

Tuesday, October 13, 2015



# Japan exit with a win

## Gloucester

Japan ended their stunning World Cup campaign on Sunday by beating the United States 28-18 to become the first nation to win three group games but fail to reach the quarter finals.

The Brave Blossoms have already caused the biggest sensation in World Cup history by beating South Africa 34-32 in their opening Pool B game.

But the simple victory over the American gave a fitting sendoff to coach Eddie Jones, who now leaves the post having said Japan would be the "team of the tournament" if they got three wins.

The winning points came from Kotaro Matsushima, Yoshikazu Fujita and Amanaki Mafi tries, and the reliable kicking of full back Ayumu Goromaru, who took his Test points haul beyond 700.

The 2019 World Cup is the first time the tournament will be hosted by an emerging rugby nation, meaning the Brave Blossoms were under pressure to show they merit the award.

"The guys have all played above themselves, they have



Japan's fly half Kosei Ono (centre) kicks the ball through during the Pool B match

worked hard, they played with a real spirit, they played how rugby should be played," said Jones.

The Australian said he would definitely be heading for the Stormers in South Africa.

"I have done my job with Japan. When I took over Japan I wanted to bring pride back in the national team and I think we have done that so it

is someone else's turn to take it over."

After the South Africa upset, Japan lost 45-10 to Group B runners-up Scotland, then beat Samoa 26-5.

The United States went into the match with only pride to play for, having lost 25-16 to Samoa, 39-16 to Scotland and 64-0 to South Africa.

Japan supporters among

the 14,517-strong crowd wore kimonos, while some US visitors were dressed head to toe in Elvis Presley jumpsuits. One Japan fan had his body painted with a message thanking Jones.

Jones made four changes to the side that beat Samoa, with centre Craig Wing becoming the Brave Blossoms' oldest World Cup debutant. The

35-year-old previously won 17 caps for Australia's rugby league team.

The United States retained only Zack Test and Samu Manoa from the side that lost to South Africa, while full-back Chris Wyles returned to captain the Eagles.

## US ahead

The United States capitalised on some early pressure when fly-half Alan MacGinty successfully kicked a 45-metre penalty. But Japan immediately struck back. A kick through by Kosei Ono allowed Fujita to run on and take the Brave Blossoms to within five metres.

With the Eagles stretched, wing Matsushima crossed the line in the seventh minute and Goromaru converted.

The Eagles then drove deep into Japanese territory and scored a try through wing Takudzwa Ngwenya, who ran through to touch down in the right corner in the 25th minute.

With Japan committing players under the posts, Ngwenya had the space to score his first World Cup try in eight years.

## England agonise over rugby failure

### Manchester

English rugby was yesterday in full inquest mode following the country's disastrous World Cup campaign with embattled coach Stuart Lancaster fighting for his future.

Amid public splits inside the England camp, there have been calls for Lancaster to be replaced, calls for captain Chris Robshaw to go and calls for a director of rugby to take charge.

Beaten by Wales (28-25) and Australia (33-13) at a World Cup they spent more than \$100 million preparing for, England are in their worst crisis as they watch the world's best battle it out for the trophy.

Despite in-depth preparations which included two weeks in Colorado, England produced their worst World Cup performance.

Newspapers have been full of stories of divisions over the naming of rugby league convert Sam Burgess in the team and even the influence on Robshaw of his classical singer girlfriend Camilla Kerslake.

## Battle-hardened Wales ready for Springboks



South Africa's players huddle together during a training session

### Weybridge

Wales tough World Cup campaign so far has made them more than ready to take on two-time champions South Africa in the quarter-finals, said forwards coach Robin McBryde.

The former Wales hooker said the team had learned from their failure to exploit a two-man advantage during their 15-6 defeat by Australia on Saturday.

The defeat left the Welsh second in Pool A and a date with the 'Boks, winners of

Pool B. "They have an exceptionally strong set piece. We know what is ahead of us," McBryde said.

"We are at a stage now where all the hard work was done in our preparations. We are getting battle-hardened now.

The Welsh go into the Twickenham match on Saturday looking to improve their wretched record against southern hemisphere teams under Warren Gatland, just two wins in 29 games with the last a 12-6 victory over the Springboks last November.

## Ireland wary of Argentina clash

### Cardiff

Ireland face an immediate injury emergency with captain Paul O'Connell and star fly-half Jonny Sexton as they look forward to a World Cup quarter-final against Argentina.

Joe Schmidt's team have a week to lick their wounds from the ferocious 24-9 win over France that gave them a week to prepare to meet a Puma side that the coach considers "incredibly good."

The Irish outscored the French by two tries to nil thanks to Rob Kearney and Connor Murray, with contributions from the boots of Sexton and his replacement Ian Madigan. That ensured top place in Pool D.

But Sexton limped off, O'Connell and Peter O'Mahony were stretchered off raising immediate doubts for Schmidt. All the casualties were to have scans on Monday.

O'Connell had a hamstring injury and the coach said "it doesn't look great with Paul."



Ireland's captain Paul O'Connell (centre) leads his team mates

"It's probably Paul that worries me of the three," he added.

Sexton was close to tears as he walked off, but Schmidt said he probably had an adductor problem.

"I've spoken to Jonny and he's already talking about next

week. I'm not sure whether that means he'll be playing. He's never short of advice!"

## A week off

Ireland were relieved to avoid France's fate of having to play New Zealand. But Schmidt can see a big challenge

in Argentina who opened their Pool C campaign with a narrow 26-16 defeat by the All Blacks before easily seeing off Georgia (54-9), Tonga (45-16) and Namibia (64-19).

"The biggest attraction for us playing Argentina was the seven-day turnaround, not because we want to play them!" Schmidt said with one eye on the injuries.

"They've been incredibly good, not just since the Rugby World Cup started," the Kiwi coach said in reference to their ever-improving performances in the Rugby Championship, notably their 37-25 away win over the Springboks in August.

"I had a very good look at their win in Durban and to put the South Africans away like that is a major performance."

Schmidt added: "They've cruised through their group. They maybe should have been a few more points further ahead at half-time against the All Blacks.