There have been some big games, featuring big-time programs, played in the high school/U19 realm the past week, and more are on the horizon.

Two notable teams, Denver East (CO) and Westerville (OH), went on tour last weekend. East traveled to Kansas City and played half a dozen matches over the course of two days, with their A-side emerging 1-1. On Saturday, they fell 29-5 to the Kansas City Jr. Blues, who have two losses on the season, but to ranked high school sides.

Impressive in the win for Kansas City was the forward pack, which supplied its backline with good possession most of the day. Their efforts were led by prop Eric Orscheln.

“He had a really good game. Had a try and four penalty kicks, so he played extremely well,” said Jr. Blues coach Eddie Cummings. “Basically, it was backs moving the ball. We had a couple tries taking it wide on them. Scrummies did a good job of pounding it, but it was more about moving the ball wide on Denver East.”

Sunday, East’s second and third sides saw action against St. Thomas Aquinas’s second and third sides, while the A-side pounded Shawnee Mission East 52-0.

On the right side of the map, the Westerville Worms made a trip to the greater New York City area, playing two A-side matches in one day. The first resulted in a massive 98-0 win over Fairfield Prep (CT).

“We had played them in Nationals in either 2000 or 2001, so I knew they had a good club,” said Worms coach John English. “They were a decent team, but that was probably the best we’ve played at any point this season.”

Westerville’s biggest win this season was to follow, as the Worms met and defeated defending high school national champs Xavier 37-22.

“They were outstanding,” said Xavier coach Joe Sweeney. “Maybe the biggest tight five we’ve ever played – big and very athletic. They are also better skilled than they were last year and play a good pattern that allows their big, athletic players to get into space. They have the size, athleticism and skills to challenge Highland and United. I haven’t seen anyone who could really challenge them in the past 2-3 years.”

English says his team is certainly better than it was last year, when it lost to Xavier in Columbus, Ohio during the regular season, but isn’t sure where it ranks amongst previous Westerville teams.

“We’ve had some pretty good teams in the past, but a different dynamic. In 2008, we were big all the way around. Our pack’s not the biggest, but we’ve got some backs that can run as well, and we’re just able to mix it up based on what’s going to work per game,” he said. “There are a couple different systems in that these guys can run. They haven’t perfected it yet, but we’re

working on it."

Big Games on tap this weekend:
Greenwich vs. Xavier
Why? Because this one is never boring. Last year Xavier won in a high-scoring affair, 47-31. Can Greenwich catch Xavier on a seemingly down year?

St. Thomas Aquinas vs. KC Jr. Blues
Why? Because they are the two best teams in the area, by a long ways. They've played twice this year and split the series, and no matter who wins the rubber match, both will be representing the Heart of America at the West playoffs; STA in the high school division, and the Jr. Blues in U19.

United vs. Highland
Why? If you don't know, what are you doing on this website? Really, are you lost?

Dallas Jesuit vs. Austin Westlake & Houston St. Thomas vs. Strake Jesuit
Why? Because three of these four teams are ranked, and it's the state semifinals. Winners play Sunday for the Texas HS state title.

Katy vs. Alliance & The Woodlands vs. Plano
Same as above (sans the rankings), but the U19 version.