This is an Eagle Eye column by Alex Goff

After seeing the USA men's 7s team make the Cup Quarterfinals for the first time since the 2010-2011 season, former USA 7s team standout Paul Emerick tweeted that the development was crucial, because the USA needed the series points.

And he's correct. Wins and improvement are all nice, but the timing is important, too. Winning two games on Day One generally means you have guaranteed at least ten points in the standings. That's what the Eagles ended up with after losing two close matches on Day Two. The upshot of those ten points? The USA shot up from 15th to 12th, and are now just a point behind Canada and two points behind Australia.

Behind them, among others, is, amazingly, England.

This is important in part because the HSBC Sevens World Series has a promotion-relegation plan in place now. The core teams ranked 13th through 15th after the 8th round in Glasgow will go into a qualifying tournament in London. They will have to fight with five other teams for the right to return as a core team.

A few days ago the USA were 15th, and a distant 15th. Now they are 13th – still in the relegation window but only four points from 9th. And given how up and down the Series has been so far, they could emerge from the next two rounds – Wellington, and Las Vegas – either in the top eight, or back down around 15 again.

The parity in the World Series this year is unprecedented. So far only three teams – New

Zealand, France, and Fiji – have qualified for the top 8 in all three tournaments. Six have qualified two out of three times, and three, Australia, Canada, and the USA, have made the Cup Quarters once.

A year ago at this time the split was very different – seven teams had made all three cup quarters, Samoa had made it twice, and Argentina once. A total of nine teams had used up the 24 Cup Quarterfinals spots. This year, 12 teams have been there.

What that says is that going forward, we might see more unpredictability. It also makes for varied pools each tournament.

The key point is, the USA has their fate in their own hands. Because parity is there in the World Series, they really can't be worrying about draws or matchups; they just need to produce. Win two on Day One a few more times, and you move up in the standings. Struggle on Day One, and Day Two probably won't be any easier. Struggle too often, and you're playing to get back in the core 15 for next year.