

England Wins Inaugural 7s World Cup

by Ed Hagerty

Edinburgh, Scotland
April 16-18, 1993

Dark horse England emerged from the pack with superb performances to claim the first ever 7s World Cup crown after three grueling days of competition at Edinburgh's famed Murrayfield grounds. Led by the blistering pace and savvy of their captain Andrew Harriman, England went out to a 21-0 lead against Australia in the final, and then held on to win as the Wallaby side, featuring Michael Lynagh and David Campese, scratched their way back to 21-17 before running out of time.

Plate and Bowl

Argentina secured the championship of the Plate competition with a 19-12 win over a tough Spanish side, while Japan embarrassed host Scotland 33-19 in the Bowl final.

United States

The United States, the oldest of the 24 sides in the competition (average age - 29.6 years), bowed out following the second day of competition, after compiling a 1-4 record in pool play. They lost to France (22-7) and New Zealand (19-5) on the opening day (Friday) and then sandwiched a 31-0 victory over Holland around losses to Ireland (38-0) and Korea (26-19) on the second. Finishing fifth of six teams in their pool, the U.S. failed to qualify for either the Plate or Bowl Championships on Sunday.

Surprises

There were many surprises in the tournament, including the rise to prominence of Ireland, whose last minute loss in the Cup semifinal to Australia proved that their fine performance in the Hong Kong 7s was no fluke.

South Africa's big, fast team improved markedly since debuting in Hong Kong, going undefeated in pool play (5-0) and indicating that they will be a future contender on the international 7s scene.

On the other side of the ledger, favored Fiji and Western Samoa showed that they may be less able to handle the longer format and colder



The victorious English side, after winning the World Cup. (L-R) - Adebayo, Sheasby, Scully, Harriman, Beal, Dallaglio. (BACK) - Cassell. (Photo - Hagerty)

weather of competitions such as the World Cup.

New Zealand compiled a 5-0 record in round robin play on Friday and Saturday but failed to make it out of Sunday's Cup round robin. An injury to star Eric Rush contributed to their demise.

England

But the World Cup's real story was the consistent, high level of play during 10 grueling matches of the young and unheralded England side. Few among the assembled journalists (myself included) gave England much chance of winning the title. Based upon the results of the Canberra, Fiji and Hong Kong 7s Tournaments, where Western Samoa, Fiji, New Zealand and Australia played so well, many people predicted an all Southern Hemisphere final four.

Indeed, England's own administrators gave them very little support. The RFU refused to send a team to Hong Kong to help in England's

preparation, and they forbade any English player picked for the British Lions' upcoming tour of New Zealand to play in the 7s World Cup. And although the Lions wouldn't depart until 2 weeks after the 7s World Cup concluded, this edict kept such players as Will Carling, Jeremy Guscott and the Underwood brothers (Rory and Tony) out of contention.

Unwittingly however, this prohibition appears to have worked to England's advantage. First of all it's doubtful that the aforementioned Lions from England's disastrous 1993 Five Nations side could have filled the boots of hungry and talented players such as Damien Hopley (6 tries) Nick Beal (70 points) and especially Andy Harriman, whom savvy coach and Hong Kong 7s vet Les Cusworth brought into his 7s team.

England's selection process definitely appears to be flawed; regularly overlooking some superb talent in its huge pool of players. Harriman, the World Cup's Most Valuable Player and leading try

scorer (12) was clearly the fastest and most accomplished back in the competition, yet he has won only one 15s cap for England (1988 vs Australia).

The England selectors also failed to recognize the remarkable talents of former Rosslyn Park wing Martin Offiah, whose superior skills and speed were evident to everyone including the rugby league scouts at the 1987 Hong Kong 7s. Offiah later went on to rewrite virtually every rugby league try scoring record.

