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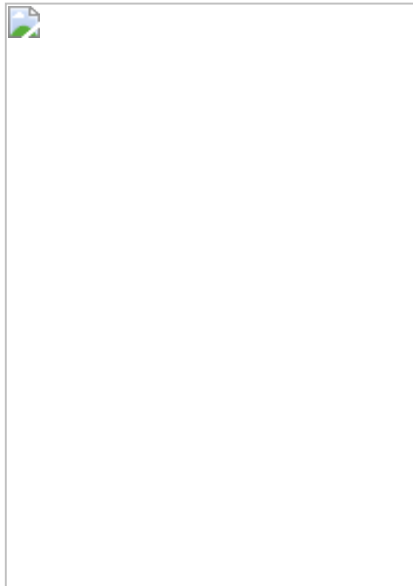
Sunday, November 23, 2003

Norway overcome France in World Cup opener

Two second-half goals send Norway to solid victory

by Brian J. Hegarty

Philadelphia, PA. September 20, 2003 (CSA) -- Using second-half goals from Anita Rapp and Dagny Mellgren, Norway started out the 2003 Women's World Cup with a 2-0 win over France at Lincoln Financial Field in front of an announced crowd of 13,486.



© Scott Bales /YCJ
France's Hoda Lattaf goes to ground in front of Norway's Ane Strangeland

"Winning the opening match 2-0 is very good for us," said Norwegian head coach Age Steen after the game. "And beating France, that was very good."

Form held for the two teams in the first half with Norway attempting to bombard the French goal with their direct, up-and-under style, with towering strikers Marianne Pettersen and Rapp as the targets.

Meanwhile, France tried to absorb the pressure and counterattack through Marinette Pichon and Stephanie Mugneret-Beghe.

Both teams dealt calmly in defense with the chances that were being created.

In the 38th minute France almost took advantage of an opportunity when midfielder Elodie Woock hit a perfectly struck ball at the top of the penalty area which appeared to startle Norwegian goalkeeper Bente Nordby, who dove to her right and tipped the shot back out into a dangerous position. The Norwegian defense scrambled to clear the ball out for a corner as Pichon raced onto the loose ball.

Results

U.S. Women's National Team

Sunday, November 2
International Friendly
U.S. 3 - Mexico 1
Cotton Bowl, Dallas, TX

Wednesday, October 22
International Friendly
U.S. 2 - Italy 2
Arrowhead Stadium, Kansas City, MO

Saturday, October 11
Third Place
U.S. 3 - Canada 1
Home Depot Center, Carson, CA

Saturday, October 5
Semifinals
U.S. 0 - Germany 3
PGE Park, Portland, OR

Wednesday, October 1
Quarterfinals
U.S. 1 - Norway 0
Gillette Stadium - Foxboro, MA

Sunday, September 28
2003 Women's World Cup - Group A
U.S. 3 - North Korea 0
Crew Stadium - Columbus, OH

Thursday, September 25
2003 Women's World Cup - Group A
U.S. 5 - Nigeria 0
Lincoln Financial Field - Philadelphia, PA

Sunday, September 21
2003 Women's World Cup - Group A
U.S. 3 - Sweden 1
RFK Stadium - Washington, D.C.

September 7
International Friendly
U.S. 5 - Mexico 0
Spartan Stadium - San Jose, CA

September 1
International Friendly

<http://www.cybersoccernews.com/Women's World Cup/firstround/Group B/>

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them, so it was a great game, an important game..."

Norwegian striker Dagny Mellgren

squirted out to Sonia Bompastor, whose shot was cleared out comfortably.

"When Norway took the lead they started to play more defensively, but we started to play really well," noted French coach Elisabeth Loisel. "We played short and on the ground, and we started to dominate a little bit and play well."

Nordby was again the hero for Norway in the 63rd minute when Pichon was again sent in alone on goal. The keeper came off her line bravely and made an outstanding save to her right, and then denied the French a rebound opportunity on goal.

"Bente Nordby was great today," said Steen. "In 1995 Bente was the best goalkeeper in the world, and today you could see why."

The French started to stretch themselves more and more in search for the elusive tying goal, and Norway took advantage in the 66th minute when Mellgren was sent in alone on Marty.

The French goalkeeper matched her counterpart's save, but she gave up the rebound to Mellgren, who calmly slotted the ball into the empty net despite a difficult angle.

France continued pressing forward, but to no avail as Norway were content to knock the ball around following the second goal and take the air out of the game.

"I think we played very well, everyone had a good game," said Mellgren. "We had chances and we scored on them, so it was a great game, an important game. It'll give us a lot of confidence going into the Brazil match.

"Overall, we know what our goal is to win a gold medal. I think we can do it. Of course it's going to be a tough ride, the teams are getting better every year."

"I told the players they could be proud of their performance," said Loisel. "If we continue to play like that, we stand a good chance of qualifying for the second stage."

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U.S. 1 Brazil 0
 New Orleans, LA.

June 14
 International friendly
 U.S. 5 Ireland 0
 Salt Lake City, UT.

May 17
 International friendly
 U.S. 6 England 0
 Legion Field, Birmingham, Ala.

April 26
 International friendly
 U.S. 6 Canada 1,
 RFK Stadium, Washington DC

2003 Algarve Cup - Portugal

March 20 U.S. 2 China 0 - Final - Loule
 March 14 U.S. 1 Canada 1- Olhao
 March 16 U.S. 1 Norway 0- Ferreiras
 March 18 U.S. 1 Sweden 1 Vila Real San Antonio

International friendly
 February 16
 U.S. 1 Iceland 0
 Blackbaud Stadium , Charleston, S.C.

Four Nations Tournament
 January 29
 U.S. 1 Germany 0
 Shanghai, China

January 26
 U.S. 0 China 2
 Wuhan, China

January 23
 U.S. 3 Norway 1
 Yiwu, China

U.S. Women's National Team
 International Friendly
 January 12
 U.S. 0 Japan 0
 Torero Stadium, San Diego, CA

2002 Results Archive

Links

USSoccer.com
[National Team player pool](#)

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