

How the Eagles Roster Will Affect Club 7s

Written by Pat Clifton
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The 36-man roster announced Thursday will have a resounding impact on the Club 7s Championships, since the Eagles play Canada in Toronto Aug. 6, the first day of the 7s Championships in San Francisco, Calif.

The inclusion of Mike Palefau on the 36-man list is a big blow to the Utah Warriors. Palefau is one of the most revered and feared speedsters in the club game, and his experience and presence will not be easily replaced. The Warriors are hoping to get Don Pati, who's recovering from knee surgery, back in time for Nationals, and that would soften the blow.

On the upside for the Warriors' 7s title prospects, Ryan Chapman was not selected. Listed on the 50-man preliminary roster from which the 36 was chosen, Chapman is enjoying great success in his first summer of 7s. He brings a very large and physical presence to Utah.

The Warriors have already secured their bid to Nationals, winning the Pacific Coast qualifier. Finishing second and also punching their ticket to the tournament were San Francisco Golden Gate, who'll be hosting Nationals. They could pick up the services of Volney Rouse, who did not make the Eagle cut.

The Chicago Griffins took the biggest hit with the naming of the list, as Roland and Andrew Suniula will not be eligible for Nationals, should the Griffins qualify Saturday at the Midwest Championships. Andrew did not play in Grand Rapids, Mich. Saturday, when the Griffins defeated the Lions for the first time in five years and won the title. But Roland did, and losing both won't be easy to overcome.

The team that benefited the most from the whittled down list is Belmont Shore, who will now have the services of Matt Hawkins and Shalom Suniula. Both on the preliminary 50-man list, but both were shaved Thursday.

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Mark Bokhoven was also unlisted, meaning he may be available for the Denver Barbarians. Bokhoven, who is recovering from a torn ACL, is ahead of his recovery schedule, but certainly not a lock to make it on the pitch for the Barbos. He is running in a straight line with pace, but the lateral movement has yet to return to full strength. Denver 7s director Howard Kent says Bokhoven is unlikely to compete in the West's final qualifier Saturday, and his goal is being ready for the Pan-Am games in the fall.