Texas A&M 7s Sweeps CRC Qualifier University of Texas
by Johnny Smith

Texas A&M University swept CRC 7s Qualifier University of Texas in 3 games tonight at College Station. The games were played under the lights at Penberthy Sports Complex in front of 600 very loud fans. The night kicked off with the A&M Developmental side taking it to UT 29-0 which was followed by a close Junior Varsity game that the Aggies prevailed in, 12-7.

The Aggies capped the night with a dominant performance against the CRC 7s Qualifier Longhorns, 26-5. The win also ensured the University Cup will stay in College Station for the 4th consecutive year.

“I am very proud of the guys” said Coach Craig Coates. “We are in the middle of a very difficult 15s conference schedule and only had 3 practices to prepare. We really were just looking to be competitive with UT in all three games.”

The Developmental game was played with younger players and the level was quite good. However, A&M had a bit too much speed and athleticism for UT. Vinnie Baratta lead the team with 2 tries as the team scored 5 total tries in route to a 29-0 win.

This game was followed by a gritty slugfest between the JV sides. It was a back and forth affair with lots of big hits and nifty passing. The Aggies were led by Aaron Durke who ran a terrific line at pace right up the middle to only give off a sterling one-handed offload to his teammate, who walked into the try zone. It proved to be the difference in the game as the Aggies won 12-7.

Coach Coates attributes most of the credit to 7s Guru David McPhail, “He came in and did one session but really provided us with a great foundation to be successful tonight.” The highlight of the night was built around McPhail’s focus, defense.

A&M spent the first 5 minutes of the game trying to play 15’s by crashing the ball into contact at every opportunity. This inevitably led to turnovers and tons of pressure being applied by UT inside the Aggies 22. However, the Aggies made impact tackle after impact tackle to turn away

the Longhorns time and time again.

Coach Coates thought it was a turning point, “It really made the difference in the game. I believe it frustrated Texas and gave us confidence. Immediately afterwards, we started playing a smart brand of 7s by moving the ball but being patient and waiting for the gaps to appear in the defense.” The rest of the way it was all A&M as Chris Parker, Brian Guillen, Luke Carter and Hunter Leland scored tries while Jonathan Barbee, Conor Betrand and Andres Diaz made tackle after tackle throughout the course of the game.

Captain Conor Bertrand couldn’t be happier with the squad, “It was very important to our seniors to make sure the University Cup stayed in College Station another year. We were up against it with little preparation but we were determined to show our worth at the 7s game”.

Texas A&M now moves back to the 15s game with a game on April 23 against Arkansas State in Jonesboro and will then close out their 1st CDP season with a home game against archrival LSU. However, A&M will be starting a full 7s program in the fall. “It is our intent to have a top flight 7s team in the very near future” said Ass. Coach Johnny Smith. “It is our stated goal to provide players with the opportunity to be Eagles and Olympians in 7’s and to compete at the highest collegiate level we can, whether that is for a USA Rugby Championship or a CRC Championship. This is just the beginning for Texas A&M 7s”

Try Scorers

Developmental
Baratta (2) Fruithandler (2) Norman (1)

Junior Varsity
Doyle, Yarborough

Varsity

Parker, Leland, Guillen, Carter