Secondly, the elegant and erudite Harriman utilized the RFU's disdain for 7s as a tool to motivate his talented but unheralded teammates to play outstanding rugby. "This is a day I'll never forget," said Harriman. "The RFU has made their position quite clear as regards 15s vs 7s. We are proud players and all this talk of us being a scratch side with no Lions needed us and the desire became even stronger."

FORMAT

The 7s World Cup consisted of 24 teams divided into four (A,B,C,D) six-team pools. Over the first two

days of the competition, each team played five round robin games against the other five teams in its pool.

Cup Championship

On day three, the top two teams from each pool (a total of eight) advanced into the Cup competition. They were divided into two (E & F) four-team pools, where they again played three round robin matches against the other teams in their pool. The top two teams from pools E and F then advanced to the semifinals and the semifinal winners met in the Cup final.

To win the Cup competition a team would play a total of 10 games.

Plate Championship

The third placed team in each of the four pools following round robin play went forward into the knockout semifinals of the RWC Plate competition.

Bowl Championship

The fourth placed team in each of the four pools went forward into the knockout semifinals of the RWC Bowl.

The fifth and sixth place teams in each of the four pools were eliminated.

To win either the Plate or Bowl, teams played a total of 7 games.

Too Long

Although the organizers went out of their way to make the first 7s World Cup an outstanding success, everyone agreed that the competition was too long and had too many games. Every player we spoke to questioned why the World Cup organizers had to tamper with the tried and true Hong Kong 7s format where 5 games over two days determined the champions.

Prior to the Cup, New Zealand coach Peter Thorburn branded the format "crazy." "The person who developed the schedule for Edinburgh has obviously never played the game," said Thorburn. "Unfortunately, I don't think it will be the best 7s team that wins at Edinburgh. It will be the team which enjoys the greatest luck, and has the fewest injuries."

Sevens, especially at this level, is a game of tremendous velocity with the players going flat out on a full sized field for 14 minutes. It has very few of the stoppages that allow players to revive in the 15 man game.



Australian star David Campese executes a switch move with Michael Lynagh, as Tonga-born Wallabies Willic Ofahengaue and Semi Taupeaefe look on. (Photo - Hagerty)



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World Cup Match Results

POOL A

Fiji 42, Latvia 0
 South Africa 28, Japan 5
 Wales 33, Romania 7
 Fiji 28, Japan 17
 Romania 22, Latvia 5
 South Africa 36, Wales 14
 Fiji 40, Romania 0
 Wales 35, Japan 7

| Teams | P | W | L | F | A | Pts |
|--------------|---|---|---|-----|-----|-----|
| South Africa | 5 | 5 | 0 | 175 | 43 | 15 |
| Fiji | 5 | 4 | 1 | 150 | 60 | 13 |
| Wales | 5 | 3 | 2 | 135 | 78 | 11 |
| Japan | 5 | 2 | 3 | 67 | 120 | 9 |
| Romania | 5 | 1 | 4 | 44 | 133 | 7 |
| Latvia | 5 | 0 | 5 | 31 | 168 | 5 |

POOL B

New Zealand 49, Holland 7
 France 22, United States 7
 Ireland 21, Korea 12
 New Zealand 19, United States 5
 Korea 28, Holland 12
 Ireland 17, France 7
 New Zealand 46, Korea 0
 Ireland 38, United States 0

| Teams | P | W | L | F | A | Pts. |
|---------------|---|---|---|-----|-----|------|
| New Zealand | 5 | 5 | 0 | 157 | 24 | 15 |
| Ireland | 5 | 4 | 1 | 128 | 45 | 13 |
| Korea | 5 | 3 | 2 | 80 | 98 | 11 |
| France | 5 | 2 | 3 | 60 | 71 | 9 |
| United States | 5 | 1 | 4 | 62 | 105 | 7 |
| Holland | 5 | 0 | 5 | 33 | 179 | 5 |

