

World Cup Qualifiers Set for August

Written by RUGBYMag Staff
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The USA and Canada have finally, officially, confirmed their Rugby World Cup Qualifier matches for this summer.

The teams will play a two-game series in the hopes of qualifying as Americas #1. The series was originally slated for July, but was moved to August, reportedly because Canada's venue was not available until then.



These two all-important games will take place on August 17 in Charleston, SC, the site of the USA's last victory over Canada, in the 2009 World Cup Qualifiers, and on August 24 in Toronto, Ont. The winner on points aggregate across the two legs will qualify as Americas 1 for Rugby World Cup 2015, and be placed in Pool D with France, Ireland, Italy and the Europe 2 qualifier.

With two places available via the Americas qualification process, the loser will play off against a South American opponent for the right to claim the second berth as Americas 2. That team will join Pool B and face South Africa, Samoa, Scotland and the Asian qualifier.

Currently, there is little to choose between USA and Canada, with the Eagles sitting in 16th position in the IRB World Ranking and the Canadians just two places above them in 14th place.

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Chairman of Rugby World Cup Limited Bernard Lapasset said: "The USA v Canada rivalry is one of the most fiercely contested in all of Rugby and matches between the teams are always compelling.

"With a place at Rugby World Cup 2015 at stake, we can expect two highly motivated, well-prepared and passionate sides to take the field in front of large crowds. Rugby continues to go from strength to strength in North America, one of the world's fastest participation growth regions, reaching out to more players and fans than ever before.

"This growth is testament to IRB's commitment to grow the Game beyond its traditional heartlands and the hard work of the Member Unions themselves in conjunction with the NACRA regional association. Rugby World Cup is the pinnacle of our sport, and through the global qualification process there is a clear pathway and opportunity for every IRB Member Union to play at that level."

In an added boost to the clash, the Webb Ellis Cup will be in attendance at the decisive second of the two matches, in Toronto, with fans being given the opportunity to see the iconic trophy in the flesh and have their photo taken with it.

Canada captain Aaron Carpenter can already feel the excitement building. He said: "I am really looking forward to the USA games coming up this summer as they are always very physical encounters. With the added bonus of Rugby World Cup qualification on the line, these games are not just another test match. We will want to win and win well.

"USA are the team we play the most so we know each other very well. When that happens, the atmosphere around the games changes and it often comes down to who wants it more and who is willing to put their bodies on the line."

USA Rugby CEO Nigel Melville added: "The USA Eagles are looking forward to their Rugby World Cup qualifying series against Canada. This is the start of their next World Cup journey for a young squad who gained great experience at the 2011 edition in New Zealand and will be working hard to build on that during 2013."

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