

# USA crushes Canada at Women's World Cup

*DEREK VAN DIEST, EDMONTON SUN*

FIRST POSTED: SATURDAY, AUGUST 18, 2012 10:58 PM MDT



TEAM USA CELEBRATES A DOUBLE PLAY AGAINST TEAM CANADA DURING WORLD CUP WOMEN'S OF BASEBALL AT TELUS FIELD ON SATURDAY. THE U.S. WON 17-4 TO ADVANCE TO THE GOLD MEDAL FINAL WHILE CANADA WILL PLAY FOR BRONZE. AMBER BRACKEN, EDMONTON SUN

EDMONTON - Alexa Maldonado was looking for a fastball in her second at bat at Telus Field Saturday.

And when the American got it on the first pitch thrown by Team Canada reliever Jessica Berube, she crushed it to the wall in right field, breaking open the semifinal showdown.

Maldonado's bases-clearing triple — she was waved home after the relay was bobbled — paced the USA to a convincing 17-4 victory and a berth in tonight's final against Japan in the Women's World Cup of Baseball tournament.

"I was just looking to be aggressive," Maldonado said.

"The first fastball I got, I was looking to swing at. My timing was right and when I hit it, I just said to myself "run", because I knew their right-fielder was playing shallow. So I ran my butt off and our third-base coach sent me home."

The shot turned the USA's three-run lead into a 7-0 advantage, which was more than enough for starting pitcher Stacy Piagno, who shut down the Canadian bats before running out of gas in the sixth inning.

"We pitched well and that's what we needed to win this tournament," said U.S. manager Ruben Felix.

"That's what kept us close in games so far and tonight we pitched well, put some good hits together and played some defence."

The Americans went on to score seven runs in the third inning to take a stranglehold of the game.

Canada had beaten the U.S. earlier in the round-robin portion of the tournament, but could not battle back into this contest.

"Their pitcher did an outstanding job, so she deserves the credit," said Canadian manager Andre Lachance.

"I think we had just one hit in the first four innings, which is very unusual considering the big numbers we've put up this week.

"And it seemed that everything they hit was falling in. Those kind of games happen, and unfortunately it happened at the wrong moment for us."

Canada will face Australia in the third-place game today (1 p.m.) at Telus Field.

The Canadian squad reeled off a 5-0 record before dropping their last round-robin game to Japan on Friday.

"When you lose a semifinal it's never easy to come back and play hard for a bronze-medal game," Lachance said.

"But like I told the girls earlier, you can be (upset) all night, (upset) tomorrow and (upset) for a week, but if they do that, they won't come away with a medal."

"So they have to sleep on it tonight and be ready to play Australia tomorrow."

derek.vandiest@sunmedia.ca

Twitter@Sundvandiest