POOL C

Australia 28, Taiwan 0
 Scotland 15, Tonga 7
 Argentina 17, Italy 7
 Tonga 10, Australia 7
 Italy 15, Taiwan 14
 Argentina 14, Scotland 10
 Australia 40, Italy 0
 Tonga 17, Argentina 5

| Teams | P | W | L | F | A | Pts |
|-----------|---|---|---|-----|-----|-----|
| Australia | 5 | 4 | 1 | 141 | 29 | 13 |
| Tonga | 5 | 4 | 1 | 117 | 34 | 13 |
| Argentina | 5 | 3 | 2 | 67 | 79 | 11 |
| Scotland | 5 | 3 | 2 | 96 | 64 | 11 |
| Italy | 5 | 1 | 4 | 41 | 123 | 7 |
| Taiwan | 5 | 0 | 5 | 24 | 157 | 5 |

POOL D

England 40, Hong Kong 5
 Western Samoa 47, Spain 0
 Canada 21, Namibia 7
 England 31, Spain 0
 Hong Kong 19, Namibia 17
 Western Samoa 28, Canada 14
 England 24, Namibia 5
 Spain 12, Canada 5

| Teams | P | W | L | F | A | Pts |
|-----------|---|---|---|-----|-----|-----|
| W. Samoa | 5 | 5 | 0 | 193 | 31 | 15 |
| England | 5 | 4 | 1 | 138 | 38 | 13 |
| Canada | 5 | 2 | 3 | 75 | 87 | 9 |
| Spain | 5 | 2 | 3 | 59 | 114 | 9 |
| Hong Kong | 5 | 1 | 4 | 43 | 161 | 7 |
| Namibia | 5 | 1 | 4 | 55 | 132 | 7 |

CUP CHAMPIONSHIP

Round Robin

POOL E

Ireland 17, Western Samoa 0
 Fiji 21, Tonga 7
 Fiji 14, Western Samoa 12

| Teams | P | W | L | F | A | Pts |
|----------|---|---|---|----|----|-----|
| Fiji | 3 | 3 | 0 | 66 | 26 | 9 |
| Ireland | 3 | 2 | 1 | 38 | 43 | 7 |
| W. Samoa | 3 | 1 | 2 | 54 | 38 | 5 |
| Tonga | 3 | 0 | 3 | 26 | 77 | 3 |

POOL F

Australia 7, South Africa 5
 England 21, New Zealand 12
 England 14, South Africa 7

| Teams | P | W | L | F | A | Pts |
|--------------|---|---|---|----|----|-----|
| Australia | 3 | 2 | 1 | 28 | 59 | 7 |
| England | 3 | 2 | 1 | 47 | 40 | 7 |
| South Africa | 3 | 1 | 2 | 43 | 35 | 5 |
| New Zealand | 3 | 1 | 2 | 68 | 52 | 5 |

Semifinals

England 21, Fiji 7
 Australia 21, Ireland 19

Final

England 21, Australia 17

PLATE CHAMPIONSHIP

Semifinals

Spain 10, Wales 7
 Argentina 24, Korea 0

Final

Argentina 19, Spain 12

BOWL CHAMPIONSHIP

Semifinals

Scotland 14, France 7
 Japan 14, Canada 0

Final

Japan 33, Scotland 19



Gulliveresque Fijian Mesake Rasari takes on Japanese defenders. While the Fijians bowed out in the Cup semifinal, the diminutive Japanese side proudly took home the Bowl by embarrassing host Scotland 33-19 in the final. (Photo - Hagerty)

With teams limited to 10 players, there was heavy reliance on doctors and physiotherapists to insure that the walking wounded were able to take the field. This was especially true for day three's Cup matches where the finalists were required to play 5 matches (that's 70 minutes of 7s) against the world's best teams.

The 7s World Cup format resembled one of the 75+ round, bare knuckle boxing championships at the turn of the century where the winner wasn't necessarily the best boxer, but the man able to absorb the most punishment.

