

Hawkins Has Eye on Talent

Written by Pat Clifton

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Atop Matt Hawkins' immediate to-do list as the new head coach of the National 7s Team is scout. Between Nationals last weekend, Serevi Rugbytown Sevens and the World Club 7s this weekend, Hawkins has a lot of players to study. He was on hand in Pittsburgh, he'll be on hand in Glendale, and he'll be reviewing tape from London.

"The biggest thing that people don't sort of take a look at is, you're not looking for that guys that's scoring all the tries. You're looking for the people that are doing the work. You're looking for the people that are making that try possible," Hawkins told RUGBYMag.

"And a big part of that is why Miles Craigwell got the MVP [at Nationals]. That's what you're looking for, you're looking for those grafters... You're only going to have three or four of those guys who are going to be scoring all those tries, but you need another 10 or 12 guys who are going to be doing all the work."

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In addition to Craigwell, Hawkins said he was impressed at Nationals by 1823 captain Mike Ziegler.

“He played really, really well. He’s a grafter in the forwards,” said Hawkins. “There were at least one or two per group that actually played really, really well. I’ve comprised a list of about 15 from Nationals, and after this weekend, I’m pretty confident that I’ll have it to maybe just over 20, and then at that point it’s down to just sort of making the choices of who fills those final spots and how do we get them down to San Diego.”

Already planning to be in San Diego are as many as 12 already contracted Eagles. The OTC contracts ran from January through June. But, pre-World Cup and without Hawkins’ input, several Eagles were re-signed through December, so as to avoid lame duck players playing in Moscow with worries of paychecks on their minds.

According to Hawkins, there is room for 15 players to be under contract at the OTC, so there are a few more spots to be won. And Hawkins has high hopes of bringing in another five-plus athletes for much of the fall, so there’s plenty of opportunity to play for this weekend.