Matt Hawkins stepped into camp for the USA 7s team ready to get the team moving again, and in the mood to joke around.

Asked about how the team would start training when half the squad had just been run through the wringer by Eddie O'Sullivan and the 15s team camp, Hawkins deadpanned: "I don't think it was so tough; some guys have some bruises to prove they were in some contact, so they might get a little rest."

All in good fun, but the captain isn't about to let the momentum slip for the 7s Eagles.

"The biggest thing that we have is momentum," Hawkins told RUGBYMag.com. "And this time is special. Going to this tournament … it's one I have never managed to play in. A lot of times we have injuries and it seems like every year four or five of the real core guys have been unavailable. It seems like for the first time most of the guys who started the season are going to be able to finish it off."

Most. Not all. Mark Bokhoven is still injured. Nu'u Punimata is in camp, but he's just back from injury and it's going to be hard. And, this is an enormously competitive camp. It's quite possible that someone who is considered a USA 7s team regular, could be staying home.

Still, said Hawkins, who is the first player in some years to captain the squad in every

tournament, the team is a strong unit, helped in large part because almost all have been in camp before.

“There’s a lot of cohesiveness, and a comfort level,” said Hawkins. “Unfortunately things change because of work or injuries, but overall it will be a lot easier for those guys to get up to speed and where we need to be because they’ve been here before. Of course, we also know now there are guys looking over your shoulder. You wonder what’s next and who’s gunning for your spot, but that’s what we’ve been cultivating over the years. That’s the culture we want.”

Spoken like a true captain. And what does the captain want from the players?

“The biggest thing I have harped on is, I want the guys to believe in themselves,” Hawkins explained. “Each year one of these guys shows up who has the capacity to play at the international level. But that’s not the only thing you need. You have to have that self belief. If we believe in ourselves, we can build on the work were we doing in Australia and finish the season strong.”