With reigning D2 champ Norwich now in division one, Washington State is the team to beat. They've already scored close to 200 points between their first two league games, while only allowing five. If you're wondering where their tradition rival, Western Washington, is on the rankings, they're rebuilding this year and dropped a 71-5 contest to WSU.

WSU may be the biggest contender for a DII title this year, but there are some new, young teams out there making an impression. Quinnipiac, for example, swept a tough Tri-State conference, which includes teams like Vassar, Rutgers and Marist. The varsity program, still in its infancy, defeated Eastern Illinois early in the season as well, and is one game away from taking home the conference title against Albany this weekend.

We're also keeping an eye on CSU Northridge. They've only been around for a couple of years and attended nationals in 2012. WSU put up 100+ points on them during the Sweet 16s, but they've already shown signs of vast improvement. Northridge defeated DI teams en route to the Scrum by the Sea title, and dropped a 22-17 contest to UC Santa Barbara last weekend.

Another surprise is Utah Valley University. The Rocky Mountain conference contested its championship last weekend and saw UVU defeat last year's West rep, Wyoming, 19-12 in the semis, and then Mesa State 45-7 in the final.

Appalachian State is also having a good season. During the last couple of years, the South has belonged to Lee University, but the two faced off at Rucktoberfest and saw ASU win by a point. Lee coach Dr. Michael Freake indicated that his team suffered some long-term injuries to influential players, and that will play a big role in the team's success this year.

In the former Mid-Atlantic region, Mary Washington has looked the strongest, defeating George Washington 38-5. Mary Washington is usually in the mix, but American University, which won the Potomac region, is a new face. They finished out their season with a 24-19 win over St. Mary's in the final. There's no definitive word on how the remaining MARFU teams will qualify

for nationals, seeing as all of the Eastern Pennsylvania teams have left for the Mason-Dixon conference and elsewhere.

Former EPRU leader Temple isn't eligible for nationals at all. USA Rugby informed Temple during the summer that they had to compete in DI, the Owls weren't able to comply on short notice, and so are competing in MARC with no possibility of advancement. Temple looked to be the strongest team in the conference this fall.

Former EPRU champion and national semifinalist Shippensburg is competing as an Independent, but only because they missed the application deadline to compete in MARC. They've been a handful of weaker DII team in the area and dropped matches to DI teams like West Chester (25-5) and Maryland (45-7). They lost their long-time coach Scott Stratton to Mount Saint Mary's, so we'll wait and see if that negatively affects their success.

Also curious to see if American International College's exclusion from Rugby Northeast will negatively affect their strength. AIC has a great coach in Eagle Mel Denham and a great leader in Jess Davis, who is one of four college-aged player heading to Europe with the Women's National Team. But AIC's league is watered down; they're joined by Vermont, Maine and New Hampshire, and that's it.

Rugby Northeast, however, is up to 10 teams this year, and Stonehill and St. Michael's have risen to the top. Stonehill won the regular-season battle 9-5, but St. Michael's will have a chance for revenge this weekend.

The only region where there wasn't some fierce competition for the teams at the top was the Midwest. Winona, Grand Valley and UW LaCrosse creamed their respective fields (with the exception of LaCrosse's early-season tie with UW Eau Claire).

Women DII College Top 20 - November 13, 2012

1. Washington State (2-0). Defeated Western Washington 71-5, Central Washington 115-0

2. Winona (7-0). Defeated St. Cloud 103-0 to win Northern Lights

3. Quinnipiac (8-0). Defeated Marist 30-0 in Tri-State semis

4. Mary Washington (7-0). Top seed in Virginia; biggest win: 38-5 over George Washington

5. Grand Valley (7-0). Defeated opponents 430-36 to win Great Lakes

6. CSU Northridge. Won Scrum by the Sea, beating DI teams like Arizona State and Sacramento State

7. Temple (5-0). Defeated LaSalle 17-0. Ineligible for playoffs

8. Utah Valley (5-1). Won Rocky Mountain defeating Wyoming 24-14 and Mesa State 45-7 in final.

9. Shippensburg (3-2). Lost to DI West Chester 25-5

10. American International College (4-0). Defeated NERFU opponents 208-12

11. Humboldt. Lost to CSUN in Scrum by the Sea final 19-7

12. Bowdoin (7-0) (10-0). Defeated Middlebury 15-10 for NESC championship

13. Appalachian University (10-0). Won Rucktoberfest over Lee; defeated DI teams Tennessee, East Carolina, Georgia & Virginia Tech

14. Stonehill (8-0). Defeated UMass Lowell 32-12

15. St. Michael's (7-1). Defeated Holy Cross 51-10 in RNE semi

16. Albany (6-1-1). Defeated Rutgers 29-22 in Tri-State semi

17. UW La Crosse (7-0-1). Won Great Waters, defeated UW Stout 87-7

18. Lee University (6-2). Lost by one point to Appalachian State in Rucktoberfest final. Bad longterm injuries

19. American University (5-0) (7-2). Won top PRU seed, 24-19 v St. Mary's

20. Buffalo (7-0). Defeated St. Bonaventure 72-0 to win Empire State