

## Eagle Women Win in Italy

Written by Jackie Finlan

Monday, 19 November 2012 10:48

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The USA Women got their European tour off to a good start, banking a 34-20 victory over Italy in the first of the Eagles' three tests.



While the USA took a 19-0 lead into the half, the first 40 minutes was marred by penalties around the breakdown, on either side. Throughout the match, USA flyhalf Sadie Anderson's boot was an integral weapon, relieving pressure and keeping the Eagles in Italy's end.

Anderson put her side in good striking position after a long kick to touch, awarded from a penalty. From the subsequent lineout, the Eagle forwards drove to the tryline and No. 8 Kate Daley dotted down for the score, 5-0.

Forward domination was the name of the first half, and the Italians had a difficult time handling the American attack up front.

"Our scrums and lineouts were very strong," USA Women National Team coach Pete Steinberg said. "In fact, the forwards were dominant in contact and that set our platform very well. The first half was excellent; they were barely in our half. Both our kicking game and defense worked very well, too."

Daley helped set up the next score, feeding flanker Stacey Bridges for the try, which Anderson converted. The third and final try of the half came out of captain Jamie Burke's hands, who finished off a sustained attack near Italy's 22 meter. Anderson added her second conversion,

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then kicked off the second half with a penalty, 22-0.

It was starting to look like a runaway, as outside center Amy Daniels fought her way over the, and Anderson's conversion made it a 29-0 lead after 55 minutes. At this point, however, four substitutions had been made and another four would be made shortly afterward. It was time to get those younger players some time on the pitch, and while valuable, it also let Italy back into the game.

"The Italian comeback was partly our subs but also partly Italy's change in approach," Steinberg said. "Most of their play came from turnovers and penalties against us, and they started to tap penalties and play quicker. We were slow to react. However, every time they scored, we turned around and pressured their line."

The Italians answered with two converted tries, one from a lineout and the other from turnover in the USA's end, 29-14. The hosts closed to 29-17 with a penalty, but then the USA scored a very important try to halt Italy's momentum.

Wing (and birthday girl) Ashley Kmiecik returned a clearing kick to Italy's 22 meter, where the forwards took over for a couple of phases. The ball then worked out to replacement center Val Griffeth, who dotted down the final try of the game. Italy responded with a penalty, and there the game ended at 34-20.

While the scoreline indicates a close game, the USA had six tries held up in the try zone, and doesn't reflect the Eagles' dominance of play.

The team named flanker Shaina Turley player of the match, but Steinberg indicated that it was a difficult choice considering some of the outstanding performances in the pack.

Six players – hooker Katy Augustyn, prop Sarah Wilson, lock Rosie Meisner, scrumhalf Jenny Lui, outside center Val Griffeth and fullback Kimber Rozier – all earned their first 15s caps.

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Next up is France for two games on Nov. 21 and 24.

### **USA 34**

Tries: Daley, Bridges, Burke, Daniels, Griffeth

Conversions: Anderson 3

Penalties: Anderson

### **Italy 20**

### **USA Lineup v Italy**

1 Sarah Chobot (48 min Naima Reddick)

2 Kitt Wagner (67 min Katy Augustyn)

3 Jamie Burke (C) (54 min Sarah Wilson)

4 Stacey Bridges

5 Sharon Blaney (61 min Rosie Miesner)

6 Shaina Turley

7 Lynelle Kugler (40 min Mel Denham)

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8 Kate Daley

9 Caroline White (40 min Jennifer Lui)

10 Sadie Anderson (75 min Hannah Stolba)

11 San Juanita Moreno

12 Sam Pankey

13 Amy Daniels (61 min Val Griffeth)

14 Ashley Kmiecik

15 Kimber Rozier