

USA Women Play for Dubai 7s Bowl

Written by Jackie Finlan
Friday, 30 November 2012 14:22

The USA Women's 7s team ended day one of the Dubai 7s with one win and two losses. They started the day with a solid 27-7 win over France; were their own worst enemy in the 12-7 loss to the Netherlands; and played one of their closest matches against Australia ever, losing 15-7.



The USA was playing in arguably the toughest pool of the competition, and predicting outcomes was difficult at best. On the one hand, the USA played their opponents closely, and those losses could have gone either way. On the other hand, the Americans weren't able to close on wins that were within their reach.

"We will have to improve on our decision-making under pressure and executing the fundamental skills," USA Women's 7s coach Ric Suggitt enumerated areas of improvement. "We need to front up on our first-up tackles, too."

Those deficiencies have now seen the USA relegated to the Bowl competition, a place the Americans probably didn't expect to be on day two. While likely disappointed, Suggitt is taking the team's first outing on the IRB Women's Sevens World Series in stride.

"We are not going to hit any panic buttons," USA Women 7s coach Ric Suggitt said. "We were within a whisker in both losses. This had been a great start for the women's series, as there were so many games decided in the last minute and that were less than a seven-point difference."

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The Americans aren't the only ones who experienced some heartbreak today. Canada dropped a 15-12 decision to Russia, which was the surprise of the tournament. The 2013 Rugby World Cup Sevens hosts have clearly ramped up their preparation for the IRB circuit and were rewarded with a first-place finish in Pool B. Canada was not in top form today but salvaged a 12-12 tie against New Zealand, which finished second in the pool.

Pool A was even more unpredictable, as South Africa ended up taking top honors after defeating Brazil 19-5, losing to Spain 5-0, and then defeating England 20-5.

The best the USA can finish is ninth overall, but the Eagles will have to get past China (0-3) in the Bowl semifinals, and then the winner of France (0-3) v Brazil (0-3) in the Bowl final. Even if the Americans end with two wins tomorrow, it'll be one of the lowest finishes the Eagles have experienced in some time.

"We are in striking distance," Suggitt said optimistically, "and we have a great set-up in Chula Vista to make the necessary improvements."