

SUMMER OLYMPICS OPEN IN TOKYO

Sweden stuns U.S. women’s soccer team with 3-0 win

By Anne M. Peterson
AP Sports Writer

TOKYO — Sweden didn’t have to bunker down on defense against the Americans this time.

Stina Blackstenius scored a pair of goals and the Swedes stunned the United States at the Olympics with a 3-0 victory Wednesday in the women’s soccer tournament.

The Americans, ranked No. 1 in the world and the favorites to win gold in Tokyo, were riding a 44-match unbeaten streak heading into the match. But Sweden, ranked No. 5, has been the U.S. team’s nemesis of sorts in recent years. The Swedes bounced the Americans from the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Games in the quarterfinals, the earliest U.S. Olympic exit ever, by making a defensive stand.

This April, Sweden played the United States to a 1-1 draw in Stockholm, which snapped a winning streak dating back to January 2019 when the Americans lost to France in the run-up to the World Cup. It was the U.S. team’s only draw this year.

“Did we expect this result tonight? No,” said U.S. forward Megan Rapinoe, who did not start but came on as a substitute in the 64th minute with the score 2-0. “It’s frustrating, and it’s frustrating that it’s Sweden. They found a lot of space on us. I don’t even know how many goals we have given up this whole year. I don’t remember the last time we gave up a goal. So to give up three is not great.”

Sweden’s offense deserved all the



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Members of the U.S. women’s soccer team embrace after Lindsey Horan’s goal in the first half against Mexico on July 5 in the team’s final game before heading to Tokyo for the Olympics. The team was stunned in a 3-0 loss to Sweden on Wednesday, July 21 at Tokyo.

credit. Blackstenius’ header into the far corner off a cross from Sofia Jakobsson in the 26th minute gave the team a first-half lead.

The United States, which came out stale, had its best chance of the opening half in the final moments when Rose Lavelle’s shot hit the post. Coach Vlatko Andonovski made changes for the second half, subbing in Carli Lloyd for Alex Morgan and Julie Ertz for Sam Mewis.

But Blackstenius scored again in the 54th minute, beating goalkeeper Alyssa Naeher, as the Americans continued to

struggle. Lina Hurtig added the final goal in the 72nd.

Sweden goalkeeper Hedvig Lindahl acknowledged the win over the favorites was encouraging, but it’s still just the beginning of the tournament. Ahead are group games against Australia and New Zealand.

“I know for a fact that you can go very far in a tournament even if you lose to the USA or whoever you play in the first game,” Lindahl said. “So in the end I don’t know how much it means, but for sure we showed the world and ourselves that we can play well against a team like the U.S. or any team.”

NBA FINALS

Bucks win first NBA title in 50 years

■ Giannis Antetokounmpo scores 50 points as Milwaukee wins final four games

By Brian Mahoney
AP Basketball Writer

MILWAUKEE — Giannis Antetokounmpo had the Larry O’Brien Trophy in one arm, the NBA Finals MVP trophy in the other and there was a cigar on the table in front of him.

All the work it took to lift the Milwaukee Bucks from a team that won 15 games when he was a rookie to one with 16 wins this postseason was finally finished.

“This is time to celebrate,” Antetokounmpo said.

Milwaukee waited 50 years for that.

Antetokounmpo ended one of the greatest NBA Finals ever with 50 points, 14 rebounds and five blocked shots as the Bucks beat the Phoenix Suns 105-98 on Tuesday night to win an entertaining series 4-2 and cap off a joyous return to a fan-filled postseason after last year’s NBA bubble.

It was the third game this series with at least 40 points and 10 rebounds for Antetokounmpo, a dominant debut finals performance that takes its place among some of the game’s greatest. Antetokounmpo finished with 35.2

points, 13.2 rebounds and 5.0 assists per game while shooting 61.8%, the first player in finals history to reach those numbers.

He shot 16 for 25 from the field and made an unbelievable 17-of-19 free throws — a spectacular showing for any shooter, let alone one who was hitting just 55.6% in the postseason and was ridiculed for it at times.

“People told me I can’t make free throws and I made them tonight. And I’m a freaking champion,” Antetokounmpo said.

He hopped around the court waving his arms with 20 seconds remaining to encourage fans to cheer, but there was no need. Their voices had been booming inside and outside for hours by then, having waited 50 years to celebrate a winner after Lew Alcindor — before becoming Kareem Abdul-Jabbar — and Oscar Robertson led the Bucks to their first championship in 1971.

“For the city, I’m sure it means everything,” said Khris Middleton, the other player left from that 15-67 team in 2013-14. “They’ve seen the work that we put in over the

years for them to get to this point.”

In a season played largely without fans, the Bucks had 65,000 of them packed into the Deer District outside, a wild party that figured to last deep into the Midwestern night.

The party wasn’t bad inside, either: Confetti rained down inside as fans chanted “Bucks in 6! Bucks in 6!” — a hopeful boast by a former player that turned out to be a prophetic rallying cry.

“I hope they enjoyed it just like we are now,” Middleton added.

The Bucks became the fifth team to win the NBA Finals after trailing 2-0 and the first to do it by winning the next four games since Miami against Dallas in 2006.

Chris Paul scored 26 points to end his first NBA Finals appearance in his 16th season. Devin Booker added 19 points but shot just 8 for 22 and missed all seven 3-pointers after scoring 40 points in each of the last two games.

“There’s just a pain that goes with your season being over,” Suns coach Monty Williams said. “But I’ve never

dealt with this and so I’m grateful, like I said, but I know this is going to hurt for a while.”

Baker’s run ends at state tourney

■ 9-11-year-old all-star baseball team places fifth among eight teams

By Corey Kirk
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The season concluded for the District 3 champion 9-11-year-old Baker Little League all-star team with an 18-0 loss to North Bend on Tuesday, July 20 at the state tournament in Scappoose.

Baker, which beat Grants Pass 21-7 in its opening game Saturday, July 17, finished fifth out of eight teams, with a 1-2 record.

“The kids had a lot of fun,” Baker manager Brandon Briels said.

North Bend had a strong performance at the plate from the start Tuesday.

“The opposing team came out hitting the ball, even their bad hits would just find their way to spots where we didn’t have players,” Briels said. “They earned it, they hit the ball very well.”

Baker, facing a 12-0 deficit after half a inning, was able to put runners on base, but that didn’t translate into runs.

“They (North Bend) pitched well and they defended really well, it was a well-coached team,” Briels said.

Coleman Ingram and Liam Jobes relieved starting pitcher Ambrose Rexroad, but North Bend continued its offensive momentum.

Still, Briels was proud to see the team, which won the district championship in late June at Wade Williams Field in Baker City, remain enthusiastic, cheering each other on regardless of the score.

“They all really gelled well together, there were never really any spats or anything, they really supported each other all the way through,” Briels said.

The game ended after four innings due to the 10-run mercy rule.

Briels said he’s grateful for the kids, and their parents and siblings, who sacrificed some of their summer.

“It’s not just the coaches, it’s everybody, the parents were so awesome, they were always there to help, it was amazing getting to know a lot of people otherwise we wouldn’t have gotten to know,” Briels said.

He’s also thankful for the Baker City community for their support during the team’s journey.

“A huge thanks to the community for sticking behind us, all of their donations and all their parents and everyone that was involved, it was super cool,” Briels said.

He’s also proud of how the Baker team represented not only its town, but all of District 3.

“We represented the entire district, not just Baker,” Briels said. “To win a game here was pretty special, winning fifth place out of eight districts, that was pretty cool. We never dropped to any poor level of saying mean things to the other team, we always held our composure and we were good sports no matter what.”



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