

## Belles Beat New York in NRU Final

Written by Jackie Finlan  
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The Boston Belles were the class of the Northeast women's Club 7s Championship today, defeating New York 22-0 in the final and conceding five points all day.



Kelly Seary and the Boston Belles are on their way to Nationals with a win over New York in the NRU C

Every player on the team is fit, smart, fiesty and relentless.

"Despite the heat, this is the best rugby we've played all season," Belles captain Emily Malkin said after the 100-degree day. "I'm so proud of how everyone stepped up. We've been working really hard on our defense, stuck to our patterns and only conceded one try all day. It was a great progression, beating New York in the final, and now we're heading to nationals."

The final was a true team effort, but Malkin pointed to playmaker Kelly Seary and Emilie Bydwell for their inspirational work.

"Bydwell was a big boost for us," Malkin said of the Eagle XV player. "She's just coming off of a USA 7s camp, and a broken hand, and she was a huge spark for us. We're happy to have her for nationals."

Once Bydwell was in the open field, she was off to the races. And if she was caught, she was nearly impossible to take down, and found ample support in speedster Ashley Clancy and Jess

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Peterson.

New York advanced through pool play relatively easily, although the Village Lions put a good fight in their 26-17 loss. They advanced to the final after its semifinal opponent, New York II, forfeited, but the Belles had earned a forfeit win earlier in the day, so the squads had both played three matches before the championship.

New York looked like it was about to put the first points of the final on the board when Erica Granger pulled her team out of their end with a breakaway. She was tracked down by Bydwell but New York maintained possession and eventually earned a penalty in the Belles' 22 meter. As the ball worked down the line from the tap, Seary picked off a soft pass to the wing and returned the ball 60+ meters for the try, 5-0.

The Belles put up another five pointer from a turnover ball that worked out to Bydwell, and Peterson made it 17-0 when she chip-kicked over the defense and gathered the bounce for the try.

In the second half, New York played excellent defense and kept the Belles in their end for much of the stanza. The Belles rallied for a final try, working the sidelines and putting Clancy into space for a sprint down the sideline.

It was a nice, convincing win for the Belles, who defeated New York on a closing-seconds try two weeks earlier at Midnight 7s.

"That last game was certainly in our heads," Malkin said of the Midnight 7s final. "That was a tough game and New York had us on our heels. We wanted to make a statement [at the NRU Championships] and knew that if we came out flat that New York would press us."

The Belles take a well deserved #1 Northeast seed to nationals, and it's unclear which team will

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take the second seed, as it's rumored that New York won't be flying to San Francisco, and third place team, the Village Lions, also aren't traveling.