Written by Jackie Finlan
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San Diego - Only two of the eight teams at the Women's All Star Championship were going to exit the weekend undefeated, and the Mid-Atlantic was happy that it could call itself one of them. Building on its 33-22 win over the West on Friday, the Sharks defeated the South in a tough 10-0 win for the Tier II crown and earned promotion into Tier I competition next years.

In his first all-star event since being promoted to the MARFU head coach position this spring, Bob Weir began his three-year term with two impressive wins, generated from a very young squad.

"That was the biggest surprise," Weir said. "We were dividing up for the rookie skits, and there were only five veterans and the rest were rookies. We're young as all get-out, and it's so satisfying as a coach to see these new players execute at this level."

MARFU knew it was in for a battle around the breakdown against South, which the Sharks had played and beat at DC Ruggerfest in late April. MARFU was able to continually tackle behind the gainline and frustrate the South offense.

"The South was really strong, but we shut the door on them and held the line," Weir said. "It was all about effort, defense and passion."

MARFU scored on either side of the break, the first coming from a wheeled scrum that built into a controlled, spinning attack down the weakside. The South couldn't contain the forward waterfall and hooker Rachel Primo dotted down the corner try.

The South kicked it up a notch in the second half, really pressuring the MARFU defense for the opening 10 minutes. Weir was very pleased that his players responded in turn, from 1 to 15.

"We stressed that everyone had to ruck, everyone had to catch-and-pass," Weir explained. "We wanted complete players."

The Sharks' final score came in the closing minutes of the match, as scrumhalf Eli White continually punished the South forwards for any mistake. She opened up enough space for fullback Meredith McAlister to get through the line and dot down the second try of the game, 10-0.

Weir was particularly impressed by No. 8 Laura Miller, who was scrum captain on Friday, and flyhalf Sam Pankey, both of whom made great decision on the field and led with powerful defense.

MARFU showed its great depth this weekend, especially considering the absence of notable NOVA players like 7s Eagles Lauren Hoeck, CJ Hildreth and Beth Black, but the performance was good enough to earn them a return to Tier I competition next year.