

Painful Memories as 7s Team Turns to Scotland

Written by
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You get the feeling that the USA 7s team players might feel at home in the dreary, wet weather in Edinburgh.

After getting a long talk about taking care of the ball, not forcing passes, and being content with taking five minutes to score a try, the Eagles finished off their London 7s by ... throwing the ball away. They staggered out of London 1-4, and angry at themselves for losing the wrong way.

Unfazed, Head Coach Al Caravelli has returned to his mantra of ball retention, and told RUGBYMag.com that the players have been focused all week leading up to the Edinburgh 7s.

“Training has been good,” said the coach. “The guys have been sharp. They know it’s going to be tough this week. To beat one of the top teams you have to play a flawless game.”

And you have to put distractions behind you. Perhaps the Eagles didn’t do that so well last week – a couple of rough calls, including a knock-on in-goal that was given as a try – contributed to their loss to England. Then they came back against Argentina, but were somewhat annoyed at themselves for having left it so late.

It was if the ghosts of their own self-doubt and frustration affected their performance against France, Spain and Portugal, all losses.

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“We are at the point where we simply should not lose to non-core teams,” said Caravelli, bluntly. “They are all good teams, but we did not play well against them.”

So on to Edinburgh, where the USA plays Samoa, Fiji and Scotland. The Americans match up relatively well against Samoa but have only beaten them once. Against Fiji they are 2-14.

“We have to control the ball,” said Caravelli. “You cannot afford to make mistakes at this level, and it will take all 12 players to accomplish what we need to accomplish.”

Look for Caravelli to make some lineup changes, also, as he assesses players for the Pan-Am Games in October.

Notes: The USA is currently 11th in the HSBC Sevens World Series standings. A place in the top 12 means an invitation back as a core team, meaning they play in all eight tournaments in 2011-2012. The USA is currently 11th with 10 points. Kenya and Scotland are only two points ahead at 12, and so could be caught. Meanwhile, Portugal and Russia are two points behind at 8, France at 6 and Canada at 5.