

RUGBY AFRICA

WOMEN'S SEVENS
OLYMPIC QUALIFIERS

September 2015



Schedule

Time of all the



Meet...

All the teams



Zoom on...

Zimbabwe



Our referees

Meet the international referees that will lead the matches of this tournament



Chairman address

Welcome to the first Rugby Sevens Olympic Qualifier tournament ever! Rugby Africa is proud to have gathered the 10 best African Women's Rugby Sevens teams here in Johannesburg for this major rugby event.

The winner of the tournament will win the sole ticket to Rio de Janeiro for the 2016 Olympic Games where Rugby Sevens will be showcased for the first time in the history of the Games. The qualified team will therefore represent not only its country but Africa. It will be a big responsibility but this team will draw its strength from the support of a whole continent. I wish the 10 contenders a successful tournament in competitive yet friendly spirit. I know they have prepared long and hard for this key event, now let the best team win! I would also like to take this opportunity to thank our gracious hosts , the South African Rugby Union, whose unfailing support has made it possible to organise this competition as well as the Valke Rugby Union for making their stadium and staff available to us. Let all the volunteers also be sincerely thanked for all their work and efforts. And lastly, all our gratitude goes to World Rugby for their financial and organisational support in putting up a world-class event. On behalf of Rugby Africa, I wish you all a memorable rugby tournament and to all the ladies on the field, good luck !

VIIIs



Africa discovered Rugby Sevens in the 20th century and quickly made it its own. A faster form of the game requiring skills and quick thinking, Rugby Sevens offers new opportunities and quickly found its audience ; it can be played by tall as well as by small people, by thin as well as by strong people, by men as well as by women, by young as well as by less young players... Everybody can become a Rugby Sevens passionate and Women took to it very well. There are more and more major Rugby Sevens competitions worldwide and that includes Africa of course. In the northern area it's growing very fast and in southern area, Rugby Sevens is already one of the most important sport and there are more and more registered players.

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*Rugby in Africa
since 1986 !*

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JOHANNESBURG

On September 26th and 27th, South Africa, Kenya, Uganda, Namibia, Tunisia, Senegal, Madagascar, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Botswana will meet at the Barnard Stadium B Field - Kempton Park in Johannesburg (South Africa). Only one team will get a ticket for the Olympics Games 2016 !

Friday 25 September

- 10h : Referees meeting
- 12h30 - 13h30 : Press conference
- 13h30 : Captains' photo
- 14h : Visit of the stadium
- 17h : Judicial meeting
- 17h : Assistant referees meeting
- 18h : Technical meeting



Saturday 26 September



10 am - 17 pm : First day of the tournament, all the team meet

Sunday 27 September

11 am - 17 pm : Second day of the tournament, ranking matches



Saturday 26 September :

Pool A :

South Africa (SA)

Namibia

Zambia

Uganda

Zimbabwe

Pool B :

Kenya

Tunisia

Madagascar

Senegal

Botswana

10:00 - ZAMBIA v SA

10:20 - BOTSWANA v KENYA

10:40 - ZIMBABWE v UGANDA

11:00 - TUNISIA v MADAGASCAR

11:40 - SA v NAMIBIA

12:00 - KENYA v SENEGAL

12:20 - ZIMBABWE v ZAMBIA

12:40 - TUNISIA v BOTSWANA

13:20 - UGANDA v NAMIBIA

13:40 - MADAGASCAR v SENEGAL

14:00 - SA v ZIMBABWE

14:20 - KENYA v TUNISIA

15:00 - UGANDA v ZAMBIA

15:20 - MADA v BOTSWANA

15:40 - ZIMBABWE v NAMIBIA

16:00 - TUNISIA v SENEGAL

Sunday 27 September

Ranking day :

11:00 - SA v UGANDA

11:20 - KENYA v MADAGASCAR

11:40 - NAMIBIA v ZAMBIA

12:00 - SENEGAL v BOTSWANA

Semi-Final / Halb-Finale Plate :

12:30 - Pool A-3 v Pool B-4

12h55 : Pool A-4 v Pool B-3

Semi-Final / Halb-Finale Cup :

13:20 - Pool A-1 v Pool B-2

13:45 - Pool A-2 v Pool B-1

Match for place 9 :

