

Two Maryland Powerhouses Clash in Overtime Thriller at MedStar Boys HS Final

On a cool, blustery afternoon in Great Falls, Great Falls Youth Rugby hosted its 11th annual tournament to benefit the spinal cord injury Adaptive Sports programs at MedStar National Rehabilitation Network. This annual charity event is dear to the heart of Gary Coetzee, president of Great Falls Rugby and himself a spinal cord injury survivor.

The event is a youth tournament for all age groups U6 through High School. A total of 40 D.C., Maryland and Virginia youth, middle school and high school teams registered. The HS Varsity bracket was the most competitive, with 12 teams registered. The whole-day event, played across 3 separate fields at the same time, hosted 48 games of rugby (7-a-side format). A very busy day.

The Washington DC Major League Rugby Pro team (Old Glory) was on hand to share the excitement of the upcoming first season of Pro rugby in our area. For more info go to <https://oldglorydc.com/season-tickets/>

Two Maryland rugby powerhouses delivered a High School championship match worthy of the buildup. The DeMatha Stags, dominant throughout pool play, met the Bethesda Roosters in the Boys High School final of the MedStar Great Falls Classic.

DeMatha reached the final after a strong semifinal win over Young Glory, who pushed the Stags far more than in their earlier pool matchup. Bethesda advanced with a gritty victory over a tough West End squad, setting the stage for an all-Maryland showdown.

First Half: Roosters Strike Early

Bethesda opened the match by keeping the Stags pinned deep in their own end, using steady phases to test DeMatha's defensive line. The first defining moment came against the run of play: off a DeMatha lineout, the Stags swung the ball wide to senior speedster Andre Johnson, who burst down the sideline for what looked like a 90-meter highlight-reel try.

But Roosters scrumhalf James Burke, sprinting in cross-field cover, caught Johnson at the line and held the ball up—an extraordinary defensive effort that kept the Stags off the scoreboard.

Moments later, off the ensuing scrum, junior center Dylan King created space with a slick offload to prop Arian Troconis, who punched forward before returning the ball to King. The captain sliced through for a 60-meter try to put the Roosters on the board. Bethesda added another score under the posts when David Michael Pfaff powered through defenders, giving the Roosters a 14–0 halftime lead.

Second Half: Stags Surge Back

DeMatha responded instantly after the break. Off the kickoff, the Stags swung the ball to Jonah Tolliver, who split the Roosters defense and raced 50 meters for a momentum-shifting try. Another DeMatha score on the edge pulled the match even tighter.

Pfaff answered for Bethesda with a weaving, zig-zagging run that broke multiple tackles to put the Roosters up 19–12. But on the last play of regulation, DeMatha found Johnson once again. The senior finished a determined run through two tacklers to score in the corner. As he attempted to center the ball, a collision led to a red card for Troconis, leaving Bethesda down a man heading into sudden-death overtime.

Overtime: Bethesda Finishes Short-Handed

Despite playing a man down, the Roosters received the OT kickoff and immediately went on the attack. Hard carries by King and senior prop Santi Galeando brought Bethesda to within five meters. Off a ruck, Burke drew in two defenders before firing a clean pass to junior Liam McDermott, who dove into the corner for the walk-off try.

Roosters win, 24–19.

Roosters coach David King praised the Stags:

“DeMatha and Coach Ryan have had a phenomenal year, winning their XVs conference championship and had easily one of the toughest, most disciplined sides in the region. Their senior group was outstanding this fall 7s season.”

Roosters coach Jean-Louis Moures highlighted the resilience of his young squad:

“It took absolutely everything we had. But these boys showed heart, composure, and belief, even when we went into overtime a man down. That’s what championship rugby looks like.”

Congratulations to Gordon Johnson — the MedStar 2025 Player of the Tournament!

Gordon delivered an outstanding performance throughout the day, showing exceptional skill, composure, and leadership in every match. His work rate, decision-making, and commitment to his teammates stood out in a large field of HS teams.

- JV Division: Loudoun edged out West Carroll
- Varsity Division: The Roosters defeated DeMatha
- U10: Ellicott City

- COED U12: Vienna

Spend your summer preparing for your rugby journey



Ambitious HS Seniors or College/Club Athletes?

Player Development Academy
Total Rugby Immersion



uxi WESTERN PROVINCE IRI



www.uxisport.us



