

## After Dubai, Women's Series Strikes Out on Own

Written by Alex Goff

Wednesday, 28 November 2012 02:30

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The IRB Women's Sevens World Series is one of the most significant advances in the global suite of Rugby tournaments and a huge step forward for the Women's Game, and it begins this weekend in Dubai.

"It's huge," said IRB Head of Development and Performance Mark Egan. "The establishment of the IRB Women's Sevens World Series is one of the most exciting developments in our competitions program for a while."

What is also interesting is the way the venues were chosen. Many believed that the Women's World Series would piggy-back off the men's World Series venues. But in fact that is only happening in one place, Dubai.

The other three venues – BBVA Compass Stadium in Houston Feb 1-2, Guangzhou University Town Stadium March 30-31 in China, and NRCA Stadium in Amsterdam May 17-18, are all stand-alone events.

Why did they do this? And why did the IRB pick Houston over Las Vegas, where there was already a women's international competition?

The first question first. The IRB wants the Women's World Series to succeed on its own, and as a result picked venues that weren't associated with men's events. The exception is, of course, Dubai, and with Emirates Airlines being a major sponsor of the World Series, and with The Sevens venue having two side-by-side fields, it makes sense the IRB made an exception in that case.

But the other venues were chosen because they weren't connected to a men's event.

In the USA, there are additional reasons Las Vegas wasn't chosen:

1. USA Rugby has rights to the women's event, and likely wanted to retain those rights, and not have the event become controlled by USA 7s LLC by default.

2. In Las Vegas, there is a women's international 7s, which is held as part of the Las Vegas Invitational. (It's worth noting that this has been part of the USA 7s weekend since 2007, and women's 7s has always been played in the stadium since USA 7s LLC has run the event.) But the LVI Women's International 7s is on a field that shares space with other competitions. It's not a stand-alone stadium, and that's what the IRB wanted.

They rejected Hong Kong for the same reason – only the semis and final are played in the stadium in Hong Kong. In Vegas, it's usually just the final. That's not what the IRB wants.

It's expected that a number of international women's teams will stay on in the USA and play in Las Vegas, as well, and it's certainly possible that the Women's World Series will expand in some way if it is at all successful.

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A pre-sale of tickets for the Women's 7s in Houston are on sale now, by the way

Tickets for the International Women's Rugby Sevens World Series in Houston will go on sale to the general public beginning Friday, November 30 at 10 a.m. and will be available online at [www.axs.com](http://www.axs.com)

or

[www.bbvacompassstadium.com](http://www.bbvacompassstadium.com)

or by calling 888-929-7849.

Teams expected are: Australia, Canada, England, Netherlands, New Zealand and the United States take on Brazil, South Africa, Russia, Japan, Argentina, and Trinidad & Tobago.