Last year, the LVI welcomed more than 230 teams which included club teams, select sides and National teams. That number is expected to grow this year with an expansion of teams in multiple competitive divisions for men, women and youth.

Teams such as the Stony Brook University Seawolves, and their coach Daniel Yarusso, are enthusiastic about returning.

“The LVI really elevates our standard as a rugby program,” Yarusso said. “Being that it is well run and quality teams, it motivates our guys to train and play at a high level throughout the year and at the event. It also exposes our players to international play which continues to drive their competitive nature and commitment to the sport.

Since their time in Vegas, the Seawolves brought an upgrade back to New York and the Empire Conference. Winners of the New York 7s tournament and the Empire Conference with an appearance in the Elight Eight to go along with a trip to the USA Rugby 7s Nationals, all in the same year (2011).

Of course, being that this tournament is in Las Vegas, teams can also expect a lot of distractions, something coaches warn their players about and make sure they know exactly why they made the trip. However, coach Yarusso says focus from his players was excellent.

“I couldn't be prouder of our guys for being focused on the rugby during their time in Vegas rather than the glitz and glamour of the strip and nightlife,” Yarusso said.

Yarusso went on to say the trip is a lot of fun, but it’s also important to have a great showing. In order to prepare your team for such a big competition, there are a few things to keep in mind to be successful.

“Teams should expect to play some good competition,” Yarusso said. “Teams that are fit and minimize mistakes will do well.”

The LVI is well-placed to give cold-region teams some warm-weather game time in February, and also to give them some exposure.

“I would hope this tournament can continue to attract the top collegiate 7s programs for a good product and would become part of a televised series by joining the CRC on NBC,” said Yarusso.

Get more on the Las Vegas Invitational by **clicking here** .