

Women's World Cup

US faces offensive challenge in defense-minded China

By ANNE M. PETERSON
Associated Press

OTTAWA, Ontario — The last time the United States played China in the Women's World Cup was in the 1999 final at the Rose Bowl, when the Americans won on penalty kicks for their second title and Brandi Chastain famously ripped off her jersey.

The teams meet again Friday night, with the winner advancing to a semifinal against top-ranked Germany or No. 3 France, and the Americans still are seeking their third title.

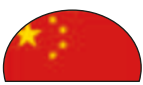
The United States has a 24-game unbeaten streak against China dating to 2003.

After scoring just six goals in their first four games, the Americans look to Alex Morgan for offense. The 25-year-old star forward was sidelined by a bone bruise in her left knee from April 11 until June 8, made her first start of the tournament in the group-stage finale against Nigeria and scored her first goal in Monday's 2-0 round-of-16 win over Colombia.

"I feel better and better each game," Morgan said. "I'm seeing my speed, my change of direction, my shot coming back. It feels good and hopefully in the next games it will feel great."

Quarterfinals

USA

China

- Today, 4:30 p.m.
- at TD Place Stadium, Ottawa, Ontario
- TV: Fox

The Americans will be missing midfielders Megan Rapinoe and Lauren Holiday, suspended because of yellow card accumulation. Morgan Brian, 22, and 26-year-old Christen Press are likely to take their spots in the starting lineup against China.

Rapinoe has been one of the most creative and dangerous players in Canada, while Holiday has been steady and dependable.

"They're definitely both incredible players, great for our team. They're going to be missed, for sure," fellow midfielder Carli Lloyd said. "But it is what it is. We kind of have to get on with it. We can't really dwell on the fact we won't have them out on the field."

THE REPLACEMENTS: Coach Jill Ellis has said Brian will likely replace Holiday in the middle of the midfield alongside Lloyd, while it's widely expected Press will start in Rapinoe's left flank spot.

Brian is the youngest player on the U.S. team.



In this July 10, 1999, file photo, China goalkeeper Hong Gao misses the final and winning United States overtime penalty shootout goal shot by Brandi Chastain in the FIFA Women's World Cup final at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, Calif. The last time the United States played China was at the World Cup final in 1999. The two countries play on Friday in the quarterfinals of the FIFA Women's World Cup in Canada.

"Mo has played significant minutes in our games," Ellis said. "We've partnered her specifically with Carli and Lauren at times so she could be confident in that position. She's a tremendous ball distributor, good on services, so we have other options there for us."

Ellis could slide Tobin Heath to the left flank and use Press on the right. Press started against Australia in the team's World Cup opener and scored a goal.

Veteran Heather O'Reilly

is also available.

BRANDI ON THAT MOMENT: Chastain told The Associated Press that it wasn't that singular moment that was special to her; it was about the process of getting there.

"I liked the outcome, of course. We all enjoyed the outcome. But when I look at that picture or I remember that PK, I think of the months and years in advance, a lifetime of dedication to the sport I love, to be the best athlete I could at that moment," she said.

SCOUTING CHINA: China advanced to the knockout stage by finishing second to host Canada in Group A. After falling 1-0 to the Canadians on Christine Sinclair's penalty kick in second-half stoppage time, China beat the Netherlands and played a 2-2 draw with New Zealand.

Wang ShanShan scored early and 16th-ranked China hung on to defeat Cameroon 1-0 last Saturday to open the elimination round. A number

of players from the U.S. team attended the match at Commonwealth Stadium.

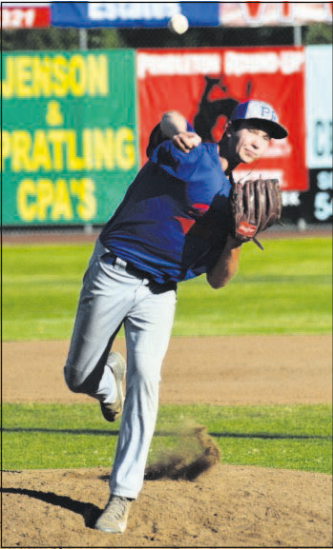
China has played in the World Cup six times but missed out four years ago in Germany. The Steel Roses have never won a title.

THE U.S. PATH: The United States defeated Australia 3-1 in the tournament opener, with Rapinoe scoring twice. Then came a scoreless draw with fifth-ranked Sweden, one of the top matches of the group stage, before a 1-0 victory over Nigeria to finish atop Group D. The U.S. faced No. 26 Colombia to open the knockout stage, winning 2-0 but scoring only in the second half when Colombia was a player down. Abby Wambach missed a penalty kick during the match.

LOOKING AHEAD: The winner will make the short trip to Montreal's Olympic Stadium for a semifinal Tuesday.

Tenth-ranked Australia, which upset No. 7 Brazil in the round of 16, will face defending champion Japan, ranked fourth, in a quarterfinal match Saturday in Edmonton, Alberta. Host Canada, ranked eighth, plays No. 6 England in Vancouver, British Columbia. The winners will face off in the semifinals in Edmonton on Wednesday.

Byrnes Oil's Levi Thieme throws from the mound in the Cubs' 10-0 win against the Dodgers on Thursday in Pendleton.



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

BABE RUTH: Monkers hits two doubles to lead Pilot Rock offense

Continued from 1B

collecting six strikeouts before surrendering the rubber to Josh Willingham for clean-up duty.

"I thought the pitchers did great tonight," Kris Thieme said. "They threw strikes and put pressure on the batter. Our defense started out a little bit shaky but towards the end they made every play they needed to make."

The Cubs played their first four batters in

the bottom of the first inning and Steve Bautista drove in the final run in the bottom of the fifth after Thieme and Shaun Simmons scored on passed balls. Thieme and Damon Ward hit doubles, and Cade Monkers hit two for the Cubs, which had four earned runs off five hits.

The Pendleton-based Dodgers stranded runners in scoring position in every inning but the third.

"That's Babe Ruth for you. When we play

as many games as we do in such a short period of time, we don't get much opportunity to practice," said manager Doug Kline. "The season was an up-and-down season. We played well at times, we played bad at times."

"Every time we came to the game we played hard and they put everything out there. I coach the kids to have fun, and I think that's the biggest thing, that we're having fun at this age."

Mathew Demianew went the distance for the Dodgers and finished with four strikeouts, three walks. Catch Kelly, Dazon Sigo, Brett Rinehart and Preston Brower had hits for the Dodgers.

The game ended the season for the 13-14-year-olds on both sides.

Deans Athletic Cardinals of Pendleton were the league's regular-season champions, and Thieme said he was grateful to the team's manager Dean

Fouquette for organizing the league.

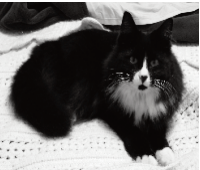
"Kudos to the guys that run this organization, and we really appreciate (Fouquette) putting all the time in to make these things happen, or these kids don't get to do this stuff," he said.

CUBS 10, DODGERS 0 (5 innings)									
DOD	000	00	—	0	4	2			
CUB	430	03	—	10	5	4			
Mathew Demianew and Blake Davis. Levi Thieme, Josh Willingham (4) and Shaun Simmons. W — Thieme. L — Demianew. 2B — Damon Ward, Cade Monkers 2, L. Thieme (Cubs).									

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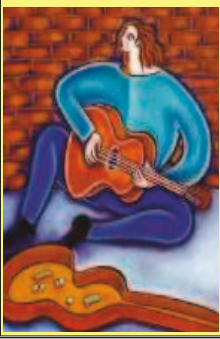
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