Written by Jackie Finlan
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The Women's National Team is currently in Chula Vista, Calif., for their first 15s-specific training camp. The assembly marks the first for new head coach Pete Steinberg, as he prepares players for the impending Nations Cup from August 2-13 at Appleby College (Oakville, Ont., Canada), site of the inaugural event in 2009.

A diverse mix of players have been invited. The previous players pool saw the majority of Eagles concentrated in the four dominating Women's Premier Clubs (Beantown, Berkeley, Minnesota Valkyries and New York), but this June camp sees 17 clubs and two at-large players in attendance. Beantown leads the pack with six players, all of whom, save Katie Dowty, played on the 2010 Rugby World Cup team. Dowty, however, has co-captained the last two USA 7s teams that competed at Las Vegas and Hong Kong.

Joining the five Beantown Eagles are another eight '10 World Cup players, including Stacey Bridges, Vix Folayan, Jill Potter, Kim Magrini, Vanesha McGee, Lisa Butts, Lynelle Kugler and Farrah Douglas.

Additionally, there are some veteran 15s players returning the fold, including 2006 RWC players Pam Kosanke and Tina Nesburg, and Anne McClain, who earned her first cap in 2004 against New Zealand.

Of the newcomers, Sadie Anderson represents the lone college player in attendance, emerging from Steinberg's Penn State team. Samanatha Pankey is the only player coming from a DII club, James River (Md.). And although several players, like Dowty and Jenny Lui, have USA 7s caps, a total of 13 players are looking for their first opportunity to earn a 15s cap.

Steinberg has already identified his top 15 for the Nations Cup, but he still needs to round out his roster and give newer players some international experience as they prepare for matches against Canada, England and South Africa, before heading into the placing match.

“This camp will primarily focus on preparing for England and Canada. We’ll only have one practice day before we play England, so we need to install our approach on attack and defense,” Steinberg told USA Rugby.

Steinberg will be receiving aid from assistant coaches Ric Suggitt (USA Women's 7s), Luke Gross (lineout specialist), John Coumbe-Lilley (former Canada Women's U20 coach), Sue Whitwell (Chicago Women and Midwest coach) and Angie Brambley (Strength & Conditioning). The team of coaches will have their work cut out for them, as they must get the squad in shape for a Nations Cup opener against England, a game that will be preceded by one day of training in Ontario.

WNT June Player Camp Attendees
Sadie Anderson (Penn State)
Stacy Baker (Keystone)
Libby Berg (Minnesota Valkyries)
Sharon Blaney (Beantown)
Sylvia Braaten (Twin Cities Amazons)
Rebecca Brafman (New York)
Francine Bray (Austin Valkyries)
Stacey Bridges (At large - West)
Jamie Burke (Beantown)
Lisa Butts (Nor Cal Triple Threat)
Emilie Bydwell (Beantown)
Sarah Chobot (Minnesota Valkyries)
Kate Daley (Chicago North Shore)
Lauren Daly (At Large)
Amy Daniels (Beantown)
Farrah Douglas (Washington Furies)
Katie Dowty (Beantown)
Victoria Folayan (Berkely All Blues)
Devin Keller (Keystone)
Pam Kosanke (Chicago North Shore)
Lynelle Kugler (Twin Cities Amazons)
Jennifer Lui (Chicago North Shore)

Kaelene Lundstrum (Twin Cities Amazons)
Kim Magrini (Keystone)
Desiree Markovich (Minnesota Valkyries)
Anne McClain (Atlanta Harlequins)
Vanesha McGee (New York)
Laura Miller (Washington Furies)
Tina Nesberg (San Jose Seahawks)
Samantha Pankey (James River)
Jillion Potter (Glendale)
Shaina Turley (San Diego Surfers)
Kittery Wagner (Beantown)
Caroline White (Seattle)