Written by Pat Clifton
Tuesday, 02 August 2011 15:33

In their last eight matches against Canada, dating back to 2009, the Eagles have posted a 2-6 record.

Their combined winning margin in the two victories (20-19 in ‘05 and 12-6 in ‘09) is just that of a converted try. Their average margin of loss is 26.5.

The last time the Eagles played in Canada, in 2009 during the World Cup qualification process, they were shellacked 41-18.

Those scores will be irrelevant when the Eagles take BMO field against Canada Saturday in Toronto, but they won’t be forgotten.

“I’ve felt the defeats and I’ve felt the wins, and its tough to go out there,” USA captain Todd Clever said.

“Playing Canada means everything. It means exactly the same for Canada. With this rivalry, it’s a blood rivalry,” added prop Mike MacDonald, who has a chance to tie Luke Gross as the most-capped Eagle of all time when Canada visits Glendale, Colo. a week from Saturday.

“They’ve gotten the better of us, in the last game. We won slightly before that. They’ve played really well in the last two Churchill Cups. The boys are aware of the challenge that’s ahead of them.”

The Eagles take the Canada game personally. Asked if beating Canada really meant more than beating the likes of Tonga or another Tier Two opponent, Louis Stanfill replied:

“Yes. Hands down it does. They're our neighbors to the North. They're our rival. We play them most often, and the past few years they've had our number, so it's time for us to turn that table.”

The question is, how?

“Try to be as aggressive as we can, and the veteran players try to build expectation of what to expect in the game,” MacDonald said.

“I know that we’re playing for more than each other. We're playing for the country and the fans and all that, but when you’re in there and you have a task, you really have to focus. You’ve really got to have that mentality of doing it,” added Clever...

“That’s the sort of attitude we need to bring in, and have faith in each other and trust...If they cross our line, they’re going to have to work their ass off to do so.”

USA and Canada kick off at 2pm Eastern. The game will be aired live on Universal Sports and webcast live on Universalsports.com. Check back to *RUGBYMag.com* for photos and a full report after game.