

New York Aims for 5th

Written by Jackie Finlan
Friday, 09 November 2012 22:17

It was a good win for New York, which outlasted the D.C. Furies 22-17 for a bid to the Women's Premier League bowl championship against San Diego. Both New York and D.C. went 1-5 during the season, so the drive to bank that second win of the fall was palpable.



“First and foremost, one of the good things I saw today was the determination and pure will to win,” New York coach Wil Snape said. “We gave away a lot of key possession but our defense accommodated for that. We kept pushing hard on defense and never stopped working. We’ve had a tough, long season so it was really important that we showed good character today.”

The defense was what helped produce New York’s first score, when a stolen lineout put the ball into flyhalf Mary McCarthy’s hands. D.C.’s defense was up quickly but unevenly, leaving a seam for McCarthy to attack. She kicked ahead when defenders swarmed, and quick support kept the ball in New York’s possession. Wing Angela Yue cleaned up a missed pass inside D.C.’s 22 meter and she dotted down in the corner, 5-0.

It took D.C. until the 30-minute mark, but the Furies matched New York’s score when scrumhalf Eli White converted a long series on the goal line into points, 5-5.

“We talked hard at halftime, and that made a big difference,” Snape said. “It’s been a theme season: We haven’t been looking after the ball as well as we should have. When we do have the ball, we’ve played some great rugby. The tries we’ve scored have been great, but we’ve been giving the ball away too cheaply. It’s persistent. Fortunately we have a good amount of decision-makers who can turn the game around for us.”

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But that turn-around wasn't realized immediately. A couple of minutes into the second half, and D.C. drove in a five-meter scrum, the five points attributed to No. 8 Laura Miller. Emily Miller's conversion made it 12-5 D.C. New York went on the offensive after that opening try, and again, much of that success rested on the team's defensive tenacity. In the middle of it all was flanker Adria Orr.

"Every time I thought, 'We've got to make that tackle,' she was there," Snape said. "She tackled everyone and everything. She deserves special praise."

Minutes after Miller's score, inside center Kaitlin Ruggiero – whom Snape amply praised for knowing when to send the ball wide or run a straight line – broke through the defense to get deep into D.C. territory. Fullback Kath Ryan sent a looping pass to wing Nicole Humphrey, who dove over for the try, 12-10.

Ryan scored a very important try about five minutes later, an opportunity that evolved after a stolen scrum, to go up 15-12. It was a lead that was never relinquished going forward.

New York continued to control possession, which resulted in scrumhalf Hannah Rosenthal's try. McCarthy's conversion gave New York the 22-12 lead.

"We're dangerous when we have the ball," Snape said. "We just need to use it better when we have it. There was space out wide all day today, and we could have made more use of it."

D.C.'s Katie Bell added a try in the 73rd minute after a weakside break off the scrum, but time ran out before that momentum could culminate, 22-17.

New York will face San Diego in Sunday's fifth place match.