

There were some superb team performances at Club 7s Nationals in San Francisco over the weekend, with teams like Schuylkill River, Youngbloodz, Marist and Middlesex making deeper runs than perhaps they were projected to.

Just like you saw some teams' names left out of the later cup rounds (Chicago, SFGG and Utah), you'll see some high-profile players' names left off the all-tournament team, because guys like Schuylkill's Greg Ambrogi and Dan Wright and Youngbloodz's Nick Johnson had fantastic tournaments.

Wright led all scorers with 39 points on five tries and seven conversions. When Ambrogi (7 tries on the weekend) went down with an injury in the first half of the semifinal against Utah, it was Wright who picked up his slack, dotting down what turned out to be the game winner.

Ambrogi was probably the player of the tournament. When Schuylkill River was put on its heels at the start of the semifinal against Utah, Ambrogi started the comeback with consecutive tries. When Utah's star player, Maka Unufe, threatened to pull Utah back even, Ambrogi delivered a crucial tackle that sidelined both he and Unufe the rest of the semifinal.

The Youngbloodz were led in scoring by Garrett Bender and the Augspurgen brothers, but whenever a big defensive play or a gashing run was needed, Nick Johnson supplied it. He scored a momentum-swinging try in the comeback against the Denver Barbarians on day one, and he setup the try that brought the Youngbloodz within a score late in the quarterfinal comeback against the Exiles.

The list below isn't of the most talented players who played at Nationals, or perhaps even the best players. It's of the guys who had the best performances when it counted.

Utah's Ben Nicholls embodies just that, as he scored six tries in the Warriors' quarterfinal and semifinal matches. It was his try under the posts that Jason Pye failed to convert to force overtime with Schuylkill River in the semifinals. Nicholls led all try-scorers with nine.

Starting 7

1. John Moonlight (Woodlands Exiles). Physically imposing on everyone.
2. Taylor Howden (Belmont Shore). 6 tries, some big hits and timely plays.
3. Danny Barrett (SFGG). Not as physically imposing as Moonlight, but close.
4. Shalom Suniula (Belmont Shore). Best player at the tournament, Belmont's engine.
5. JP Eloff (Chicago Lions). Better defense than you might expect, faster than you think.
6. Greg Ambrogi (Schuylkill River). Much faster than he looked, very hard worker on the field.
7. Maka Unufe (Utah Warriors). Most athletic, talented guy there. A danger every touch.

Reserves

Ben Nicholls (Utah Warriors). Leading try scorer with 9.

Dan Wright (Schuylkill River). Leading scorer with 39 points.

Alex Ross (Belmont Shore). Scored 8 tries. Race with Unufe would be fun to watch.

Justin Boyd (Belmont Shore). Bigger, stronger, faster than most. Very good defense.

Nick Johnson (Youngbloodz). Nonstop motor. He impressed everyone.

Honorable Mention

Garrett Bender (Youngbloodz)

Will Knipscher (Schuylkill River)

Phil Mack (Woodlands Exiles). Scored 32 points on the weekend.

Tim Barford (Atlanta Old White). Had five tries in four games, and might've had more.

Jared Collinson (Middlesex)

Malakai Vaka (Hawaii)

Mike Palefau (Utah Warriors). Had a good tournament, but not dominant like we're used to.

Andrea Aswega (SFGG)

Rocco Mauer (Chicago Lions)

Peter Tiberio (Chicago Lions). Two meters short of Chicago forcing overtime against Belmont.

Duncan Kelm (Belmont Shore)

Riaan Hamilton (Belmont Shore)

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