Harlequins Cup 7s kicks off the West club 7s qualification season Saturday in Irving, Texas.

9 teams are expected to compete in the qualifier bracket: Dallas Harlequins, Quins B, Fort Worth Elite, Glendale, Woodland Exiles, Kansas City Rogues, Kansas City Blues, Denver Barbarians and the Austin Huns.

The top four finishers from the 2010 tournament are back; the Barbos are defending champs, the Quins are looking to improve on their second-place finish a year ago, and the Blues and Rogues are again looking to score precious points.

Perhaps the most noteworthy newcomer is Glendale. Fresh off a DI 15s title campaign, the Raptors have revamped their 7s program. They took last summer off, but have hired former 15s and 7s Springbok Andre Snyman as their 7s coach and put together a formidable roster.

The most recognizeable name on the roster is Ata Malifa, the capped 7s Eagle. Dewon Reed has been with Glendale's 15s team for years, but played 7s with the Barbos. He'll be in Glendale blue in Dallas. Former Aspen 7s captain Spencer Scott is now a Raptor, and he's a big addition. Cristian Sarmento, who spent the 15s season with the Barbos, is back with Glendale for the summer.

The host Quins have also overhauled their 7s team. Zac Mizell and Gonzalo Ruiz return from last summer, as does scrumhalf Dylan Carrion. Carrion is expected to miss the first qualifier due to injury, however.

The connection Dallas has made with Arkansas State, with Mizell, his brother Jake and Carrion all going to school in Jonesboro, has paid off this summer, as fellow Red Wolves Paul Benade Shaun Potgieter are playing for the Quins.

But the most notable addition is Hunter Leland, the honorable mention USA Rugby All-American from Texas A&M. He and Eric Luikens, the star of the Texas Longhorn 7s team that participated in the CRC, will add a jolt of speed and skill to an already impressive Quins team.

The defending champs should again challenge for the Quins Cup, despite losing some playmakers. Expected back are Maximo DeAchaval and Ben Haapapuro, who combine for maybe the best restart tandem in the country.

However, Taylor Howden has moved to Long Beach, Calif. to play for Belmont Shore, and as mentioned earlier, Reed is with Glendale. The Barbos will also be without the services of Mark Bokhoven, who is recovering quickly from injury but has a personal obligations keeping him from being in Dallas.

The two Kansas City teams, Rogues and Blues, should be competing for qualification points, as both have won social tournaments this summer; the Blues cashing in at Tulsa's Parrothead 7s and the Rogues taking Fountain City 7s in Kansas City. The Forth Worth Elite and Austin Huns are also expected to be competitive.

RUGBYMag.com's Pat Clifton will be on the ground in Dallas, and you can follow him on Twitter (@Pat_Clifton) for live scoring updates. You can also check quins7.com and the Harlequin 7s facebook page for updates.