POOL RESULTS

Pool A

April 16-17

Surprising South Africa emerged as the top team in Pool A with a 5-0 record after two days of round-robin play. The Springboks recorded victories over Japan (28-5), Wales (36-14), Latvia (47-5), Romania (38-0) and an upset of number-one seeded Fiji (26-19).

Fiji (4-1) also qualified for the Cup Championship, but while flyhalf Waisale Serevi continued to show that he is the World's best 7s player, an injury appeared to have curtailed the mobility and speed of Fijian giant Mesake Rasari, a standout for Fiji in both their 1991 and 1992 Hong Kong 7s championships.

Wales (3-2) went into the Plate and Japan (2-3) qualified for the Bowl.

Pool B

As expected, New Zealand's All Blacks emerged from Pool B undefeated, 5-0. The Netherlands surprised them by scoring first in

their opening match but then the All-Blacks cruised to a 49-7 victory. The U.S. put up a good fight but went down to the All Blacks 19-5. On Sunday, New Zealand posted victories over Korea (46-0), Ireland (24-7) and France (19-5).

Ireland, which had posted a strong performance in the Hong Kong 7s, continued their winning ways in Edinburgh (4-1). They too qualified for the Cup, their sole loss coming at the hands of the All Blacks.

Korea (3-2) qualified for the Plate with wins over Holland and the U.S. and a 14-0 upset of an inexperienced French side. France (2-3) went into the Bowl, while the U.S. (1-4) and Holland (0-5) got front row seats for Sunday's deciding matches.

Pool C

Pool C provided the most surprises in round robin play as four teams (Argentina, Australia, Scotland and Tonga) emerged from the first day's play with identical 2-1 records. Friday's major upsets were Tonga's 10-7 victory over Australia on a last minute drop goal by Isi Tu'ivai and Argentina's 14-10 decision over host Scotland.

Tonga and Australia advanced to

the Cup with two victories apiece on Saturday; Tonga prevailing over Taiwan, 52-0, and Italy, 31-7, while Australia topped Argentina, 40-5, and Scotland, 21-12.

Argentina's (3-2) third place finish qualified them for the Plate Championship, while Scotland (3-2), originator of the seven-man game, was relegated to the Bowl.

Pool D

Western Samoa, the 1993 Hong Kong 7s Champion, emerged undefeated (5-0) from pool play; the big, fast, physical islanders amassing 195 points while allowing their opponents only 31.

Interestingly, the championship wasn't decided until the final game of Pool D between two undefeated (4-0) teams; England and Western Samoa. And while Western Samoa won this match by a significant margin (28-10), England played without starters Nick Beal, Tim Rodber and Andy Harriman.

The deep thinkers in the press box sagely concluded that this was a tactical ploy by England, but the fact was that all three men were nursing injuries.

(Continued on Page 10)

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England captain Andrew Harriman scored 12 tries in the tournament. (Photo - Hagerty)

World Cup 7s:

(Continued from Page 9)

Both Spain and Canada emerged with 2-3 records but Spain went into the Plate by virtue of its head to head victory (12-5) and Canada entered the Bowl.

CUP CHAMPIONSHIP

Following the competition of the two-day round robin and the emergence of Southern Hemisphere teams at the top of all four pools, there was a definite consensus among the sporting press as to the World Cup's outcome. Typical was the statement by the *Sunday Times*' Stephen Jones: "It is inconceivable that the winning 7s World Cup team will not come from the Southern Hemisphere and there is a high probability that the title will go to the Pacific Islands."

How wrong we were!

Whether it was the rain, the cold weather, the biting wind or the cumulative effect of having already played five games in two days, something conspired to throw the pre-tournament favorites out of kilter.

