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AUCKLAND, 9 Sept. - Key facts about the USA players selected for the Rugby World Cup 2011 match against Ireland on 11 September at Stadium Taranaki, New Plymouth, between USA and Ireland.

1. Mike MacDonald (Leeds Carnegie, England, age 30, 62 caps, 6 tries, 8 RWC matches, 1 RWC try)

- Third Rugby World Cup.
- A third World Cup appearance by MacDonald and Paul Emerick equals the Eagles record by Alec Parker.
- Has played in all eight of the United States' RWC matches in 2003 and 2007.
- Needs to play in three matches in RWC 2011 to break Alec Parker's Eagles record of 10 RWC matches.
- With his 63rd cap, sets a new Eagles record, surpassing Luke Gross's total of 62.
- Is the only player in the Eagles squad to have made his test debut before 2003 (30 June 2000).

2. Phil Thiel (Life University, USA, age 26, 9 caps)

- Rugby World Cup Debut.
- Will be competing with Chris Biller for the starting position at hooker.
- Was involved in American Football and wrestling in school, before giving rugby a try.
- Won his first four tests and has now lost his last five. Made his Eagles debut in November 2009.

3. Shawn Pittman (London Welsh, England, age 23, 13 caps)

- Debut Rugby World Cup.
- One of six players in this squad to play club rugby in England, playing professionally at London Welsh.
- His position is tighthead prop and he is expected to be the Eagles' starter in that spot.
- Made his test debut in November 2008 and has collected 13 caps.

4. John Van Der Giessen (Utah Warriors, USA, age 29, 18 caps, 1 try)

- Debut Rugby World Cup.

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- Will be joining the Utah Warriors, after having played club rugby at Bath (England) in 2010/2011.
- Was called up to replace the injured Luke Gross at RWC 2007, but never saw any of action.
- Eventually made his national team debut in June 2008 in a defeat against England Saxons.

5. Hayden Smith (Saracens, England, age 26, 14 caps)

- Debut Rugby World Cup.
- Born in Penrith, a western suburb of Sydney, Australia.
- Joins Chris Wyles as the only players in this squad to play in the English Premiership. Both are Saracens.
- Made his test debut on 8 November 2008.

6. Louis Stanfill (Mogliano, Italy, age 26, 26 caps, 3 tries, 4 RWC matches, 2 RWC tries)

- Second Rugby World Cup.
- Played in all four of USA's World Cup matches in 2007.
- Scored two of his three career test tries at the 2007 RWC, crossing against Samoa and Tonga.
- Is coming off a professional spell at Italian club Mogliano and is looking to extend his overseas career
- Started his international career by losing his first 13 tests. Has won seven of the 13 that followed.

7. Todd Clever (Suntory Sungoliath, Japan, age 28, 37 caps, 11 tries, 4 RWC matches)

- Second Rugby World Cup.
- Will captain his side in the 2011 Rugby World Cup. Nicknamed 'Captain America'.
- Played in all four of the Eagles' 2007 Rugby World Cup matches.
- Was selected to 2003 World Cup squad, but did not play a single match in that tournament.
- Made his national team debut in August 2003, when still a student at the University of Nevada.
- Plays in Japan's Top League, having played in New Zealand and South Africa.
- Will play as a flanker. Also a keen Sevens' player, in which he plays as a prop.

8. Nic Johnson (Unattached, age 28, 14 caps)

- Rugby World Cup debut
- Projected to be the starting number 8, but can play other back row positions.

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- Not attached to a club after playing professional rugby at Italian outfit L'Aquila.
- Made his test debut against Ireland in May 2009. Has represented the Eagles 14 times.

9. Mike Petri (New York Athletic Club, age 27, 22 caps, 1 try, 1 RWC match)

- Second Rugby World Cup.
- Featured in one 2007 RWC match.
- Made his test debut at the 2007 Rugby World Cup, in a 64-15 defeat against South Africa.
- Recorded his only career test try in a 39-22 win against Russia in June 2010.
- Has represented England's Sale Sharks and Wales' Newport Gwent Dragons at club level.
- Faces competition from teammate Tim Usasz for the starting scrum half position.

10. Roland Suniula (Boston Rugby, USA, age 24, 8 caps, 1 try)

- Debut Rugby World Cup.
- Joins older brother Andrew in this squad. Both were born in American Samoa.
- Listed as a centre, but is also capable of providing cover at fly half.
- Scored a try in his test debut, a 27-10 defeat against Ireland in May 2009. This remains his only test try.
- Learned to play the game in New Zealand, but is now playing his domestic rugby in the USA.

11. James Paterson (Highlanders, New Zealand), age 24, 1 cap)

- Debut Rugby World Cup.
- Only player in the Eagles' squad that was born in New Zealand. He was born in Christchurch.
- Has played Super Rugby for the Crusaders and most recently the Highlanders.
- Made his test debut on 21 August of this year in a match against Japan.