14:30 - Pool A-5 v Pool B-5

Match for place 7 :

14:55 - loser match Semi-Final / Halb-Finale Plate (1) v loser match Semi-Final / Halb-Finale Plate (2)

Match for place 5 :

15:20 - winner match Semi-Final / Halb-Finale Plate (1) v winner Semi-Final / Halb-Finale Plate (2)

Match for place 3 :

15:45 - loser match Semi-Final / Halb-Finale Cup (1) v loser Semi-Final / Halb-Finale Cup (2)

Match for place 1 :

16:10 - winner match Semi-Final / Halb-Finale

Cup (1) v winner match Semi-Final / Halb-Finale Cup (2)

UGANDA

Uganda's Lady Cranes are used to competition. Frequently opposed to Kenya, they want to show that rugby is growing at least as well as in other big African unions.

Ready for Johannesburg ?

In 2009, the team was under the spotlights at the Women's Sevens Rugby World Cup in Dubai. Since then, the lady Cranes are pretty famous and they will do their best to maintain this reputation.

Supported by an entire country, players are determined and ready to play !

This Olympic tournament is also a good opportunity for the coach, Allan Musoke, to test his players against the best African teams. Few players of the 2009's team remain to share their experience but the team is ready for a great tournament.

So what should we bet on the Lady Cranes ? Victory ? Why not !

However, Uganda Union regrets the format of the qualifier. Only one country will represent Africa and the competition is fierce. *"If three tickets had been available, we wouldn't have had any doubts but now we can't be sure of anything".*

Uganda is a multi-cultural country. Playing Rugby for a Woman is not always easy. However those women, mothers, sisters, daughters playing Rugby surprise people... In a good

*" The aim if to go to the Olympics. If we don't,
we will qualify in 2020 ! "*

way ! Each year, the number of registered women increases by 40% ! No doubt a great future awaits the Lady Cranes.

The 26th and 27th of September will be a turning point. Uganda players will have to show their skills. And if they don't qualify for the Olympics ? For sure it will be a great deception but the union will keep fighting for the development of Women's Rugby.

A woman development officer will soon support the project and will help the union to prepare the 2020 edition of the Olympics.

The U19 recently won the Safari Sevens tournament, so the union is confident that will present their most competitive team so far for the next Olympic Qualifier.



KENYA



Powerful, fast, skillful and efficient. The Kenyan team has already proven itself long ago. Just like their men counterpart, the Women's Sevens team just keep on getting better and will no doubt get promising results this year too.

The Lionesses are ready. Seven players took part in the Worldwide Qualifiers while the other five are new in the team. Despite a lack of opportunity to play often enough and even though their preparation wasn't long enough, the union remains positive and the girls are enthusiastic.

This tournament is the most important one and the team knows it. The union cannot stress out enough

how much the girls had to sacrifice on a daily basis for their team. Their love for rugby is unfailing and they dedicate most of their time to matches and tournaments. These women gave up their normal daily routine for this tournament, firmly believing that it will change their life and the image of Rugby Sevens. *"This sacrifice is their strength"* ensures the union.

Competition will be fierce but the Kenyans have good reasons to believe in their team. A perfect mix between youth and experience is their secret weapon. The youngest players make up for their lack of experience with strength, dexterity and speed.

The ladies want to play and compete. Victory would be a major push for the country and all the girls at home playing rugby in schools and supporting the team.

The Lionesses want to change perceptions. The women's place does not have to be at home it can be on the

They fought hard to gain recognition and will not stop now.

And what if the path to Rio is shut ? Well, their fight will keep on going.



Amy Perrett

**We should say it more often, rugby is also a sport for Women.
Women Players, managers but also referees.**

Amy is a part time referee for the Australian Rugby Union and for World Rugby. Her dream would be to quit her job as assistant nurse and be a full time referee. Indeed for her rugby is an old love affair.

Amy started to play when she was 7 years old with her twin brothers. At 12 she could no longer play with the boys and since there was no girls teams her only option to stay in rugby was to become a referee. It was also a good way for her to thank her club for their unfailing support.

