WORCESTER, England - Eagles Head Coach, Eddie O'Sullivan, has made three changes to his starting team ahead of Saturday's important clash with Russia at Sixways Stadium.

The USA v. Russia match will kick off at 7:00 a.m. ET on June 18 and will be broadcast live online at www.universalsports.com and on tape delay on Universal Sports at 12 p.m. ET.

Both the USA and Russia know there is more to this match than meets the eye, as the next time these two teams will see each other will be on September 15 on the world's biggest stage, the Rugby World Cup.

The last time these two countries faced off in June of 2010, the Eagles ran out 39-22 winners (watch those highlights by clicking here). The Eagles will, however, be without veteran fullback Chris Wyles (Saracens) and wing Taku Ngwenya (Biarritz), who both scored tries in that victory, and also Hayden Smith (Saracens), Samu Manoa (San Francisco Golden Gate) and Mike MacDonald (Leeds Carnegie).

The Eagles will be looking for more consistency in their play, with many of the combinations tested last week having another opportunity to work together.

"We are looking forward to the final game of the Churchill Cup and we expect after our third week in camp we will be more cohesive than we were against Tonga. But it will be a tough game against Russia who have already had three months together in New Zealand and the Six Nations Tier Two Championship during the spring", said O'Sullivan.

In Pool B, Russia narrowly lost out 24-19 against Italy 'A' and 34-18 to a powerful Canadian outfit.

"This is going to be a very important game for us as we build towards the RWC," said Eagles captain Todd Clever.

The starting team for the USA is similar to last week, with two changes to both the forwards and the backs.

The props are Shawn Pittman and Mate Moeakiola, with Eric Fry providing cover in the reserves. Chris Biller starts at hooker and Phil Thiel will be on call on the bench. Lock John van der Giessen takes over the number four jersey and will partner with Scott LaValla, who has been outstanding in 2011. Louis Stanfill moves from lock to eight man, while Inaki Basauri and Clever round out the loose trio. The other forward replacements are Pat Danahy (lock) and Nic Johnson (loose forward).

In the backline Cal Golden Bear, Blaine Scully, comes into the squad at fullback with Roland Suniula shifting to the bench. Scully has been on the Eagles' radar for some time since impressing All-American and National Team selectors during his time at Cal. Scully is an All-American, played on the IRB Sevens World Series in 2009-2010 and was also in the 2010 Churchill Cup squad.

The other change in the backline is at scrumhalf, as the hard-working Mike Petri comes back into the starting team.

The experienced left wing Kevin Swiryn gets a start with Colin Hawley on the right wing. Hawley is the only American player to start in every 2011 Churchill Cup match.

The center pairing of Paul Emerick and Andrew Suniula gets more valuable time together, with playmaker Nese Malifa spearheading the backline.

Tim Usasz (scrumhalf) and Tai Enosa (utility back) are the other two backline replacements.

This match has significant ranking implications but will also be a preview of the USA v. Russia Pool C fixture in the 2011 Rugby World Cup that has already begun to attract significant media attention. Russia is currently ranked #19 in the world, while the Eagles are two places ahead at #17.

"It is an important test as it gives us the opportunity for us to throw down a marker for our RWC pool game and another opportunity for players to stake a claim for inclusion in the RWC Squad," echoed O'Sullivan.

In the other Churchill Cup fixtures, the England Saxons will play Canada in the Cup final (11:30 a.m. ET), while Tonga takes on Italy 'A' in the Plate final (9:15 a.m. ET). Those games will also be broadcast live on www.universalsports.com .

USA EAGLES
15 Blaine Scully (University of California - Berkeley)

14 Colin Hawley (Olympic Club)

13 Paul Emerick (Life University)

12 Andrew Suniula (Chicago Griffins)

11 Kevin Swiryn (Agen)

10 Nese Malifa (Glendale)

9 Mike Petri (New York Athletic Club)

1 Mate Moeakiola (Bobigny 93)

2 Chris Biller (San Francisco Golden Gate)

3 Shawn Pittman (London Welsh)

4 John van der Giessen (Utah Warriors)

5 Scott LaValla (Stade Francais)

6 Inaki Basauri (L'Aquila)

7 Todd Clever (Suntory Sungoliath, captain)

8 Louis Stanfill (Mogliano)

Reserves:

16 Phil Thiel (Life University)

17 Eric Fry (Las Vegas Blackjacks)

18 Pat Danahy (Life University)

19 Nic Johnson (Unattached)

20 Tim Usasz (Nottingham RFC)

21 Roland Suniula (Boston Rugby)

22 Tai Enosa (Belmont Shore)

Unavailable due to injury:

J.J Gagiano (Cape Town University), Junior Sifa (Nottingham RFC)