12. Andrew Suniula (Chicago Griffins, USA, age 29, 9 caps, 2 tries)

- Debut Rugby World Cup.
- Joins younger brother Roland in this squad. Both were born in American Samoa.
- Played Rugby League in Australia for the Manly Sea Eagles before switching to Rugby Union.
- Has scored test tries against Portugal and Russia.
- Made his national team debut in November 2008 in a 29-19 defeat against Japan.

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13. Paul Emerick (Life University, USA, age 31, 44 caps, 14 tries, 4 RWC matches)

- Third Rugby World Cup.
- One of two players in this squad that can play in third RWC. The other is Mike MacDonald.
- The record for RWC participations by an American is three by Alec Parker.
- Played one match in the 2003 RWC and three of the USA's four in 2007. Plays at centre.
- Back in the USA after having played for clubs in New Zealand, Italy, Wales and Ireland.
- Has scored 14 test tries in 44 matches after making his Eagles debut in April 2003.
- His 14 test tries rank second in Eagles history behind Vaea Anitoni's 26.

14. Takudzwa Ngwenya (Biarritz Olympique, France, age 26, 19 caps, 8 tries, 4 RWC matches, 2 tries)

- Second Rugby World Cup.
- Played in all four of USA's RWC matches in 2007.
- Scored two tries in RWC 2007, including one against South Africa that was voted 'Try of the Tournament'.
- Born in Harare, Zimbabwe. Plays his club rugby in France with top flight side Biarritz Olympique.
- 'Taku' made his test debut at the 2007 World Cup in a 28-10 defeat against England.

15. Blaine Scully (Unattached, age 23, 4 caps, 1 try)

- Debut Rugby World Cup.
- Made his test debut in June of this year and has featured in four tests.
- Scored his only test try against Canada in August of this year.
- Not attached to a club. Aiming to play professional rugby overseas after the 2011 RWC.

16. Chris Biller (hooker, San Francisco Golden Gate, USA, age 25, 13 caps)

- Debut Rugby World Cup.
- Has appeared in 13 test matches for the Eagles, having made his debut on 31 May 2009.
- In a battle with teammate Phil Thiel to be the starting hooker in the USA's opening match.
- Won the 2011 Super League Championship with San Francisco Golden Gate.

17. Matekitonga Moeakiola (prop, Bobigny, France), age 33, 23 caps, 1 try, 4 RWC matches, 1 RWC try)

- Second Rugby World Cup.

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- Featured in all four of USA's 2007 RWC matches.
- Born in Vaini, Tonga. Teammates call him 'Mate'.
- At 33, he is the oldest in this United States squad.
- Projected to be Mike MacDonald's backup at loosehead prop.
- Made his test debut at the 2007 World Cup and scored his only test try in that match (vs England).
- One of seven Americans to score a try in his RWC debut and the only one in 2007.
- All of his four 2007 RWC appearances were made as a substitute.
- Plays his club rugby at Bobigny, in the northern suburbs of Paris.

18. Scott LaValla (second row, Stade Français, France, age 23, 6 caps)

- Debut Rugby World Cup.
- Born on the Fourth of July, the USA's national holiday, in 1988.
- One of three players in the USA squad to be playing Top 14 domestic rugby in France.
- Made his test debut in June 2010 and has accumulated six caps.
- Listed as a second rower, but can also fill in at flanker.

19. Pat Danahy (flanker, Life University, USA, age 26, 5 caps, 1 try)

- Debut Rugby World Cup.
- Projected as one of the backup flankers behind Todd Clever and Louis Stanfill.
- Made his national team debut against Uruguay in November 2009.
- After captaining Stanford University also played collegiate rugby at Dublin University.
- Played at Australia's Eastern Suburbs, before moving to Atlanta-based Life University.

20. Tim Usasz (scrum half, Nottingham, England, age 28, 15 caps, 2 tries)

- Debut Rugby World Cup.
- In 2007, gave up a career in corporate finance to pursue one in professional rugby.
- Born in Brisbane, Australia, he represented his native country at U-16 level.
- Is expected to challenge teammate Mike Petri for the starting scrumhalf position.
- Has amassed 15 caps and two test tries after making his Eagles debut in May 2009.
- Is nicknamed 'The Russian' because of his presence and '50-50' for the reliability of his stories.

21. Nese Malifa (fly half, Glendale Raptors, USA, age 26, 20 caps, 2 RWC matches)

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- Second Rugby World Cup.
- Played in two 2007 RWC matches.
- Born in American Samoa, a country that he has represented in cricket.
- Has made 20 test appearances, scoring 65 points on 16 conversions, 10 penalties and one drop goal.
- This World Cup might fuel his ambition of playing professional rugby overseas.

22. Colin Hawley (winger, Olympic Club, USA, age 24, 4 caps, 1 try)

- Debut Rugby World Cup.
- Made his Eagles' debut in 2009 and it took another two years for him to earn his second cap.
- Scored his only career test try in his debut against Georgia in June 2009.