All of Notre Dame's scoring came in the final minute of play, a circumstance that was partially due to the Irish's persistence and partially due to Utah's complacency. But the reigning USA Sevens CRC champions banked those precious conversions and held onto the 21-17 win as time expired, booking its trip to tomorrow's Cup round.

Utah rallied to advance to the Cup round (Marvin Dangerfield)

There was a lot on the line during this final pool play match, as both teams had lost to Dartmouth and beat Boston College earlier in the day. The victor would be rewarded with an opportunity to play for the title.

Utah did a good job of taking advantage of its penalty opportunities and size advantage, and that's how several of the tries evolved. The first came from Zach Taylor, who followed Don Pati as he tapped through a penalty and dragged some defenders a few meters. The corner try was converted by Blake Miller, who hit three fabulous conversions during the game.

Utah had the edge one-on-one, both in size and speed, and the team made sure that contest was repeated as often as possible. Pati scored the second try off a penalty tap, taking on his defender and simply galloping through mid air to freeze his defender for the score. Then to launch the second half, Utah sent the kickoff deep, jumped on the bobbled reception, and Taylor ran in his second five-pointer of the day.

"We try to get the ball to our wings but we have pretty good speed all around," Taylor said. "If we see an opening, we take it."

Notre Dame was by no means overwhelmed, however. The team showcased some wily running lines and could ran off each other very well at full speed. But they could never quite finish its breakaways, due to quickly-closing defenders. With only a minute to go, the Irish realized it needed to get creative if it wanted to shake up Utah's defense.

Sean Mitchell sent a fabulous cross-kick pass toward the opposite sideline, and although Utah looked like it had the space covered, a couple of quick, tight passes saw Andy O'Connor into

the try zone. Alex Macomber got the next two tries rolling, setting up Bobby Manfreda after breaking weak of the breakdown, 21-12.

Shortly after the next kickoff, the final whistle blew, and Notre Dame had possession near midfield. Utah was just trying to get an opportunity to kick the ball to touch, but a couple of fortuitous penalties and a calm devotion to moving the ball succinctly allowed the Irish to record a final score and match Utah's try count, 21-17.

"We took our foot of the gas a little bit and that's all it takes," Taylor confessed. "It's something we'll take with us tomorrow – to never let up." It was a thrilling end, but Notre Dame will be kicking itself for not turning on the jets earlier in the match.

With the win, Utah heads into the Cup round with the #2 seed in pool B, finishing 2-1, while Notre Dame's 1-2 record relegates them to the Challenger bracket.