

# US women thumped while Dutch score 10 in Olympic football

US women's 44-game unbeaten run ended by Sweden in Tokyo opener

● **Netherlands women's soccer blows out Zambia in historic win to open Olympics**

AFP | London

Gold medal favourites the United States began their bid for a fifth women's Olympic football title with an embarrassing 3-0 loss to Sweden, while Team GB kicked off their campaign at the Tokyo Games by beating Chile yesterday and the Netherlands put 10 past fellow debutants Zambia.

The US have won four of six Olympic titles since women's football was introduced to the programme in 1996, but suffered a heavy defeat by the same team that knocked them out on penalties in the quarter-finals in Rio. Stina Blackstenius scored twice before substitute Lina Hurtig added a third for 2016 silver medallists Sweden at a game played in an empty Tokyo Stadium due to strict Covid-19 restrictions.

The loss ended a 44-match unbeaten run for the Americans dating back to the start of 2019. It was also only the second time they had lost a game in 90 minutes at the Olympics.

"They're (Sweden) one of the best teams in the world," said US forward Megan Rapinoe. "There's really no time to dwell



Rose Lavelle of the United States in action with Caroline Seger of Sweden

or think about if Sweden is living in our heads or not. We've got another game in three days."

The Dutch made history in Miyagi as Arsenal striker Vivianne Miedema scored four times in a remarkable 10-3 thumping of Zambia.

Lieke Martens netted twice, while Shanice van de Sanden, Jill Roord, Lineth Beerensteyn and Victoria Pevlova also got on the scoresheet.

It was the highest-scoring game in women's Olympic history and the most scored by one team in a match, but Zambia avoided a record margin of defeat as Barbra Banda scored twice late on to secure a hat-trick.

The largest win remains Germany's 8-0 thrashing of China in 2004.

In Sapporo, Great Britain won

their Group E opener 2-0, with Manchester City striker Ellen White scoring twice and having a goal disallowed by VAR for offside.

Hege Riise's side are bidding to become the first British team to win an Olympic football medal.

"When you get into a competition, it's really important you win that first game," said Team GB captain Steph Houghton.

"There's still a lot of stuff to improve on but three points on the board, we're really pleased."

Brazil star Marta bagged two goals in a 5-0 rout of China in Group F, meaning she has now scored in five straight Olympics.

Debinha scored in between Marta's brace before a late Andressa penalty and Beatriz strike completed a comprehensive victory in Rifu.

It's obvious we put ourselves in a big hole, but we're the only ones who can get ourselves out of it

US COACH VLATKO ANDONOVSKI

In the other Group E game, hosts Japan rescued a 1-1 draw with Canada as Aston Villa's Mana Iwabuchi scored an 84th-minute equaliser.

Christine Sinclair had put the Canadians in front, marking her 300th appearance for her country with a record-extending 187th international goal.

Australia sit second in the early Group D table behind Sweden after Sam Kerr found the net in a 2-1 victory over New Zealand.

**Several teams take a knee**

Players from the US, Sweden, Team GB and Chile all took a knee before kick-off to highlight racial injustice.

"As players in Great Britain we've been taking the knee in club and international matches and we felt strongly as a group that we wanted to show support for those affected by discrimination and equality," said Houghton.

"It was a proud moment because the Chile players took the knee too to show how united we are as sport."

New Zealand did the same ahead of their game against Aus-

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The match was personal for Team USA: The Swedes knocked the four-time World Cup winners out of the tournament on penalties in the quarter-finals in 2016

tralia, whose players stood arm in arm facing their opponents.

The International Olympic Committee has relaxed some of the rules for protests at the Games, softening a long-standing ban on political protests at the global sporting event.

Athletes will now be allowed to take a knee before play begins to highlight racial injustice, speak to the media and post online about their views, or wear clothing with a protest slogan at a press conference.

But political statements during events, victory ceremonies and at the Olympic Village are still off the cards, the IOC said.

"For us it feels right to stand up for human rights," said Sweden defender Amanda Ilestedt. "For us it feels good to do, and something we stand for as a team."

**Sri Lanka coach says spat with captain was 'good debate'**



Mickey Arthur Dasun Shanaka  
AFP | Colombo

Sri Lanka coach Mickey Arthur yesterday brushed off suggestions that he berated skipper Dasun Shanaka in front of cameras after they lost a one-day series to India.

India passed Sri Lanka's 275-9 with five balls to spare in Colombo on Tuesday to record a win that gave them a 2-0 lead in the three-game series.

Sri Lanka's South African coach was seen sharing heated words with Shanaka and gesturing at the captain on the field after the game they lost by three wickets.

