The Allied Rugby Conference hosts its national qualifier Saturday in Norman, Okla. The eight-team field is split into two pools, with out-of-conference teams like Oklahoma State, Arkansas and Colorado State competing.

Texas A&M, Colorado State, Texas Tech and Baylor are in pool A, and Arkansas, Sam Houston State, Oklahoma and Oklahoma State make up pool B. The top two teams from each pool advance to the semifinals, and the tournament champion is awarded an automatic bid to the 7s National Championships.

The caveat is that teams playing in the ARC and another qualifier, like Colorado State, Arkansas and Texas A&M, had to submit to USA Rugby which tournament they intend to qualify through prior to playing. A&M intends to qualify through the Southeastern Collegiate Rugby Conference's championship in Montgomery, Ala. next weekend, so the Aggies cannot win an automatic bid in Norman. It's unclear whether Arkansas or Colorado State have chosen the ARC as their qualifier.

Nonetheless, Texas A&M should be considered a threat to do well in Oklahoma. Connor Mills and Brian Guillen are back, as is pretty much the whole team that competed at Nationals last fall.

The talented Jan Young will make his Texas A&M 7s debut this weekend. He was injured part of last season and participated in the Texas A&M Corps of Cadets, which limited his availability.

Having won the bid to host Nationals for the second year in a row with plenty of time to prep, the Aggies are amped to make a run at a National Championship.

“The guys are really jacked up about 7s and they’ve taken a real good attitude towards it. They’re real excited about it,” said A&M coach Brett Mills.

“I think the traditional attitude was 7s was fun, but it wasn’t that serious, but now when you have a goal, which is obviously to go to the National Championships again and try and win it, win the ARC, win the SEC, it kind of changes the atmosphere at camp and guys are real professional about their approach.”

Also expected to compete for the ARC title is host Oklahoma. The Sooners were very active in 7s last year, playing at 7s Nationals and the Collegiate Rugby Championship. They return their entire CRC roster, which went 2-3 in Philadelphia and was knocked out in the Challenger semifinals by Maryland.

Bobby Impson made the CRC All Tournament team and helped the Denver Barbarians to a semifinal appearance at the men’s club 7s National Championships in August. Michael Al-Jiboori, Brad Henry, Dakota Wilkinson, Patrik Jones and Ryan Bachman are all play-making veterans for the Sooners.

Arkansas is another team to watch out for, as the Razorbacks are fresh off of a second-place finish to varsity Lindenwood at the Heart of America tournament Sept. 22. They also competed

at Nationals last year.

Texas Tech has some 7s experience, too, having played at the CRC Qualifier in Las Vegas in 2011.

For the ARC 7s schedule, visit this link.