

Hungary kicks off RWC 2015 process in Europe

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Hungary will host the first RWC 2015 qualifier in Europe

- European teams participate in the largest regional process
- Europe central to tournament planning and success
- RWC 2015 to boost Rugby in the region

The global qualification process for Rugby World Cup 2015 in England is gathering pace and next month teams from across Europe will join the party.

Hungary will host Bulgaria in Kecskemét, situated 80 km from the capital Budapest, at 14:00 local time on October 6 in a match that will signify the beginning of a European process involving 32 nations and 100 matches over two years.

In 2010 Georgia, Russia and Romania – the latter via the final place play-off – advanced from the FIRA-AER European Nations Cup to secure a place at New Zealand 2011 after a captivating qualification process and this time around is set to be just as exciting as Spain and RWC 2007 qualifiers Portugal will be looking to secure places having missed out last time.

It is the first time that Hungary or Bulgaria have been involved in the opening regional qualification match and with the Webb Ellis Cup and England Rugby 2015 (ER 2015) Ambassador Lawrence Dallaglio in attendance, the match will provide the perfect opportunity to showcase the passion and strong support of Rugby which exists outside of the world's leading nations.

[VIEW THE EUROPEAN QUALIFICATION DETAILS HERE >>](#)

[VIEW THE GLOBAL QUALIFICATION PROCESS HERE >>](#)

[AUDIO: IRB HEAD OF RUGBY WORLD CUP KIT MCCONNELL ON QUALIFYING PROCESS >>](#)

It will also be a significant occasion for Rugby World Cup 2015 organisers, who aim to inspire greater interest and participation within Europe through Rugby's showcase event.

IRB Chairman Bernard Lapasset said: "The beginning of the European qualification process is a significant landmark for Rugby World Cup 2015 from a competition and culture perspective."

"This qualification process will also play a large role in engaging fans throughout Europe and cementing the IRB, ER 2015 and FIRA-AER's joint strategic objective of delivering an outstanding Rugby World Cup for Europe. I am looking forward to attending the match and seeing the first steps in the European journey towards RWC 2015"

The London 2012 Olympic Games showed the UK's excellent ability to roll out the welcome mat to sports fans and tourists from around the world and ER 2015 is focused on delivering an event that showcases the best of Britain, the best of Rugby and delivers a world-class experience for all visitors near and far.

ER 2015 CEO Paul Vaughan added: "It is great to see Europe embark on the road to Rugby World Cup 2015 with the qualifier between Hungary and Bulgaria in October. Part of England Rugby 2015's legacy plan is a programme to engage and boost Rugby within Europe so the qualifier really kicks off Rugby World Cup 2015 in the region."

"We are committed to delivering the best ever Rugby World Cup to date and will be working closely with FIRA-AER to ensure that Europe is a key stakeholder; be that through fan engagement, the volunteer programme or creating the lasting legacy for the sport post tournament."

With the three years to go landmark rapidly approaching, planning and preparation for the eighth Rugby World Cup is on schedule and accelerating rapidly. Already this year an initial round of assessment for potential match venues has been completed, tournament dates finalised and key appointments made within the ER 2015 organising body.

On December 3, the Pool Allocation Draw will see the 12 directly qualified teams seeded into three bands according to their IRB World Rankings and then drawn across the pools, providing a fitting climax to what has been a big year in the delivery of Rugby's showcase event.



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