

Nats Bid on Offer at ECRC 7s

Written by Pat Clifton

Thursday, 04 October 2012 15:23



The East Coast Rugby Conference 7s tournament is Saturday in Amesbury, Mass. Eight teams make up the field, with the champion advancing to the USA Rugby College 7s National Championships next month in College Station, Texas.

The only team which cannot earn the automatic bid on offer this weekend is American International College, who is new to the conference. Upon entering the ECRC, the Yellow Jackets agreed they would not be eligible for the conference's automatic bid in 15s or 7s.

AIC won the inaugural Northeast 7s Circuit in the spring. Boston College, Albany and UConn also competed in the three-tournament series. So the Yellow Jackets should be considered the favorites coming into the weekend. Boston College is the defending ECRC 7s champ, so the Eagles are also a threat.

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Northeastern, the defending ECRC 15s champion, is hobbling into the 7s tournament with some injuries, but the Huskies have been focusing on all-around team play and building a 7s program. But they, along with the rest of the conference, are having to do it in the middle of a 15s season.

“It’s been pretty hard to really find the balance between what we’re trying to do with the team in 15s versus what we’re trying to do with 7s, especially given the fact that we have a completely new coaching staff,” said Northeastern 15s head coach and 7s assistant Jamie Green.

“Leading up to the tournament we’ve managed to get quite a bit of focus on the 7s and despite the fact that we’re carrying quite a few injuries, we’re really hoping to make a performance.”

Albany started their 7s renaissance a little earlier than Northeastern, playing in the Northeast 7s Circuit, the CRC Qualifier in Las Vegas and the Empire 7s tournament all last semester. Albany has been focusing on 7s one day a week throughout the fall.

“I think we’ll do Okay. There’s five games, so our depth, I don’t know if we have the depth to last the whole tournament,” said Albany coach John Durant. “Our top eight, I feel, are competitive. Beyond that, it’s not a lack of athletic ability, it’d be more experience, guys that are relatively new to 7s who didn’t get a lot of playing time in the spring.”

Each team advances to the quarterfinals following pool play, with the top team from each pool playing the bottom team from the other and so on.

Pools

A

Boston College

Northeastern

UConn

UMass

B

Albany

Middlebury

AIC

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Southern Connecticut