To be a woman in a male dominated environment was never a problem for Amy, although it took time for the public to accept a young lady as a referee for men' s games. After 10 years of refereeing, the match official can be proud of her accomplishments as she knocked down the obstacles on her road to success one by one.

Actually as a woman she received more opportunities to officiate at a high level. Fifteen-a-side or Sevens rugby, Amy loves both forms of the game.



She finds it easier though to build real friendships and teamspirit in rugby sevens with her follow referees.

Europe, UK, North America, Asia, Africa, Australia, Amy is a true globe-trotter referee. Since she attended a World Rugby referee training course in Stellenbosch in 2013. it won' t be her first time in South Africa. She is aware of the cultural differences in Africa.

However she is very clear about one thing, the same rules apply to all.

As long as the rules are observed each team can express itself freely on the field with its own approach of rugby.

An iron fist in a velvet glove ! Amy can't wait for this new African experience,

“Any discipline showcased in the Olympic Games has great potential and it is a real plus for development and public awareness”

ZAMBIA

After a friendly match against Zimbabwe in August, Zambia selected its team and is now ready for Johannesburg's tournament. Trainings were not always adapted to girls' level given the lack of funds and good training gear and equipment. However they did their best and are confident.

In 1995, the Zambian ladies won the plate cup in Uganda. This old memory motivates the whole team: this year will be Zambia's year, Rio is within reach ! Those women are now true Rugby Sevens passionates but in most cases they started to play by chance : They tried, they played and they stayed. Even though it's still mostly a male sport in Zambia, room is being made for women.

Only three women clubs exist in the country but it's only a beginning and the union is pushing hard ; many projects are in the pipelines : More clubs, more young women players, improving the Get into Rugby program, hiring women as union staff, developing Rugby in schools... It's not going to be an easy ride but the union's initiative to develop Woman Rugby is supported by the education ministry. If they don't do well in this tournament, they will work harder: they will take part to Rugby Africa tournaments, the union will organize matches for every age category (U8, U12, U14,U16...).. A lot of rugby for these ladies who want to make their country proud !

Zambia



SOUTH AFRICA

Preceded by the reputation of Springboks men team, women springboks have a lot of pressure on their shoulders. Since they didn't qualify for the Sevens World Series a few months ago in Ireland, the South African players are more motivated than ever and want to forget this bad performance and qualify for the 2016 Olympic Games.

A tournament that tastes like revenge !

Playing at home is sometimes overwhelming and stressful for teams who are being closely watched. But the South African girls are great professionals and know how to handle pressure. They play the way they enjoy it most and hope that it will be enough to obtain better results.

Zenay Jordaan, the team captain is optimistic. They are self-confident and trust their capacities : *"With the amount of work we have put in, we have to win this tournament !"*.

Some tournaments are pretty bad memories but they learnt from it. The team has improved on its attack and its defence and will construct the game around those strengths ; but Zenay won't tell us more, she doesn't want to reveal all their secrets to their contenders.

Game strategy and concentration are the watchwords ! Will it be enough to go to Rio ? Nothing is settled. There is still a lot to do especially off the field. Indeed, South African women's rugby is growing, and more and more young girls start to play Rugby.



“ We showed that we can play a good Rugby ”

Now is not the time to disappoint ! As a team, as women, players are proud. For the first time they will play on home soil in front of their families and fans for a big tournament. The team is not 100% ready, quite a number of players are injured and a few adjustments are still made to the team list. However there are few surprises in the Boks' composition : why change a successful team ? Or at least a team that is really chasing hard after success. A couple of new players have joined the squad : Ziyanda Tywaleni will play her first match of the year. The coach

stands right and wants his team to show the fighting spirit specific to Springboks. The girls know it, they have to convince! They can't miss that tournament, they hope that a prestigious victory will bring them the support they so desperately need ! They dream of Rio and they will do everything possible to make the dream come true. After that ? They don't think about it yet. They stay positive and focus their energy on the qualifier tournament. Whatever the result will be, they feel ready and know that the best is yet to come.

Meet...



SAUDAH ADIRU

After an intense referee training at Maties Academy in Stellenbosch, Saudah will be acting as referee for an important tournament for the first time! She trained a lot to reach that point and being there is already a victory.

She will apply in real conditions what she learnt at the referring and she hopes perform.

