Olympic Club has been to the national semifinal twice before, in 2007 and 2008. Palmer has been three times, last year (2010), 2001 and 1995.

Both storied clubs have members who feel they should already have one of USA Rugby's eagle-shaped trophies in their respective cases, but after Olympic Club and Palmer meet Saturday at Infinity Park in Glendale, Colo. in the 2011 semifinal, only one team will still have a shot at the bronzed bird, while the other will go home disappointed, again.

Asked if he thought this felt like the year they'd win it all, Olympic Club center Matt Rose said simply and earnestly, "Yes."

Palmer center Mike Junk elaborated a little more when posed with the same question.

"I feel like we've got some good drive. We're ready to be there," he said. "We only lost a few key starters from the pack. Although we're smaller, we're definitely fit and ready to be out there and see what the Olympic Club's got. I think everyone's just excited to try and bring back a championship."

Olympic Club's lineup features some pretty familiar names. Cal All-American Keegan Engelbrecht is their flyhalf, Cal All-American and Eagle Rikus Pretorius is at No. 7 (Well, No. 6. He's South African), Eagle No. 8 Kort Schubert anchors the back row, and former NFL and Stanford defensive tackle Carl Hansen is a cog in the engine room.

Palmer's bunch perhaps possesses a little less star power. Jarod Selby is an international 7s player, but for Canada, so his name probably raises fewer eyebrows in the American club

scene. English scrumhalf Luke Stringer is a very skilled player, but just in his first year of American rugby, he too isn't a broadly known talent. Ryan Duklas is a UW-Whitewater All-American and the Dragons' No. 8, but he probably isn't as famous as Engelbrecht.

These two talent-chocked rosters should create some interesting matchups. How will Duklas handle lining up across from Schubert?

"I would wage caution comparing any American No. 8 to Kort Schubert," said O-Club coach Ray Lehner. "Kort's a pretty special player, and there's a lot that Kort does for our club, but I don't know a lot about this Palmer kid, so we'll have to wait and see how they match up."

Pretorius is arguably O-Club's best player, but will he find his usual measure of success against one of Palmer's best defenders, strong-side flanker and former Kutztown standout James Fitzgerald?

Engelbrecht has as accurate a boot as there is in DI, but if he misses when going for territory, the ball will likely find its way into the hands of Selby, a lethal attacker. This matchup, amongst all others, could be the key to success or failure for either club.

"The No. 1 goal would be to not kick (Selby) the ball, and if we have to, we hope to turn him around," said Lehner. "We don't really treat is as a special order, it's just kind of good rugby tactics to never kick the ball to a fullback with a wide field in front of him."

Controlling possession with forwards and territory with smart kicking is Olympic Club's gameplan. To disrupt it, Palmer needs to play strong one-on-one defense.

"They sound like a pretty well-balanced team," said Junk of O-Club, "and I feel if we catch them with our forwards, if we make good tackles right at the breakdown, don't let them suck us in too much and shoot it wide on us, I feel defensively, if we tackle hard and keep them short yardage at every breakdown, we should be able to hang with them pretty well."

Olympic Club and Palmer kick off at 4:30pm local time. The winner plays either host Glendale or the Boston Irish Wolfhounds 4pm Sunday.