

Wales

2019 finish- Grand Slam champions.

Wales kick off this year's six nations as defending grand slam champions. Regarding the world cup Wales can definitely look back and be proud of their efforts, coming up short against eventual winners South Africa in the semi-finals.

What's new

Warren Gatland has stepped down as head coach of Wales following an extremely successful tenure with three grand slams to show for his efforts. It is former Scarlets head coach Wayne Pivac who steps in to attempt to fill the big boots left by Gatland. Pivac has brought with him new members to the coaching staff including former Wales captain Sam Warburton as a breakdown advisor.

Regarding the makeup of the squad it is most certainly 18-year-old Gloucester winger Louis Rees-Zammit's inclusion that is getting wales fans most excited. Although only at the tender age of 18 Zammit's electric pace and 10 tries in all competitions highlight the impact he has had on the Aviva premiership this year. Nick Tomkins is also a surprising inclusion having represented England at underage level with the Saracens centre qualifying for Wales through his Welsh born grandmother.

Player to Watch

Talupe Faletau

On his day, there is not many number eights in the world that can compare with the ability of Faletau. His return to Wales is a major boost to Wales following nearly a 12-month injury lay off that included two broken arms. If Wales can keep Faletau injury free for the course of the tournament many will think twice before betting against them.

Predicted Finish

Although entering the competition as defending Grand slam champions, many experts are in fact writing off Wales title hopes. When looking at their fixture list it is easy to see why, with daunting trips to the Aviva stadium and Twickenham to come. Injury has also ruled out influential centre Johnathan Davies for the entirety of the competition. With these reasons in mind, a **third-place** finish is expected. However, Wales will relish the tag of the underdog and could easily spring a surprise or two.