

## Schuylkill Breaking Out in Mid-Atlantic

Written by Alex Goff  
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At the beginning of the summer 7s season, all was in question in the Mid-Atlantic.

With NOVA having scaled back their 7s efforts, no other club seemed prepared to step into the breach. Throughout the early going coaches and players said they thought the competition was wide open. But now it seems it's not anymore.

Schuylkill River has now won three of the four Mid-Atlantic qualifier tournaments, and goes into the Mid-Atlantic Championship this weekend far, far ahead of any of the other teams.

The surge of Schuylkill coincides with the arrival of Chris Ryan, former New York and Northeast women's 7s coach. Ryan, who worked with Julie McCoy with the USA women's 7s team, has somehow unified a group of players from different states.

"We have a good core of guys who have been playing together in some way – for Lehigh Valley and not for Schuylkill – and that helps," Ryan told RUGBYMag.com. "We only train once a week as a team, so the guys have to be committed. They've done a great job playing as a unit."

The team features players from the Philadelphia area and the Baltimore-DC region. Players meet in Newark, Del. Every Thursday night to train together. Other days the two groups train more locally.

It's a strange approach but it has worked. All the players have bought in, and Ryan in fact has 13 of his 14 players available for this weekend's territorial championships.

"We've been able to win tournaments just seven or eight players, but we have almost all of them

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available this time,” Ryan said. “But it’s not a foregone conclusion. We know Norfolk, with Fred Wintermantel and Ed Stockunas, are really strong, and the only time we met what we felt was a true Norfolk side the score was 14-12.”

In Schuylkill River’s favor.

Leading the way for Schuylkill are Greg Ambrogi, speedy Dan Wright, and sidestepping Josh Albowitz, but Ryan said success has to be an all-squad endeavor.

“It’s teamwork more than anything,” said Ryan. “Lots of teams have good athletes and fast runners, but if you need to play as a team.”