

FIRS 2011 The Official Women's World

Championships in Roccaraso, Italy

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Players began to arrive in Philadelphia on June 28th and 29th. The ladies were able to skate both days at the NERC "ARENA". All players had arrived for the 8 p.m. practice on 6/30. The team had a good 2 hour skate then home for a late dinner and bed. The team was up early and on the rink by 8 a.m. for another 2 hour skate. Team USA got ready for the trip to the airport but first lunch, Philly cheese steaks and pizza from Johnny G's, a local steak shop known for great food. After lunch the team loaded the trucks with their equipment, luggage and were taken to the train station for the 1 p.m. airport express. When the girls arrived at the airport the trucks were there and ready to be unloaded. This year we were split up for our flights but once we were all checked in, it was off to Italy! After the long trip to Italy all of the team had finally arrived. Quiet night, bed and start to get our body clocks on Italian time (6 hours a head).

Day 1 (7/3/11) Breakfast and an early walk to check out the area and rink. 2 p.m. practice then back to the hotel for a late lunch. After lunch, a walk into the town of Roccaraso then 6 p.m. dinner then off to the opening ceremonies. The rink was packed and the federation put on a very nice ceremony. Then back to hotel to hang out then bed check. All players accounted for, Good night!

Day 2 (7/4/11) 9 p.m. game time, long day trying to stay focused and ready but it was finally game time. The ladies looked ready. The USA got on the board 1st when Cheleste (Cheese Wiz) Loyatho (Calf) scored on a one timer from Kayla Demint (Calf) at the 1:47 mark of the 1st half. The USA would hold a 1-0 lead until 25:53 when Chelsi Wells (CO) took a Kelly McCormack (NY) pass and drilled one short side for a 2-0 USA lead. Then at 35:16 Laura Veharanta (Calf) would work a nice give and go with Courtney Orner (AZ) and the USA had a 3-0 lead. The girls played a great puck position game the rest of the way and would shut out Australia for win number one. Jetta Rackleff and Amber Carey would combine for the shut-out in goal.

Day 3 (7/5/11) Next was Finland, a 1:45 p.m. start time. The girls came out flying!! Chelsi Wells got the USA on the board at 4:28 assisted by Jennifer (Money) Munhofen (Atlanta). Laura Veharanta made it 2-0 at 7:40 on a rocket from the left circle. The girls were

finding their game now they took a 3-0 lead .59 seconds into the 2nd half, Kayla Demint assisted by Kathleen (Big Foot) Savino (CT). Finland would get on the board at 20:46 to cut the USA lead to 3-1 however the USA would put this one away scoring 2 goals in the final 2 minutes Celeste Loyatho from Captain Lisa(Judy) Giovanelli (CT) and Laura Veharanta from Kathleen Savino for the 5-1 victory. Amber Carey (Calf) and Jetta Rackleff (OR) split this one in goal to share the victory.

Day 4 (7/6/11) Next up the home team Italy. The stands were packed for the 11:15 a.m. game and the girls knew they had to be ready, and ready they were getting on the board first at 1:47 Kayla Demint assisted by Laura Veharanta. Demint would make it 2-0 taking an Allie Era (AZ) pass and burying it top shelf. Jetta Rackleff got the start and was playing well in net. Demint would complete the natural hat trick scoring her 3rd straight goal at 11:05 for a commanding 3-0 half time lead for the USA. In the 2nd half Italy would score to cut the lead to 3-1 but again the USA would finish strong getting late goals from Kathleen Savino and Laura Veharanta for a 5-1 victory and a 3-0 record in pool play. With 1 game to play that night!

That game was against the only other undefeated team Canada! This game would determine 1st place for pool B. Canada came out fast and just :25 in #91 Amanda Parkins scored and that fast it was 1-0 Canada. Canada would take a high sticking penalty and the USA would make them pay. Kelly McCormack would hit a streaking Lisa Giovanelli who hit the long side corner and it was tied 1-1. The USA would go up 2-1 at 15:41 when Celeste Loyatho scored assisted by Laura Veharanta. The USA would carry most of the play but #11 Jarrel Jackie would tie the game at 26:35 for Canada and we were in for a great finish. Both teams had chances but Amber Carey (USA) and Keely Brown (Canada) would close the door on everyone and this game would end in a 2-2 tie.

The tie did not settle anything. The USA and Canada were tied in all 6 tiebreakers so for the first time in the FIRS World Championships the 2 teams would use a 3 player shoot out to settle the pool B standings. Canada scored 1st, the USA missed shot 1 and 2 and when Canada scored on it's 2nd shootout goal it was over, Canada would place 1st in the final standings for pool B. The elimination round was next!

