In three days, the country will celebrate the hosting of its most impressive international women's 7s event to date, as the USA hosts the second leg of the IRB Women's Sevens World Series in Houston. And if the first round in Dubai was any indicator as to what brand of action we can expect this weekend, then prepare for a slew of single-digit decisions and shocking upsets.

One of the prime examples is New Zealand, which began their Dubai 7s title run by tying Russia and Canada during pool play. Although we expect the standings leader to go deep into the Houston 7s, we wouldn't be surprised to see them play close matches against England and Netherlands, their Pool A opponents, and run up the score against Trinidad & Tobago. Since there are only 12 teams in the tournament and the top eight advance to the Cup round, teams are forgiven for a dropped match here, or, in New Zealand's case, getting only one win on day one in Dubai.

But New Zealand's colors ran true on day two, and they ended their Dubai outing with a 41-0 win over South Africa. We expect that same kind of championship play from the Kiwis, so the Pool A game of the day will come down to England and Netherlands. Both sides were inconsistent in Dubai and deserved to play out the 7th place match in Dubai, which England won 24-5. So it'll really depend on the roster that travels and the composure therein.

All told, we figure New Zealand will win Pool A 3-0, England should finish 2-1, Netherlands 1-2 and Trinidad & Tobago 0-3.

Pool B is home to the USA and Canada, which is a little disappointing since the two North American sides see each other frequently, but also promise a good show against each other.

Canada has infused some youth into their squad, with flyers like Bianca Farella and Magali Harvey representing the young 20s. But they've got stalwart performers in Jen Kish, Mandy Marchak and Ashley Steacy, to name a few, who will anchor the team, and hopefully improve their sixth place finish in Dubai.

The USA has taken another route and filled their lineup with experience. For the first time since the country professionalized 7s rugby, all of the Eagles on board are full-time athletes. Vanesha McGee returns as captain and is joined by veterans Katie Dowty, Vix Folayan, Kelly Griffin, Nathalie Marchino, Deven Owsiany, Jill Potter, Christy Ringgenberg and Kimber Rozier. Ryan Carlyle and Lauren Doyle account for the younger players, while Bui Baravilala has replaced Emilie Bydwell.

The two sides will face off in their first match of the day (2:54PM CT). Canada has been the victor of late, and although the hometown advantage and edge in experience will boost the USA, Canada has proven to be a bit more resourceful and steady. We're picking Canada by a narrow margin.

There's no outright turnkey match in Pool B, as South Africa is in the same realm as the North Americans. If both sides lost to South Africa, no one should be surprised, as they defeated England and Netherlands in Dubai, a vast improvement since the USA defeated the South Africans in China last fall. They run hard, like to take chances, and can shake the most disciplined teams.

The unknown in Pool B is Argentina. They come in as the fourth-ranked team, but what they lack in international clout they compensate with the element of surprise. The USA will get a sneak peak before their opening match, but we think Argentina will go 0-3 on the day. We pick Canada 3-0, USA 2-1 and South Africa 1-2.

Pool C is all about Russia. Russia? They surprised everyone in Dubai, winning the Plate by beating Canada (for the second time during the tournament), defeating Netherlands convincingly, and tying eventual champion New Zealand 12-all. The only thing that has changed since late November is that Russia isn't a surprise anymore. Teams will be prepared for their artillery, and Australia will be their main competition.

Australia underperformed in Dubai as well. They looked sharp after four games, and even against New Zealand in the two-try loss. That defeat deflated the Aussies, however, and the reigning RWC Sevens champ fell 17-5 to Spain in the 3rd place match. But Australia has one of the most intimidating players on the pitch – Emilee Cherry - who led all scorers with seven tries. They'll push Russia harder than anyone else they've met thus far, and we're picking the Southern Hemisphere side for the tight win.

Japan and Brazil round out Pool C, and they should account for one win between them. Japan is tiny, fast and fearless in the tackle. Brazil is the South American powerhouse but went winless in Dubai, finishing 12th. Tough call on this game, but we're giving it to Brazil. That said, we expect Brazil to be the third-best third-place team and move onto the Bowl competition, while the Netherlands and South Africa should compete in the Cup round.

Day one finish in Pool C: Australia 3-0, Russia 2-1, Brazil 1-2 and Japan 0-3.

Those are the predictions, but we're hoping they're wrong, as nothing makes a competition more enjoyable than an unforeseen win, or an underdog playing for the Cup.

Stay tuned for all of the day-of action as they occur.