ROUND ROBIN

Pool E

Things did go according to form for favored Fiji in the Cup round robin. They reached the semifinals

Average Age and Pre-Tourney Seed

| Seed | Country | Average Age |
|------|--------------|-------------|
| 1 | Fiji | 26.4 |
| 2 | New Zealand | 24.5 |
| 3 | Australia | 25.1 |
| 4 | W. Samoa | 25.9 |
| 4 | England | 23.6 |
| 6 | Scotland | 25.0 |
| 7 | France | 25.4 |
| 8 | South Africa | 24.2 |
| 9 | Wales | 24.8 |
| 10 | Ireland | 26.1 |
| 11 | Argentina | 23.7 |
| 12 | Canada | 26.8 |
| 13 | Namibia | 28.3 |
| 14 | Italy | 25.3 |
| 15 | Romania | 25.3 |
| 16 | Japan | 24.7 |
| 16 | Korea | 24.1 |
| 18 | Tonga | 23.6 |
| 19 | Spain | 28.1 |
| 19 | USA | 29.6 |
| 21 | Hong Kong | 28.6 |
| 22 | Taiwan | 27.9 |
| 23 | Holland | 27.1 |
| 24 | Latvia | 26.7 |



Hong Kong 7s champ Western Samoa was undefeated (5-0) in pool play, including a 28-10 victory over England (above). However, they exited with two losses in the Cup round robin. (Photo - Hagerty)

with a perfect 3-0 record, beating Tonga 21-7, Western Samoa 14-12, and trouncing Ireland 31-7.

And while Fiji's squeaker over Western Samoa was a predictable result between the 1993 Hong Kong 7s finalists, Ireland's 17-0 pasting of the Samoans was a total surprise. This upset, combined with their 14-12 decision over Tonga, put Ireland through to the semifinals.

Pool F

Australia and England advanced to the semifinals from Pool F with 2-1 records, while New Zealand and South Africa were eliminated.

Australia opened with a hard fought 7-5 win over South Africa, were absolutely hammered (42-0) by New Zealand in their second match, and then topped England 21-12.

England qualified for the semifinals with a 21-12 victory over the All Blacks and a 14-7 win over the tenacious Springboks. Significantly, Andrew Harriman was again absent from England's lineup when they went down to Australia (21-12) in their 3rd round robin match of the day.

Semifinals:

Australia 21, Ireland 19

Far from an all Southern Hemisphere final, the surprising Irish came within 15 seconds of making

the World Cup Championship an Ireland - England encounter. A frantic, last-second try by Tongan-born Willie Ofahengaue, however, got Australia into the final after a touch and go battle with Ireland, 21-19. It was a repeat of Ireland's performance in the Hong Kong 7s, where they took Australia into overtime in the Cup quarterfinal before finally bowing out.

Scrumhalf Semi Taupeaefe, also from Tonga, scored Australia's other two tries, while Michael Lynagh nailed all three conversions.

Dennis McBride, Vince Cunningham and Richard Wallace touched down for the Irish, but Ireland's Five Nations hero, Eric Elwood, could only hit 2 of 3 conversions.

England 21, Fiji 7

England's semifinal win over Fiji may have been the best of the weekend's 81 matches. Fiji went out to a 7-0 lead on try by Filimone Seru, his ninth of the competition, and Waisale Serevi converted. At this point many of the "experts" figured that Fiji had finally put it in gear, but England defended like demons, Harriman touched down in the fifth minute and Nick Beal's conversion took the teams into the break tied at 7-7.

It appeared from the stands that England might be exhausted after their first half display of tackling, but young Lawrence Dallaglio scored within the first two minutes.

A great tackle by David Scully allowed Harriman to kick the ball ahead, gather it and go 50 yards for the insurance try and entrance into the final. Beal converted both tries.

Final:

England 21, Australia 17

All through the tournament, Andy Harriman had emphasized the importance of scoring first and England certainly took his words to heart in the final, racing out to a 21-0 lead.

Facing an Australian side which had beaten them in the last round robin match before lunch time, Harriman practiced what he preached, outrunning the great David Campese for a 65-yard try just 30 seconds after the kickoff. Tries by Lawrence Dallaglio and Tim Rodber followed within the next five minutes, and with Nick Beal perfect on all three conversions, England went into the half with a 21-0 lead. The crowd, which to this point had booed the "Olde Enemy" England unmercifully whenever they took the field, gave them a standing ovation.

