

# Rugby 7s To Showcase In Glendale On Heels Of Olympic Debut

by Marco Cummings

Writer for and on behalf of the City of Glendale

It's the biggest rugby event of the summer for Glendale, and this year's edition promises to be the best yet.

Now in its fifth year, the 2016 Serevi RugbyTown Sevens (SRS) tournament at Infinity Park (Aug. 26-28) will be the biggest ever, as 20 teams converge in Glendale to compete for the winner-take-all \$10,000 purse, including teams representing all five U.S. military branches.

The three-day event, which will feature 62 matches, will be an experience sure to please both participants and fans alike.

"The SRS tournament continues to grow in stature as we enter the fifth year of the competition," said Glendale Raptors Director of Rugby Mark Bullock. "There are more international teams competing and the USA military teams have raised the standard of their play."

The military component is an element which makes the competition a unique one, and each U.S. military branch will also be competing for their own shot at a separate Armed Forces Rugby 7s Championship in Pool A. The All-Army team, winners of the past three military championships, will be looking to defend that title yet again.

"The City of Glendale and Infinity Park are tremendous hosts and really roll-out the red-carpet for the teams participating," said Anthony Poore of All-Army Sports. "Our goal is to win and advance to the Cup Finals."

Tournament hosts Glendale are also looking to return to the Cup Finals for the first time since the tournament's inaugural year.

"We're focusing on [Serevi RugbyTown Sevens] because we would really like to make an impact," Glendale Raptors head coach Andre Snyman said. "We'd like to be very competitive. That's our goal: to try and get back in the final like we did the first season."

In the past, Glendale has been unique as the only club side competing against a host of All-Star participants. But this year, the Raptors have been busy recruiting with hopes to improve quality within the team.

"I've started to change it, bringing in players from other clubs," Snyman explained. "I would like a Glendale side that is a typical All Star team."

One of Glendale's key recruits during this summer rugby 7s season has been Jamaica National Team captain Conan Osborne. The former University of York standout has featured for Glendale in every tournament this summer, and has already shown an immediate impact on the pitch and within the team.

"He's a great guy and the captain of the Jamaican National Team so he knows what it's all about," Snyman said of Osborne. "He's a leader and a lot of the players appreciate his input. He's integrated pretty well and the guys have accepted him."

At SRS, Glendale will compete in Pool B alongside the Bermuda National Team, Black Dragons, Royal Air Force and the SoCal Grifpins.

Pool C will feature locals Denver 7s, the Atavus All-Stars, Atlantis Rugby, British Army and Rugby Utah. Rounding out the tournament field in Pool D are Texas-based Negro y Azul, Ramblin' Jesters, Stars Rugby 7s, Tiger Rugby and Canadians Upright Rugby Rogues.

As always, the tournament field presents a good mix of teams, with varying styles and experience. For example, Negro Y Azul will be playing in its fourth SRS tournament, while Upright Rugby Rogues will be appearing in just their second after debuting in last year's edition of the competition.

"We are returning to this tournament because of the high level of competition and professional approach to running the event from early in the year to the finals," Negro Y Azul manager Ty Landry said. "The professional approach breaks down into several areas — facilities, reliable support and scheduling. This is a top-notch event from both perspectives."



Photo by Seth McConnell  
This rugby 7s tournament features each U.S. military branch and they look to compete for the Armed Forces Championship in addition to the rest of the tournament honors.

Upright Rugby Rogues technical director Darrell Devine was similarly impressed by the tournament, prompting the team's return to the field in 2016.

"Although last year was our first time in attendance we were very impressed with the quality of facilities, accommodation and hospitality," Devin explained. "This combined with the opportunity to have our players compete with elite teams is invaluable to their growth and development as young athletes."

The weekend's action doesn't simply be-

gin and end with rugby. Also making a return to the tournament's events is the Glendale Bruises & Brews Beerfest, which will be held Saturday August 27, from 12-4 p.m. on the second day of the tournament in Infinity Park. Those of age will be able to enjoy beers, ciders and other libations from more than 20 local breweries.

Admission for the Bruises & Brews Beerfest includes a ticket to SRS, a commemorative beer tasting mug and is only \$35. Free parking only a block from the stadium is available for all.



Photo by Travis Prior  
The Denver 7s team moves the ball quickly in 2015 Serevi RugbyTown Sevens Cup Final against the Serevi Selects and showcases the high energy and finesse play of rugby 7s.

And in a year where rugby 7s is now getting its due as a debut sport in the summer Olympics, the Serevi RugbyTown Sevens tournament remains an example of how the City of Glendale continues to be a champion of the sport on both the local and international stage.

"It's truly an international event, people from all over the world are coming out," Glendale Mayor Mike Dunafon says of SRS. "It is a community building sport. It is played all over the world, and we're recognized for it."

  
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