The first match in West Pool 2 of the Men's Club DIII Round of 16 sees the Tucson Magpies take on sixth-seeded Dallas Athletic Rugby Club. Tucson is the third seed overall and are looking to take the next step to the title.

The St. Louis Royals get ready to scrum down against Sunday Morning Rugby Club. (Photo courtesy of

But that is easier said than done. According to team captain and President John Rouff, the team will be missing a lot of starters come Saturday. In the game against South Valley, Rouff tore his ACL and meniscus in his knee. Also, one of the starting locks has a work commitment and the starting fly half will not be there.

Despite this, Rouff is confident that his team can push through to the next round in the playoffs. "Our chances are really good that we'll be in the Elite 8. Lack of depth would be our only hold up there," Rouff said.

The Magpies went 5-3 in their league season and narrowly defeated Camelback in the Arizona championships, 29-28. Rouff said that the team's strength lies in their open field play and this is where the battle will take place on Saturday. "From what we've been able to gather, it seems like they're oriented a lot like us," he stated. "Set pieces aren't a big thing for us; we're confident in our open field play, but they focus on that as well."

Tucson has a mobile forward pack that can link well with their backs, forming many different lines of attack. They have excellent team speed and are looking to use everybody across the board, according to Rouff. He also said that the team's scrum was disrupted in the last round of play, so they will be looking to improve in that area before the weekend.

Dallas won't be a pushover by any means. The team finished its regular season undefeated, averaging 58 points and allowing opponents an average of only nine points. They took second in the Texas Rugby Union DIII Championships after a one-point loss to the Austin Blacks in the final.

If Dallas can bring it to Tucson in the set pieces and contain the Magpies in the open field, it will be a very tough game to call.

The other match-up in the pool this weekend will be Beaumont (Calif.) vs. 2010 finalist St. Louis. Possibly the strongest team in the pool, St. Louis is looking to pick up where it left off last year and claim the trophy.

"We believe that we're going to go all the way back to the national championship game," team Vice President Steve McKinstry said.

The Royals finished top of the table in the Missouri Rugby Football Union in 2010 and had a points differential of 357.

McKinstry stated that while the team is confident, they are taking it one step at a time and not looking past their game against Beaumont. "Our first game is against Beaumont and we don't really know much about them," he added.

Like Tucson, St. Louis is looking to improve their set plays, lineouts in particular. "We feel confident in our scrums, but we're a very small pack," McKinstry said. "We can move the ball and make it a fast-paced game. That's our goal."

Beaumont earned the seventh seed and face an uphill battle if they want to unseat last year's runner-up.

Tucson plays Dallas at 1:30 p.m. (PST) at the Olympic Training Center in Chula Vista, California. St. Louis plays Beaumont at 3:15 (PST).