He appeared to indicate that Shanaka should go with him off the field but the captain did not budge while Arthur walked away, in a video widely shared on social media.

"It was actually a very good debate, no need to make mischief out of it," Arthur said on Twitter responding to match commentator Russel Arnold's comment that the exchange should have been held in the dressing room.

**Hamilton 'did nothing wrong' in Verstappen move, says Mercedes tech chief**



Lewis Hamilton  
AFP | London

Lewis Hamilton's controversial first-lap move on world championship rival Max Verstappen at the British Grand Prix was "absolutely in line with the overtaking guide", his Mercedes team insisted yesterday.

Verstappen accused seven-time world champion Hamilton of being "dangerous, disrespectful and un-sportsmanlike" following their collision at Silverstone on Sunday.

Red Bull's Verstappen had to retire from the race while Hamilton went on to win, slashing the Dutchman's lead in the championship from 33 points to just eight.

"As far as we are concerned, the manoeuvre that took place, the manoeuvre that Lewis did, was absolutely in line with the FIA's overtaking guide," said Mercedes technical chief James Allison.

**Bahrain Olympic football team set for Kuwait test**



A group of Bahrain's Olympic team players at their camp

TDT | Manama

Bahrain's under-23 Olympic football team take on their counterparts from Kuwait today in an international friendly match to be played at their ongoing overseas training camp in Istanbul.

The game is set to be the second of three warm-up matches at their camp, which continues until Tuesday next week.

The nationals have continued to train daily under the supervision of Olympic team head coach Ismail Karami.

They had earlier won their first friendly against local club Beykoz 5-1 on Monday. Today's game will be followed by another friendly, also against Kuwait, on Monday next week.

Bahrain's under-23s are cur-

rently training with 28 players in Istanbul. They are Ahmed Al Sherooqi, Ali Muftah, Ebrahim Al Khattal, Faisal Abdulla, Faisal Hassan Habib, Ammar Mohammed, Omar Abdulbasit, Younis Mousa, Adnan Fawaz, Abdulla Al Haiki, Abdulrahman Sayed, Ali Khalifa, Hussain Al Attar, Hussain Abdulkarim, Abdulla Freah, Ebrahim Shareeda, Mohammed Marhoon, Hamza Abdulla, Ali Al Dosari, Sayed Mohammed Amin, Hassan Issa, Fahad Jassim, Mohammed Ahmed, Ziyad Basil, Hussain Tawfiq, Hamad Fouad, Hamza Al Jabne and Abdulla Nimer.

The Bahrainis are preparing for upcoming competitions, mainly the AFC U23 Asian Cup Qualifiers, which takes place in October.

**Said Maalem says Fakhreddine has personal issues with other Arab fighters: 'Especially Algerians'**

TDT | Manama

BRAVE CF 52's main event just got a lot more personal for both Mohamed Said Maalem and Mohammad Fakhreddine. The protagonists of the historical fight night have been trading shots since their proposed bout fell through and Said Maalem has taken up a notch again by accusing Fakhreddine of having personal issues with other Arab fighters.

Speaking in the Road to BRAVE CF 52 series that will drop next week, Said Maalem gave his overall impressions of his adversary turned arch-enemy and shared that he felt Fakhreddine behaves differently when he faces an Arab fighter as opposed to other athletes, such as Russians, and said "The Latest" especially has issues with Algerian fighters, remembering Fakhro's rivalry with Tahar Hadbi.

"Fakhreddine is very disrespectful, regardless of family, country, or anything, as a person he is not polite and is cocky and obnoxious. This isn't the first time he does this to an Arab fighter, he fights with foreigners and Russians and acts like the respectful well-raised fighter, but when he fights an Arab or Algerian, especially Algerian, he disrespects them and loves to act like he is much



Mohamed Said Maalem

TDT | Manama

To me, he's a silly individual who went out of his way to curse, I don't curse. To me, he is silly and has mental issues

MOHAMED SAID MAALEM

better, scarier opponent who scares everyone. When even a fly isn't scared of him", said Said Maalem, who went as far as to accuse Fakhreddine of

having mental issues.

"To me, he's a silly individual who went out of his way to curse, I don't curse. To me, he is silly and has mental issues."

BRAVE CF 52: Bad Blood goes down on August 1st in association with The Golden Cage. In the main event, reigning Middleweight champion Mohammad Fakhreddine takes centre stage as he looks to become a two-division titleholder when he takes on top contender Mohamed Said Maalem for the vacant BRAVE Combat Federation Light Heavyweight championship of the world.