Some people rest during July and August, for our referee it was training time. 14:40 minutes of jogging the first morning, 17:28 the second one and much more frequent training sessions than the rest of year.

Rugby Sevens is also about that ! A rapid and demanding game performed by trained athletes. Saudah arrives at the Qualifier perfectly fit and she is ready to push beyond her limits.

After referring a few matches of the Elgon Cup and U19 tournaments, this competition will be the most important of her young career. The pressure is on but our young referee handles quite well and it actually helps her staying focused until the D-day.

She doesn't know the match official team but meeting people from all around the planet gathered by the love for Rugby is something she

"On the field, we only speak one language : rugby !"

teams. It's not a problem for her, referring is the same all around the world.

However she emphasizes the fact that application of rules is most rigorous on the southern part of the continent. In Eastern part of Africa, the referee stands on the defence line in a tackler tackled situation. In the South, the referee stands on attacking line. A subtlety she figured out at Maties institute and that she will integrate to her own referring style. After all, it's well-known that travels broadens the mind !

MADAGASCAR



In some countries, Women Rugby searches its way and is not yet recognized as other sports. Well, Madagascar is an exception, on this island, Rugby is king and Woman's rugby is supported by crowds.

Does Madagascar team present at that tournament will meet this challenge ? Definitely yes, it's not a legend, Rugby is the most important sport in Madagascar. They are used to overcrowded stadiums : at Mamach Stadium, the 30 000 tickets are always sold out in a record time. Their experience on big tournaments will be a strength for this team. Players know how to deal with pressure and can transform it into something positive.

As always, they will be supported by an all nation.

They started their preparation three months ago and with three trainings by week they constructed their strategy on their speed to overcome their lack of tall players.

In Madagascar, playing rugby is a blessing. Given the challenge team's managers decided to bring most experienced players. Madagascar must be represented to this international event !

Players are more than motivated : indeed for those experienced women, it's probably the

last chance to participate to the Olympics. It's a once in a life occasion ; they feel ready and they will fight on each ball putting all they have on the battle. Usually discrete

players will try to show during the tournament that they are great athletes and that they are at least as good as any other team. Madagascar is definitely a serious contender for the title !



TUNISIA

March : Training and competitions with Spanish and German girls in Madrid.

May : Marcoussis with the French and Dutch teams. Once again training and competitions.

Then ? Hong Kong's and Roma's tournaments.

Taking a rest after so much rugby ? What's better than a little trip to the Fidji Island in August to compete and practice once more ? It's been a long and demanding preparation ; the Tunisian team arrived two weeks ago in Johannesburg and players are now ready to give their

Since Rugby Sevens is part of the official program of the Olympics, the Tunisian Rugby Union considers it one of its priorities and Johannesburg is a milestone of their development program.

The process started with the creation of an U18 women's team two years ago who took part to the 2015 Youth Olympics games in China. Then those young players joined the national senior team and brought their youth and motivation to the group. After this long preparation, the girls know each other well and play as a group.

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They are also conscious that a qualification to the Olympics can boost Women's Rugby in Tunisia.

Often people don't realise that Women's Rugby in Tunisia is not a marginal sport. Women have an important place within the Tunisian society, and more and more opportunities are offered to young girls, there are now U12 teams and some U14 national competitions.

That illustrates the long term strategy of the Union. The younger players are already preparing to join one day

the adult national team. And if they don't qualify now for the Olympics, the adventure won't stop !

Incentives for young Tunisian girls to play Rugby will be stronger and stronger in order to increase the number of registered players. Women's Rugby in Tunisia is already shining and it's just a beginning.



AIMEE BARETT



After years of service for the South African fifteen-a-side and sevens rugby teams, Aimee Barrett took on a new challenge. In 2014, she chose to be the 16th woman on the field. A successful reconversion !

In 2005 Aimee held a rugby ball for the first time. Since then her passion for the sport kept on growing and she is now a respectable and well known South African referee. Refereeing felt like an obvious next step after her brilliant career as a woman rugby player and a perfect way to give back to a sport that had brought so much into her life. It is indeed through rugby that she got to study in the university of Stellenbosch and

got to travel the world extensively.

