England Sevens captain Ben Gollings has announced that he will be stepping away from the international game, having not been awarded a new contract with England.

Gollings is Sevens Rugby's all-time record points-scorer with 2,652 from 70 tournaments, surpassing Fiji's great Waisale Serevi.

Gollings' international Sevens career spanned over a decade, having made his debut in the 1999/2000 IRB Sevens World Series in Paris at the age of 19.

He is the only man to have played in all 11 World Series contested to date.

Gollings also played in three Commonwealth Games and at two Rugby World Cup Sevens, reaching the final of the latter in 2005 in Hong Kong.

"It was really disappointing not to be offered a new contract with the England Sevens team as it has been a hugely enjoyable part of my life for so many years," said Gollings.

“It is a shame I won’t be able to fulfil my ambition of cracking the 3,000 points barrier or becoming all-time top try scorer, but I’ve been fortunate to enjoy as much as I have.

Fond memories

"I count myself very lucky to have had the opportunity to play the game I love as a profession and I’d like to thank the supporters for the way they’ve treated me during my time on the Sevens circuit. Sevens has some of the best fans you could wish to play in front of and they create awesome atmospheres all around the world.

“The influence and popularity of Sevens today is unrecognisable from the game I started playing in 1999. It’s growing so quickly and I have been extremely proud to have been a part of the England set-up for so long.

“I will have so many fond memories of my time touring and playing. On a personal note, running out with my two young sons, Woody and Rocco, at Twickenham in the 2010 quarter final was a special moment. Winning the 2006 Hong Kong Sevens is one of my favourite career memories and leading England to a win in Dubai last year was a particular highlight because it was a significant stepping stone for the team, which propelled us forward.

"I can’t praise the boys enough for their work ethic and what they’ve achieved over the last two to three years. Despite the disappointing end to the season, I can only see England going from strength to strength and it will be extremely hard not to be a part of that exciting future."

England Sevens head coach Ben Ryan is the man leading the development of that squad.

""“These decisions are never taken lightly and while we understand Ben’s disappointment we felt that it was one that needed to be made to move the squad and our game forward over the coming seasons," said Ryan.

“It doesn’t detract in any way from the terrific service Ben has given England over more than a decade at the highest level. His professionalism has set a high standard to match for all those who have trained and played alongside him.

“Ben was there from day one in 1999 when the World Sevens Series began and although he had spells with Newcastle and Quins and overseas he kept on returning because of his love of the sevens game and the game has a lot of affection for him too."

Gollings shocked

Gollings has admitted to being surprised by the decision.

“It was a bit of a shock not to be given a new contract and it will take a few months to get my head around no longer being part of the England Sevens squad, but I understand their decision to look to younger players to take them forward and I wish the team and the boys the best of luck and have every faith in them that they can win the 2013 Rugby Sevens World Cup in Moscow.

“I'm 31 and as fit as I’ve ever been so feel I have a few more years rugby in me. I haven’t yet decided what path to follow next. I’ll have some time out and assess my options in England and also abroad.”

World renowned broadcaster and Sevens head commentator Nigel Starmer-Smith had led the tributes outside of the England camp.

“Ben is the Serevi or the Eric Rush of England Sevens. He’s truly world class and has been outstanding for England. He’s been the cornerstone of their squad for years.

"Ben’s a player who is made for Sevens and there aren’t many like him about. Despite playing for over a decade he wasn’t on the wane. Over the last three years he’s probably played better

than he did in the early years. Ben lifted himself to new fitness levels and had an absolutely brilliant season two years ago. He's the greatest Sevens player England have produced by a mile.

"I guess I, like so many, would have wished to see him lead England to the next World Cup Sevens, and maybe even, with some luck and maintained fitness, the inauguration of the Sevens in the Olympics of 2016. If that is not to be then we shall treasure so many memories of one of a very select few maestros of the Sevens game, a genial man of high standards, who played such a part in putting England proudly into the top echelon of the Sevens world scene."