

# Brown Men's Rugby

## Weekly Match Report

Saturday, November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023  
 Marvel Field, Brown University  
 Providence, RI

### Brown v. Kutztown College – First XV

Scoring Summary	Brown	Kutztown
<b>First Half</b>		
2 min	Brown Try (Omar Al-Jendari '24)	5
14 min	Kutztown Try	5
24 min	Brown Try (Kaspar Pitblado '26)	5
36 min	Brown Try (Junior Gafa '24)	5
	Conversion (Raphael Lansonneur '25)	2
<b>First Half</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Second Half</b>		
41 min	Kutztown Try	5
	Conversion	2
50 min	Brown Try (Junior Gafa '24)	5
	Conversion (Raphael Lansonneur '25)	2
76 min	Brown Try (Omar Al-Jendari '24)	5
	Conversion (Raphael Lansonneur '25)	2
<b>Second Half</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Final Score:</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>12</b>

Having earned a top seed in the NCR national playoffs, for the national quarter-final round, Brown hosted Kutztown University out of Kutztown, PA. The so-called Golden Bears are a varsity program who are national contenders every year in both XV's and 7s, and lay claim to the 2022 CRC 7s National Championship. KU came into this matchup with a few regular season losses to CRAA D1A opponents (generally recognized as the highest level of competition in American rugby, comprised mostly of varsity programs) including one point defeats at the hands of both Southern Virginia University and Mount Saint Mary's University. Despite the losses on their record, KU boasts a reputation of being big, aggressive, and fast, usually winning the physical battle against their opponents. With a berth in the NCR national semi-finals on the line and those matches being hosted in their backyard, Kutztown was plenty motivated to upset our top-ranked Brown Bears. With many supporters in attendance, enjoying a lovely tailgate atmosphere at Marvel field put on by our hospitable parent's group, and relishing the sunny weather and temps that got up into the 50s by kick-off time, Brown was ready to take the next step in their title defense campaign.

Kutztown gifted Brown with a penalty on their very first possession, deep in their own territory. Seizing the opportunity to utilize their vaunted lineout maul, Brown opted to kick to touch and attack from that set piece platform. The Bears executed a playbook perfect diverted drive and Omar Al-Jendari '24 scored from the back of the maul just 2 minutes into the match. With occasional gusts of wind making kicking challenging throughout, the score stood at 5-0. The two sides battled through the next 10+ minutes, with Brown mostly dominating possession and putting Kutztown through defensive phases. When KU finally did gain possession, they showed how dangerous they're capable of being with the ball in hand. Making Brown pay for a scrum penalty, KU were able to move the ball through their attackers out to the wing where their most dangerous ball carriers play. A couple of Brown defenders were unable to complete their tackles and Kutztown evened the

scoring at 5-5. Later, in the 24<sup>th</sup> minute of the match, Brown again had an opportunity for an attacking lineout resulting from a KU penalty. This time, opting for a classic lineout maul at the front and Kaspar Pitblado '26 was the try scorer on this one, putting Brown back in the lead, 10-5. With about 5 minutes left in the half, Brown kicked into KU territory and their counter attack opted for a long skip pass that went forward and presented Brown with an attacking scrum about 25M away from the KU goal line. The Brown pack were awarded for their scrum dominance with penalty advantage and on the launch play the ball got to a hard charging Junior Gafa '24 who broke several tackles and dragged multiple KU defenders across muddy Marvel before scoring a try that got everyone on their feet. Raphael Lansonneur '25 added the conversion to put the Bears up 17-5. A few moments later Brown was back deep in KU territory with an attacking lineout and ran a play in the 5M channel which nearly scored but the KU defence was able to drag the ball carrier into touch just before they could score and the halftime score stood at Brown 17 – 5 Kutztown.

The first minute of the second half was a kicking battle that Brown lost after the Kutztown kicker pinned the Bears deep in their own territory and Brown failed to execute an effective exit. The KU #14 received the errant kick with space to run and gashed through the Brown defence from about +55M. In pursuit, Tito Edjua '27 was able to get an ankle tap tackle on the dynamic winger just in time, nearly preventing a score, but the ball carrier's momentum allowed him to barely reach the ball over and get it down for the try. Converting the kick after Kutztown was back in the match, trailing by one score 17-12 just one minute into the second half. 5 minutes later, KU committed a ruck penalty near midfield and Brown kicked to touch for an attacking lineout about 30M away from the Kutztown goal. Having been dominating lineout mauls, as usual, the Bears opted again for the tried and true, this time driving the opposition about 15M. What came next was the best example of clinical, disciplined, championship level rugby that the Brown Bears have put on display all season. Over more than 3 minutes and 30 seconds of continuous possession from the lineout, Brown tested the KU defence and ground them down until on the 25<sup>th</sup> phase of possession Junior Gafa '24 again barrelled over the line for a try, his second of the match. Lansonneur slotted the conversion and extended the Brown lead back to double digits, 24-12. The match remained scoreless for both teams over the next 25 minutes and as the clock wound down, the intensity ramped up and as happens, so did the penalty count. At the 65<sup>th</sup> minute, a Kutztown reserve player committed a dangerous tackle on Gafa '24 which the ref deemed worthy of a red card match ban. Despite tempers flaring on both sides, our experienced Brown Bears were able to keep cool heads and maintain their discipline in closing out the match. In the final 5 minutes of the match, a Kutztown penalty again allowed Brown to setup an attacking lineout, this time from about 20M away from the goal line. For good measure, the Bears went back to the diverted maul drive that got them the first points of the match and it was again Al-Jendari '24 who was able to point the ball down at the back of the maul. Lansonneur added the conversion and just a few minutes later the final whistle was blown. The final score; Brown 31 – Kutztown 12.

This week, the Bears will enjoy a bye week to celebrate the Thanksgiving holiday, regrouping the following week when players return to campus and preparing for the national semi-final round. Below is a look at the NCR D1 Final Four, which will again be hosted at Penn State Berks in Reading, Pennsylvania, on Saturday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>. The winners of the semifinal matches will match up in Houston, TX on Saturday, December 9<sup>th</sup> in the NCR D1 National Championship match.

Saturday, December 2<sup>nd</sup> @ Penn State Berks; Reading, PA

NCR Semi-final #1 @ 1pm: #3 St. Bonaventure University vs. #1 Brown University

NCR Semi-final #2 @ 5pm: #2 Notre Dame College vs. #4 Indiana University

Brown Squad:

1. Omar Al-Jendari '24
2. Joe Al-Hasso '25
3. Asa Rosenmeier '27
4. Matt Mitchell '24
5. Oliver Corbett '24
6. Kaspar Pitblado '26 – Rowe Stodolnic '27 @ 79min

7. Henrique Gabriel '26
8. Antonio Esteves '24
9. Dylan Lewis '24
10. JT Dyer '25
11. Theo Romero '27
12. Junior Gafa '24– Will Sinfield G'24 @ 65min
13. Tito Edjua '27
14. Santiago Cortabarria '25
15. Raphael Lansonneur '25

Referee: Josh Musonera