To be honest though, refereeing wasn't her first choice and it is not always easy. When she is on the field she mustn't pay any attention to the comments coming from the coaches, spectators and players, it requires a lot of self discipline.

"I always try to be excellent during the ten first minutes of the game to show that I understand the game and make them forget that I am a woman." Says Aimee.

Yes rugby is a male dominated sport but there is room for Aimee and women. Some still call her Mister Referee, old habits are hard to get rid of.

Dubai, Americas, Hong Kong, Aimee has officiated fifteen-a-side and sevens rugby matches all over the world. Travelling and experiencing different environments opened her eyes. Each team has its own

"They call me Mr. Ref"

style and language and brings something different on the field although difficult to manager at times. Refereeing abroad is often an excellent opportunity for Aimee to meet with other international referees and is always a great learning experience. Because at the end of day, let's not forget that rugby is all about sharing.

Feeling ready for the big African competition, Aimee will take the various cultures into consideration and has actually researched each team ahead of the tournament. From her research Aimee can say with confidence that African rugby has a lot of potential.

"Africa is capable of producing great athletes who can then be introduced to rugby. The diversity of the continent is such that it should always attract large audiences. "

SENEGAL

Some teams are going to Johannesburg with the firm intention to win the ticket to Rio. The Senegalese know that the competition will be hard and that they are less prepared than others. Yet the mere fact that they are part of the tournament amongst the ten best African teams is already a true honor and a real pleasure for this unpretending team. It is a tough but enjoyable journey.

More training, more preparation, more commitment, that is the price to pay for this team who will play its first big tournament in Johannesburg. A lot is at stake for these very young players who have never competed against the bigger teams of South Africa, Kenya, Tunisia and the like. The coach will seize this as an opportunity to gauge his players, what works and what doesn't.

The girls will probably have to face a hard truth but it will for sure be a memorable moment for all. The Jigeeen7's will be in Johannesburg to



learn. Their goal is not to win but to climb up one or two steps on the ranking and prepare the future. In the long run, the Senegalese Rugby Union wants to reinforce its senior teams, retain its younger players in order to build full teams with the youngest and the more experienced players. Tournaments will be fostered, without playing opportunities the girls won't be able to improve, a domestic competition is a must.

The U18 will be under the spotlights because in the end the younger players feed the national squad.

Many projects for both a team and a union really motivated as they have well understood that Women's Sevens Rugby was an opportunity not to be missed.

Today the union is on the right track. Numerous initiatives are being implemented to raise awareness with the families and make them realise that rugby is not a dangerous sport, overcome the religious barriers and show rugby as a social tool.

ALHAMBRA GONZALEZ

Alhambra Nievas Gonzalez doesn't need to name her native country, we can easily guess it is Spain ! Although Spain isn't well known for its passion for rugby, Alhambra has a long-lasting love for rugby.

In 2002 young Alhambra was introduced to rugby in university. After two years as a player she started to referee. For nine years she will play for a club then for the national team whilst refereeing some matches during the weekends. Until one day an perfect opportunity arose that was not to be missed. She ended her career as a player and started refereeing on a full-time basis. She first officiates matches in Spain but very soon was appointed as assistant referee for international games. She took part in the Women' s Sevens World Series in 2012, then in the World Cup in Moscow in 2013 and officiated several matches of the Women's Sevens World Series in 2014.

At ease with fifteen-a-side rugby and sevens rugby, she is proud to be able to live from her passion.. Being a woman is not an issue for Alhambra and she doesn't even consider it a hot topic. In her point of view, we must just stop making a difference. Sport is for both men and women and rewards qualities, skills, performance and hard work. Men, women, everybody is on the same boat.

As for many others, rugby offered Alhambra many traveling opportunities.

The young referee has seen all the continents except for Africa. Her world tour will therefore be complete at the end of September.

Alhambra is eager to land. She has heard so much about our continent and of course there is a public for rugby in Africa.

Coming back from the Women's World Series qualifiers in Dublin, Alhambra stresses out the potential of South Africa and Kenya.

Africa has a great potential, the development of rugby is under way with enthusiastic teams playing for the love of rugby not forgetting very good referees.

She intends to share her experience with the other referees in Johannesburg and keep on learning. She will also be sensitive to the different cultures since she strongly believes that referees must adapt their style to the teams and countries they come from.



