A report on the Fijian news website Fijilive.com stating that the USA and Canada have joined the Pacific Nations may have some legs.

The IRB is looking into expanding the competition now that Samoa has been pulled out. Now it appears that the competition might include Fiji, Tonga, Japan, the USA, and Canada.

This idea has been discussed before, but nothing has been confirmed. Wednesday's report on Fijilive.com apparently made it all seem a done deal. It isn't … yet.

Asked for comment, USA Rugby CEO Nigel Melville didn't say nothing will happen.

"The concept is at an advanced stage of discussion," Melville told RUGBYMag.com. "An announcement will likely be made in the next few weeks."

What will likely happen is that the USA and Canada will host one game in this competition and play one on the road. And then everyone will convene in Japan for a final week of matches.

Does this all sound familiar? It should. From 1996-2001 the USA was in some form of Pacific-based competition. The Pacific Rim had the USA, Canada, Japan and Hong Kong playing home-and-away with each other through the spring. This lasted from 1996-1998. In 1999 the competition, then named the Epson Cup, was changed to exclude Hong Kong (which had been allowed to cap players in residence for only six months) and include Samoa, Tonga, and Fiji. This round-robin competition lasted two years, and then was reduced in 2001 to a system where USA played Canada for the right to play in a two-game weekend in Tokyo.

That was the last year the North American teams were involved.

The IRB formed the Pacific Nations Cup after that, and included development sides from New Zealand and Australia. Now it includes Fiji, Tonga, and Japan. Samoa are the defending

champions, but in June, when the event is held, they will be touring South Africa.