Second Half

With old pros (both literally and metaphorically) Lynagh and Campese in their lineup, it would have been a mistake to count the Wallabies out and, true to form, Australia came roaring back in the second half. First Lynagh, then Campese, employing his trademark goose step, scored tries in the corner but Lynagh, critically, was unable to

Leading Try Scorers 7s World Cup

| Name | Country | Tries |
|--------------------|--------------|-------|
| A. Harriman | England | 12 |
| B. Lima | W. Samoa | 11 |
| S. Taupeaefe | Australia | 9 |
| F. Seru | Fiji | 9 |
| J. V.D. Westhuizen | S. Africa | 9 |
| A. Joubert | South Africa | 8 |
| A. Ieremia | W. Samoa | 8 |
| W. Serevi | Fiji | 7 |
| R. Wallace | Ireland | 7 |
| D. Campese | Australia | 6 |
| S. Vonolagi | Fiji | 6 |
| F. Bunce | New Zealand | 6 |
| M. Appleson | Scotland | 6 |
| L. Koko | W. Samoa | 6 |
| D. Hopley | England | 6 |
| M. Moncrieff | Scotland | 6 |
| S. Lolo | Tonga | 6 |
| P. Baraldi | Argentina | 5 |
| V. Cunningham | Ireland | 5 |
| G. Osborne | New Zealand | 5 |
| J. Timu | New Zealand | 5 |
| C. Williams | South Africa | 5 |
| I. Tu'ivai | Tonga | 5 |
| S. Davies | Wales | 5 |
| A. Aiolupo | W. Samoa | 5 |
| J. Tonuu | W. Samoa | 5 |
| G. Jorge | Argentina | 4 |
| J. Flett | Australia | 4 |
| D. McBride | Ireland | 4 |
| P. Woods | New Zealand | 4 |
| E. Rush | New Zealand | 4 |
| T. Blackadder | New Zealand | 4 |
| N. Beal | England | 4 |
| J. Kerr | Scotland | 4 |
| G. Rivero | Spain | 4 |
| N. Jenkins | Wales | 4 |
| V. Patu | W. Samoa | 4 |
| L. Dallaglio | England | 4 |
| G. Hein | USA | 3 |
| F. Del Castillo | Argentina | 3 |
| R. Constable | Australia | 3 |
| M. Burke | Australia | 3 |
| S. Rabaka | Fiji | 3 |
| J. Garth | Ireland | 3 |
| A. Rolland | Ireland | 3 |
| E. Elwood | Ireland | 3 |
| P. Nawalu | Japan | 3 |
| Y. Yoshida | Japan | 3 |
| H. Kato | Japan | 3 |
| S. Ono | Japan | 3 |

convert (21-10). Then Australia's big scrumhalf Semi Taupeaefe crashed over near the posts in injury time for a converted try (21-17).

The ball was returned to play for about a minute but time ran out and England emerged as worthy winners of the first 7s World Cup.

| England | Australia |
|-----------|--------------|
| Sheasby | 1 Fenwicke |
| Rodber * | 2 Burke |
| Dallaglio | 3 Ofahengaue |
| Scully | 4 Taupeaefe |
| Beal | 5 Lynagh |
| Adebayo | 6 Constable |
| Harriman | 7 Campese |

Referee: J. Robin (France)
* replace by Cassell



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U.S. Eagles. (FRONT, L-R) - Finkel, Telkamp, Hein, Hinkin, Dujakovich, O'Brien. (BACK) - Signes (Manager), Burgett, Stephens, Ridnell, Vizard, Brewington, Ayub (Trainer), St. Ville (Doctor).

(Photo - Hagerty)

**France 22,
U.S. 7**

The Eagles lost their first round robin match to a faster but inexperienced and very beatable French side by a margin of four tries to one.

