

Schuylkill River Claims Richmond 7s Qualifier

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The Schuylkill River Exiles claimed their third title of the four Mid-Atlantic Rugby Football Union 7s qualifier tournaments at Richmond, Va. on Saturday. It was a long trip for the boys from Philadelphia, but the team ground out the day with only eight players en route to going 5-0 and outscoring their opponents 161-24.

In the final test before the MARFU Championship, only four teams competed. Due to the number of teams, Schuylkill River played all other teams in the qualifier bracket (Norfolk, Maryland Exiles and Kenya Exiles) and then was reseeded for the semifinals and finals. The day started off on the right foot for the Exiles, with a 50-0 win over the Kenyan Exiles. Winger Greg Ambrogi scored early and often, touching down five times and adding two conversions. In the second match, Schuylkill River faced their toughest match against Norfolk. Down 12-7, the Exiles threatened but were stopped just short of the try line, however were able to force a scrum from which Ambrogi scored again and captain Will Knipscher spilt the posts to gain the win, 14-12. The third match in pool play saw the Philly boys meet a familiar foe, Maryland Exiles, and were able to stay perfect in pool play, winning 31-7.

In the semifinals, Schuylkill River was too much again for the Kenyan Exiles, winning their rematch 40-0, paced by Knipscher's two tries. In the other semi, Maryland was able to avenge an earlier loss to Norfolk, setting up a rematch of the previous week's finals. After going down 5-0 early, Schuylkill River was able to clamp down and scored 26 unanswered points, led by Gavin Blower's two tries to win 26-5.

The Schuylkill River Exiles are the number one seed heading into the MARFU Championship next weekend. They have lost one match all season to Kutztown in the Wilmington Qualifier. Only the top two teams at the MARFU Championship advance to nationals, so the Exiles are focusing on forgetting past accomplishments and playing their top rugby this weekend in

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"The tournament went well," captain Pat Boyle told RUGBYMag. "Obviously we would have liked more teams to compete, but we can only play who enters, so in that sense, we did our job.

"We are happy to get the number one seed, but with the way MARFU decides its teams to go to nationals, it all comes down to the championship this weekend," he added. "We saw what happened to Old Puget Sound Beach this weekend. They played great all year but one bad day and they are not headed to nationals. We need to forget any results we had this summer and concentrate solely on that day."

Schuylkill River Point Scorers:

Tries: Ambrogi 9, Knipscher 4, Blower 4, Suellentrop 4, Bardwell 2

Conversions: Bardwell 10, Ambrogi 4, Blower 1, Burch 1, Knipscher 1, Suellentrop 1