NAMIBIA

The Namibian Men's Squad proved itself long ago by qualifying several times for the Rugby World Cup, it is famous on the international rugby stage and has a bright future awaiting. All in all fifteen-a-side male rugby is a success story in this Southern African country, so a Women's Sevens Rugby team comes as a surprise !

However, it works !

We said it again and again but in the end we must keep on repeating it, rugby is no longer an exclusively male sport. Proof is given in Namibia where everything possible is done to foster women's rugby.

In camp for the last three months, players are eager to play. Although well prepared, the Namibians have had no real opportunity to play big tournaments so this Olympic qualifier will be their first time on the field as a team. Stressful and exciting at the same time. Putting up a team together wasn't exactly

the best players could not make it due to commitments with their university and several others stopped playing before the tournament but the best possible team will be present on the 26th of September. The union has realistic expectations and the players know that their chances of qualifying are rather slim.

However the Namibians won't travel to Johannesburg as tourists, they are ready to give a hard time to the other teams and mostly to learn and gain experience for the future.

« we know we don't really stand a chance to go to Rio, so we are looking towards the future and preparing for it »

This qualifier tournament will place the girls in real conditions : a big stadium, more experienced teams, a large public, lots at stake. Even with a true passion, playing rugby in a country where women's rugby isn't a tradition can be challenging. So this tournament is most of all an opportunity to convince the Namibians to keep on playing.

In other countries, it might be easier to recruit women players but in Namibia it is far from easy. Misconceptions are to be blamed for it. Indeed, young girls tend to think that they need to be

extremely fit to play rugby. But unless you are really expecting to play in the Olympic Games you don't necessarily have to run 20 kms a day ! This kind of misconception is tough to kill but slowly but surely Namibia is improving as they focus on women's rugby development through schools with the 2020 Olympic Games in mind.

Will the Namibians prove that rugby is in their genes?





ZIMBABWE

In 1999 Zimbabwe had to put together a women's rugby team. Men had proven themselves at the 1987 and 1991 Rugby World Cup and showed that rugby deserved some attention.

The first training session of the brand new women's team

looked nothing like your normal rugby practice. At the Harare Sport Club, ladies were throwing the ball in all directions, crying and complaining for everything. And yet motivation came quickly and they soon started to work hard ; they learnt the Laws of the Game and finally split into two groups : the Old Hararians and the Harare Sport Club.

Between 2000 and 2004, growing interest for rugby lead to the formation of several teams in various areas of the country, yet in most squads there aren't enough players. No point wasting time, fifteen-a-side rugby was not at this stage a viable option. The girls took it upon themselves to rather try rugby sevens. Those were the glorious days of women's rugby in Zimbabwe.

In 2002, the Old Hararians flew to Swaziland for their first game abroad during the Swazi Sevens tournament. Boosted by this experience they decided in 2004 to try fifteen-a-side rugby.

"VIIs rugby was obviousness"

What a disappointment it was ! For their first match, South Africa won the match 82 points to nul and the Zimbabweans went back home with a bitter taste. Let' s re focus on Rugby Sevens, after all to each his own !

The ladies kept playing for several months but in 2005 – 2006, women's rugby slowly died down. Teams ceased to exist one by one , players quit the game and all activity came to a standstill.

One had to wait the end of 2006 for retired volunteers players to rekindle the flame of the women's rugby in Zimbabwe. But those players have gotten older and are not ready to play again, what they wish for this new team - the Pangolin - that they are founding is youth and energy ! Rather cleverly, they attended basketball games, cricket games, football games and volleyball games and recruited their future Pangolin players there.

These new players were true athletes, they were energetic, fit, strong, quick and understood

**They had nothing and now the victories
come one after another !**

what was expected of them.
However they had no idea how to
use a rugby ball and that was
problematic to say the least...

The girls, coaches as well as
players, just worked harder and
harder and started winning several
international games in Zambia,
Botswana and South Africa.
Nothing seemed to stop them.

The road to greatness is a long one
but as their name suggest it, the
Pangolin just like the animal are
rare and special players,
aggressive and excellent in their
defense. Fierce opponents on a
field !





THANK YOU

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See you soon !