The match started on a blue note when U.S. center Mike Telkamp (Old Puget Sound) inadvertently kicked a French chip further ahead and wing Philippe Bernat-Salles scored with only 19 seconds elapsed. Dominique Dal Pos scored again just before the break and France lead at halftime, 10-0.

Didier Faugeron and Eric Bonneval added second half tries for France while the Eagles countered with a late consolation try by captain Gary Hein (Old Blues) after a nice break by Will Brewington (Maryland Old Boys). Chris O'Brien (Old Blues) converted. The U.S. made a number of mistakes and were never really in the game. They worked the ball well at times, but just couldn't finish.

Gary Hein commented that, "All their tries resulted from our mistakes. We didn't pressure them and never created opportunities. We just waited for them to make mistakes."

| | | |
|-------------|---|---------------|
| U.S. | | France |
| Vizard | 1 | Janeczek |
| Brewington | 2 | Dal Pos |
| Ridnell | 3 | Cabannes |
| Dujakovich | 4 | Deylaud |
| O'Brien | 5 | Bonneval |
| Telkamp | 6 | Faugeron |
| Hein | 7 | Bernat-Salles |

**New Zealand 19,
U.S. 5**

The Eagles played much better in a 19-5 loss to the All Blacks, actually outscoring them in the second half 5-0.

All of New Zealand's scoring came on first half tries by Pat Lam (51 seconds), Eric Rush (three minutes) and Glen Osborne (five minutes); Osborne converting the first two, 19-0.

Scott Stephens (Washington RFC) touched down for the U.S., 19-5.

Coach Steve Finkel noted that, "Our plan was to maintain possession and not take the ball into pressure. We are just becoming comfortable with our new defense and we won the second half."

| | | |
|-------------|---|--------------------|
| U.S. | | New Zealand |
| Ridnell | 1 | Seymour |
| Stephens | 2 | Lam |
| Burgett | 3 | Blackadder |
| Brewington | 4 | Rush |
| Telkamp | 5 | Bunec |
| Hein | 6 | Woods |
| Hinkin | 7 | Osborne |

Referee: P. Marshall (Australia)



Eagle Will Brewington on the attack versus France.
(Photo - Hagerty)



The U.S. Eagles scrum down against the All-Blacks. Although losing 19-5, the U.S. squad outscored the number-two seed 5-0 in the second half. (Photo - Hagerty)

**Ireland 38,
U.S. 0**

The Eagles were totally outclassed against Ireland, a younger, fitter, faster side with a better inherent understanding of the game. In addition, the Eagle defense was particularly poor in this match.

Ireland posted a 26-0 halftime advantage and five different Irishmen accounted for their six tries: Rolland, McBride, Wallace, Cunningham (2), and Garth. Flyhalf Eric Elwood added four conversions.

U.S. manager Emil Signes said that, "You never know which Ireland you're going to see. They played very well in this game, denying us possession and then we missed a number of tackles."

| | | |
|-------------|---|----------------|
| U.S. | | Ireland |
| Vizard | 1 | Garth |
| Brewington | 2 | McBride |
| Stephens | 3 | Johns |
| Dujakovich | 4 | Rolland |
| O'Brien | 5 | Elwood |
| Hein | 6 | Cunningham |
| Hinkin | 7 | Wallace |

**United States 31,
Holland 0**

Against Holland, a slower, less athletic side, it took the U.S. a while to hit their stride. The Eagles still appeared tentative and only held a 7-0 halftime edge, courtesy of Jim Burgett's intercept try, which O'Brien converted.

In the second half, however, perhaps realizing that they had greater team speed, the U.S. became more aggressive offensively. Andy Dujakovich (Kansas City) stopped a ballcarrier near the Dutch goal line, turned him, and the ball went from Tony Ridnell (Old Puget Sound) to Chris O'Brien for the try.

