

Semifinalists Decided in Junior World Championship

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Defending champions New Zealand, England and France all enjoyed victories on the last day of pool action at the IRB Junior World Championship 2011 in Italy to take their place in the semi finals, where they will be joined by Australia as the best runner up across the three pools.

It is the first time France have ever reached the semi finals and they will face 2008 and 2009 runners up England at the Stadio Comunale di Monigo on Wednesday, June 22, before New Zealand meet Australia in a repeat of the 2010 final.

New Zealand extended their unbeaten run in the Junior World Championship to 18 matches with a 48-15 victory over Argentina in Padova to top Pool A, while England held off South Africa to win 26-20 and top Pool C.

France were at their scintillating best early on against Australia in a match they knew they had to win if they were to realise their semi final dreams, but were made to work hard to edge a thrilling match 31-25 and finish as Pool B winners.

The defeat left Australia with a nervous wait to see if they had done enough to claim the best runners up spot, but word soon filtered through they had edged out South Africa on point

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differential after both finished with 11 points.

Other highlights on Saturday were first wins for Ireland and Fiji, who beat Scotland 30-13 and Tonga 36-18 respectively to take their place in the fifth to eighth play-offs. Ireland will face their Pool C opponents South Africa again, while Fiji tackle Wales.

Scotland, Tonga and hosts Italy, the only other side without a victory, will be joined by Argentina in the battle to avoid relegation to the IRB Junior World Rugby Trophy in 2012.