Waisale Serevi remembers what it was like to be an amateur rugby player representing Fiji. He remembers what it was like when the game went professional, and still Fiji struggled to support its team.

The all-time rugby 7s great sees now, in 2011, despite rugby being the national sport of Fiji, Samoa and Tonga, that their national teams are still strapped for cash, and the frustration comes out in his voice, if not necessarily in his words.

“From my point of view the players are doing their part,” Serevi told RUGBYMag.com as he unveiled his Island Kings T-shirt initiative, proceeds of which will go to provide financial assistance to players from Fiji, Samoa and Tonga. “They are training hard, working hard. I am not pointing fingers. I just want to do what I can to support the boys.”

Fans of the Pacific Island national teams can buy the Serevi Rugby T-shirts to show their support, and money will also go directly to the players.

“What we are trying to do is set up the platform to support the players,” Serevi explained. “I remember what we faced when I represented Fiji. The played do not get supported financially. This is a great opportunity for me. I have seen the struggles, and not only Fiji but Samoa and Tonga are still looking for sponsors. From my point of view the players are doing their part. They are training hard, working hard. I am not pointing fingers. I just want to do what I can to support the boys. They have supporters all over the world and with this T-shirt plan those supporters can show their support, and help the team as well.”

Serevi has now made his home in Seattle, and is working on several initiatives to help rugby in the USA, but he remains connected to Fiji.

“Politically things are difficult in Fiji so maybe it’s difficult for the team to raise money,” he said. “But I know that when the players are happy, they perform to the best of their ability. Rugby has brought me this far and it is my time to promote rugby and in this case especially help Fiji and Tonga and Samoa.”

The T-shirts, modeled at right, can be purchased from www.serevirugby.com and from exclusive online partner
www.worldrugbyshop.com
for US$24.99.