Tries by Mike Telkamp and Dujakovich followed in the 10th and 12th minutes. Then, just on full time, Burgett made a nice break and presented his Old Puget Sound teammate, Tony Ridnell, with a gift try. Chris O'Brien converted two of the four second half tries to bring the final score to 31-0.

| | | |
|-------------|---|----------------|
| U.S. | | Holland |
| Ridnell | 1 | Wierenga |
| Brewington | 2 | Syebel |
| Burgett | 3 | Verholstad |
| Dujakovich | 4 | Geelhoed |
| O'Brien | 5 | Bos |
| Telkamp | 6 | M. Marcker |
| Hein | 7 | Blom |

Referee: A. Condorelli (Italy)

**Korea 26,
U.S. 19**

The Eagles' final match was against Korea with a place in the Bowl Championship at stake. Based on their previous matches, the U.S. (1-3) and a very quick Korean side matched up very well. Korea was 2-2, with a 28-12 win over Holland and a 14-0 upset over France. In their two losses, Korea fared better than the U.S. against Ireland (28-12) but much worse against the All Blacks (46-0).

The U.S. got on the board 30 seconds into the game when Jon Hinkin (OMBAC) made a break and then kicked ahead. Gary Hein was able to touch down and Chris O'Brien converted, 7-0.

Cho Sung-Chul answered with an unconverted try in the second minute but Hein's reply in the fourth gave the U.S. a 12-5 lead.

Chul, however, scored again in the sixth minute and Cha Deuk-Joon's conversion tied it at halftime, 12-12.

Second Half

A converted try by replacement Choi Chang-Yul gave Korea their first lead shortly after play resumed (19-12), but a Jim Burgett try and O'Brien conversion levelled the score once again, 19-19.

Unfortunately for the Eagles, a converted try by Park Jin-Bae (26-19) sent Korea into the Bowl and the U.S. out of the competition.

| | | |
|-------------|---|--------------|
| U.S. | | Korea |
| Vizard | 1 | Lu |
| Brewington | 2 | Kang |
| Burgett | 3 | Kim |
| Dujakovich | 4 | Kim |
| O'Brien | 5 | + Cho |
| Hein | 6 | Park |
| Hinkin | 7 | Cha |

Referee: G. Gadjovich (Canada)
+ replaced by Choi

Commentary

The conclusion that must be drawn from the Eagles' performance at the 7s World Cup (as well as the Canberra, Fiji, and Hong Kong 7s) is that the U.S. simply doesn't have the athletes to compete successfully in top-level international 7s.

All of the players were fit and they played their hearts out. By domestic standards the U.S. 7s team was very fast, but among the 24 teams in Edinburgh, the Eagles were among the slowest. They were also the oldest team in the competition.

Well-Coached

The U.S. was well-coached and technically on a par with any other team, but when their breaks came they were rarely able to take advantage of them because they didn't have the pace to beat their opponents or tackle them when on defense. Speed kills.

Diligent Selections

And make no mistake about it, this was the best 7s team the U.S. can currently field. U.S. 7s coach Steve Finkel, manager Emil Signes, and the U.S. selectors watched players at tournaments all around the country. They also spent an entire week-end last August appraising the best U.S. talent at the National Club and All-Star 7s Championships.

Well-Prepared

The Eagles were also well-prepared. The best players were brought together last January for a weekend camp in Phoenix and the team played three high-level tournaments prior to the World Cup.

A similar acknowledgement was expressed by Scotland's management, whose team lost in the Bowl final to Japan. "At the end of the day, you get what you deserve," said senior coach Douglas Morgan. "It shows the level we're at. We just don't have the big, strong athletic men the other countries have."

Duncan Paterson, the Scotland manager who had led his squad on a three-week tour to Australia, the South Pacific and the Far East in preparation for the Cup, was blunt in his assessment of Scotland performance: "We weren't good enough."

Las Vegas Midnight 7s

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