The Chicago Lions are Midwest 7s club champions after defeating YoungBloodz 26-14 in the final of the Midwest Championships.

The Lions won all their pool games but faced a stern challenge in the semis, beating a physical (and sometimes perhaps too physical) 1823 squad 14-5 to advance to the final.

YoungBloodz, meanwhile, won their pool and advanced to the final after defeating the Chicago Griffins.

In the final, Brad Harrington, Peter Tiberio, Eddie Bluemel and Rocco Mauer all scored tries to seal the victory for the Lions.

“I have to give a shout-out to Scott Peterson, who really put his body on the line today,” said Lions Head Coach Aaron Manheimer. “He made some huge tackles for us and handled himself when he was targeted by what I felt were some illegal tackles, as well.”

It was a ferociously hot day in Michiana, Ind., and humid as well, and that taxed all the players involved.

But the Lions handled it better than most, led by captain Bluemel, the hard running of Matt Degutes, and the finishing ability of Tiberio and Mauer. They had to battle in the semifinal, their closest match in the Midwest championships in several years. Tries from Degutes and JP Eloff saw them through.

YoungBloodz, for their part, did just enough to qualify for nationals, and might be forgiven for being relieved that they didn't win the final. The Midwest winners go into the Pool of Death at nationals, along with Utah Warriors, SFGG, and Glendale Raptors.

The #2 team enters Pool D with Schuylkill River, SoCal #2, and West #2.

CUP CHAMPIONSHIP:
Chicago Lions 26-14 YoungBloodz

3rd/4th 1823 33-10 Chicago Griffins

PLATE FINAL
Cincinnati Wolfhounds 24 -17 Milwaukee

Cup Semifinals
Chicago Lions 14-5 1823
YoungBloodz 19-12 Chicago Griffins

Pool Play
Chicago Lions 33-7 Chicago Griffins
1823 40-14 Cincinnati Wolfhounds
YoungBloodz 26 -5 Milwaukee
Chicago Lions 26-5 Cincinnati Wolfhounds
1823 26-19 Milwaukee
YoungBloodz 19 -5 Chicago Griffins
Chicago Lions 24-12 Milwaukee
Chicago Griffins 33-0 Cincinnati Wolfhounds
YoungBloodz 19 -7 1823