

LSU Win Over Notre Dame in Challenger Final

Written by
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Louisiana State may have had some bumps in the road, but they showcased some good sevens in the end, winning the Challenger Trophy at the USA 7s Collegiate Rugby Championships Sunday at PPL Park in Chester, Pa.



LSU takes the ball up against Notre Dame in the Challenger Final. (Photo by Steve Mitchell)

LSU was coached by a substitute coach. Original coach Jeff Reuther was called away to play for his club in the USA club finals, so former USA women 7s coach Julie McCoy stepped in, and LSU quickly took on McCoy's characteristic love of keeping the ball moving.

Against Notre Dame Sunday the Tigers played the better 7s and were more dangerous on the counter-attack, winning 24-0 to take what would normally be called the CRC Plate, but was the Challenger Trophy.

LSU got on the score sheet early when Notre Dame's Andy Mullen kicked downfield hoping to gain some territory. But Tigers' Allen Allongi fielded the ball and sped back upfield, finding a gap, slipping a tackle, and going the distance. Bobby Johns made the conversion for a 7-0 lead.

LSU almost scored again from a kick into in-goal, but Notre Dame's cover defense was there to touch the ball down. However, still in the Notre Dame end, LSU kept attacking and captain Adam Ducoing sold a dummy and scampered in for his team's second try and a 12-0 lead.

In the second half, Notre Dame seemed determined to make a physical mark on the game, while McCoy's LSU players were clearly told to keep the ball moving and test the Irish fitness. Some big early hits from Notre Dame looked impressive, but LSU kept the ball and the momentum, and a series of rucks at the Irish line resulted in a quick pickup and touchdown and a 19-0 lead.

LSU were riding high now and a turnover led to Mike Bordes going in from long range.

It was a clear and emphatic victory for an LSU team a little unlucky not to make the Cup round. The Tigers rebounded well to win three in a row on Sunday and take home some hardware.

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“It’s a great accomplishment,” McCoy said. “I know when I go in that locker room that the team is just going to be so proud of themselves because they bought into playing roles on the team instead of positions. They asked ‘what can I do for my team?’ Our team value allows the individuals to express themselves and we don’t just have the one or two stars. I hope the guys, fans and 7s enthusiasts enjoyed it because that’s the American way, all banding together.”

LSU 24

Tries: Allongi, Ducoing, Other, Bordes

Convs: Johns

Notre Dame 0