

Canada loses to England 2-1, eliminated from Women's World Cup in quarters

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By Israel Fehr

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VANCOUVER – Christine Sinclair scored for Canada but two early goals by England proved too much to overcome as England prevailed 2-1 in the quarterfinals of the Women's World Cup on Saturday at B.C. Place.

"I'm proud of my girls. I think they give you everything and it just wasn't good enough tonight. The dream is over," said Canadian coach John Herdman. "Our best just wasn't good enough."

Looking to secure a spot in the semifinals, Herdman went with the same starting lineup he put out in the [1-0 win over Switzerland](#) last Sunday in the round of 16.

After a short feeling-out period, Canada produced the first scoring chance of the game in the 10th minute when Christine Sinclair turned two England defenders on the right side of midfield and played a wonderful cross over to Melissa Tancredi. Tancredi was one-on-one with a defender, cut back at the top of the box with a good look at goal but her shot sailed high above the crossbar.

It was a brilliant display of skill from Sinclair, but it will be largely forgotten given the result of the play and the disappointment of the final score. One minute later, England forward Jodie Taylor pounced on a misplayed pass by centre back Lauren Sesselmann and ran clear on goal and struck the ball into bottom left corner past Erin McLeod to put England up 1-0 after 11 minutes. Lucy Bronze improved England's lead to 2-0 in the 14th minute with a header off a free kick. Even with an abundance of time on their side it would be a difficult deficit for the red-and-white to overturn. Canada hadn't scored more than two goals in their last 21 games and hadn't managed even two in a

game in nine straight.

Of course, they would need to get one before they could get two. Canada came close on a few occasions with Tancredi glancing a Sophie Schmidt free kick just over the bar while Sinclair had a couple half-decent chances too but she couldn't put them on target.

Sinclair's efforts were eventually rewarded. Canada's captain made it 2-1 in the 42nd minute slotting in a loose ball in the box after Ashley Lawrence forced England goalkeeper Karen Bardsley into an awkward save and she let the rebound spill out right at Sinclair's feet.

The second half got off to an odd start when Bardsley was forced to come off in the 51st minute with an apparent eye injury and was replaced by backup 'keeper Siobhan Chamberlain.

Diana Matheson, making her first appearance at the World Cup, came on for Rhian Wilkinson with around 30 minutes to play. Matheson took a position in midfield and Josee Belanger went from right wing to right back.

The hunt for the second goal continued with Herdman inserting 22-year-old striker Adriana Leon in place of Tancredi 10 minutes later in the hope that fresh legs could lift Canada's attack. Kaylyn Kyle was the team's third and final substitution of the game to fill a more offensive role than the outgoing defensive midfielder Desiree Scott.

There were chances there for the taking. Leon danced past defenders into the England area but didn't have the finish. Then she whipped in a good cross that Schmidt connected with but skied way above the net. In the end though, that second goal remained elusive for Canada, just as it had all tournament.

As if a game between two rivals had needed any additional hype, there was an extra focus on officiating after England's coach Mark Sampson put the heat on Canada and the referee ahead of Saturday's proceedings. Sampson [claimed the hosts](#) were "without a shadow of a doubt the most aggressive team in this tournament," and that the Canadians were consistently getting away with fouls.

The two goals inside 15 minutes rendered Sampson's statement moot. Canada had to play a more open playing style than they're accustomed to try to get back into the game. In fact, it was England that was often the aggressor in tackles.

"We knew it was going to be a physical contest. You've got the English fighting spirit against the Canadian grit," said Herdman. "I've got to give credit to Mark and his team of players and staff, they did well tactically tonight and we very hard to break down."

With the win, England moves on to the semifinals next Wednesday in Edmonton. Earlier Saturday, [Japan](#) booked their spot opposite the Three Lionesses after knocking off [Australia](#) 1-0. The U.S. and [Germany](#) meet in the other semifinal in Montreal next Tuesday.

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