

USA Win With Game-Ending Try

Written by Jackie Finlan
Friday, 01 February 2013 19:18

If you thought the USA Women's 7s first game couldn't be topped in terms of drama, then you were dead wrong. Two minutes into the second half, the Eagles were up 17-0, but then South Africa unleashed a determined offensive attack that saw them overtake the Americans 19-17. But on the final play of the game, with no time on the clock, 21-year-old Lauren Doyle dotted down the go-ahead try for the 22-19 victory.



After a shaky start where the kickoff was handed over to South Africa, the USA found themselves on their own tryline defending a scrum. But scrumhalf Katie Dowty did a good job of disrupting the outlet pass, which dribbled out of South Africa's possession. Dowty scooped it up and hit Vanesha McGee sweeping around to the weak side.

McGee arced toward the sideline, while South Africa's Sinazo Nobeke aimed to cut her off before she straightened up. As the two came within striking distance of each other, McGee delivered a big fend, giving her the room and time to take off down the sideline. Nobeke stayed in pursuit, but few have the breakaway speed of McGee, 5-0.

USA was in scoring possession again, but Kelly Griffin took an offload to the weakside of the tackle and was left unsupported. But the Eagles reversed the turnover soon enough and saw Christy Ringgenberg break toward the corner. South Africa's was covering well, so at the last second, Ringgenberg heaved the ball over her shoulder to Nathalie Marchino in support. On their heels, the defense couldn't adjust fast enough and Marchino was in for the five-pointer, 10-0 at the break.

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The USA looked like they were having fun and translated into some nice offensive series. Dowty started the next campaign downfield, dummy passing past her opposite deep in the USA's end. Her teammates were in quick support, and the ball stayed alive through a series of offloads. Eventually, McGee found space between two defenders and dotted beneath the posts. Ringgenberg converted, 17-0.

A little less than six minutes remained in regulation, and South Africa was anything but defeated. From halfway, Mara Williams had ball in hand with one teammate outside her. Her wing was properly marked, and Jill Potter was coming across to mark Williams. But Potter overran Williams, who immediately cut behind Potter and motored to the tryline uncontested. Yolanda Meiring converted the try, 17-7.

Less than a minute later, RSA substitute Mathrin Simmers was diving over the tryline, 17-12. Three minutes remained and the USA seemed to lose some of the oomph it had in the first half. They had a good opportunity from a good kickoff receipt from Vix Folayan, but a knockon handed over possession. RSA employed the hard-running Williams into contact, and she did well to fend Deven Owsiany and make good ground. Meiring was in quick support, scooped up the ball and dove over for the tying points. Her conversion made it 19-17.

Second remained and RSA made a fatal mistake in sending the kickoff directly into touch. The Eagles proved to be the ultimate professionals, as Dowty calmly tapped through the mark and sent the ball to sub Lauren Doyle. Somehow, the youngster fought her way down the sideline without going into touch and dotted down the winner in the corner, 22-19.

A barnburner of a match. The USA have Argentina (0-2) next and hope to finish 2-0-1.

USA 22

Tries: McGee 2, Marchino, Doyle

Cons: Ringgenberg

South Africa 19

Tries: Williams, Meiring, Simmers

Cons: Meiring 2

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