's a chronic issue for the young team. "I heard the referee make some calls today that I've never heard of," Konkey laughed. "We've always had issues with penalties because we're so eager, and want to move forward, and we have a hard time restraining ourselves. We just need some more discipline."

Konkey was happy with the performance overall, but it's clear that the team demands a high level of play from each other. And as tomorrow's looms, no one's feeling the bruises or the niggling injuries; they're all focused and looking to win a championship.

"We're moving past our performance today and getting ready for tomorrow," Konkey said. "We feel so blessed to be here. We're going to do it for our teammates first, and our school second."