Day 5 (7/7/11) Up for breakfast 9 a.m., team meetings and walk through practice then rest and get ready for the Czech Rep. The USA ladies needed no other motivation then knowing the Czech's had eliminated the USA from the gold medal last year. The USA goaltending had been outstanding so far and for this game Jetta Rackleff would get the call. The USA had also been getting strong play from all 3 lines. On defense the Combo's of Charlotte Nicholson (NY) and Kathleen Savino (CT) and the pair of Lisa Giovanelli (CT) and Allie Era (AZ) were outstanding. Their defense was superb and their puck position game allowed the USA forwards to attack with speed every game. The USA's 3rd line kept teams off balanced. They played a 1-

2-1 trap to perfection. Courtney Orner (AZ) and Nicole (Gino) Giannino (NY). Both played the front and created havoc with their speed. Kelly McCormack (NY) and Chelsi Wells (CO) played the sides and played strong! Running the trap from the back was Jennifer (Money) Munhofen (Atlanta). Running 2-3 different systems at teams allowed the USA to be unpredictable. The girls looked ready for the Czech's game. The USA power play would click on its 1st chance. Laura Veharanta from Lisa Giovanelli at 10:47, 1-0 USA. The teams went back and forth but the 1st half would end 1-0 USA as both goaltenders were outstanding. In the 2nd half it was great hockey. The USA was controlling play when the Czech's Martina Vonkova got free and tied the game at 28:26. All of sudden it got very interesting. The USA girls did not get off the game plan. They controlled the play with puck position, as they regrouped and came with speed Allie Era took the puck with lots of speed down the right wing as the Czech's backed in Laura Veharanta worked her way to the weak side back door and Allie made a perfect pass and Laura made no mistake and buried it to give the USA a 2-1 lead with 1:27 to play. The USA would shut it down by holding the puck and when the horn sounded they had avenged last year's lose and move the USA into the semi-finals.

Day 6 (7/8/11) The Semi-Finals were here! The USA would face pool A winners Spain. Spain showed lots of speed in Pool play and would be a big challenge for the USA. The USA would turn to Amber Carey in goal for this match up. The USA would get on the board first Allie Era from Celesta Loyatho at 3:18. Courtney Orner would make it 2-0 scoring unassisted at 11:48. The USA would take a commanding lead when Laura Veharanta scored assisted by Courtney Orner at 16:33 and the 1st half end 3-0 USA. In the 2nd half the USA would play a perfect half controlling play with puck possession and forcing Spain to chase. The USA would score 3 goals in the last 4 minutes to win 6-0 and advance to the gold medal game. The girls were playing their best hockey of the Championship.

Day 7 (7/9/11) The Gold Medal Game! **The FIRS Women's World Championship Game.** It was what the girls came for and it was here. To make it even more interesting it was against Canada, who they tied in Pool play and lost a tie breaker shoot-out too.

USA vs. Canada

"It doesn't get any better than this"

The hardest decision to be made was who was going to be in net. After sleeping on it Amber Carey got the call. Jetta was fantastic all week and I truly believe I could have gone with either. It was game time! I think the USA set the tone early when at 1:36 Charlotte Nicholson (NY) took a charging penalty. The USA killed it off and the girls were skating and pumped. Canada got on the board first at 8:50 #4 Nanji Sasha unassisted. The USA would respond quickly rookie Kayla Demint from Laura Veharanta at 9:45 and we were tied. Canada jumped right back on top

when #4 Nanji Sasha scored her 2nd unassisted goal at 11:38 and that's how the half ended 2-1 Canada. The locker room at half time was quite but not down. I gave the girls a minute before I spoke. They had gotten better every game, they worked the system and I needed them to believe! I challenged my keeper Amber "we need a wall, you shut the door and we'll get 2". Then the team "play our game and it will come". Keely Brown (Canada) was playing out of her mind. We were dominating but we were still down one. I was reinforcing what I had been saying all week "pass to score". In the second half we continued to use our speed but still trailed. Then with 5:28 remaining Courtney Orner made a behind the back pass from behind the net to Laura Veharanta who buried it and we were all tied up! Pass to score, there it was. Now it was who's going to get the next one. Both teams had chances late but nothing. Canada had a great chance with :10 to play but Amber came up big. The faceoff was to Amber's left Demint won the draw to defenseman Allie Era, Allie took the puck behind the net and turned on the speed, Allie made a move in the high slot around a Canadian player (my heart was in my throat) straight up the middle of the rink flying as she crossed the redline she took a high shot Brown (Canada) made the save but the loose puck went behind the net, USA rookie Kayla Demint picked it up as Brown was down and wrapped around to the left it looked like slow motion but then the Ref (who was on the goal line) pointed and the buzzer went off and the USA had scored with :01 on the clock to capture the

FIRS 2011 Women's World Championship!!!

The door opened and the girls rushed onto the floor to celebrate this unbelievable victory. Words can't explain how proud we were of this team and what they just accomplished.

Congratulations to Canada on a great game!

The celebration and closing ceremonies was just magical for the girls. Watching them standing there singing at the top of their lungs OUR National Anthem was just an honor.

Congratulations Girls, You did it!

Coach

Final Team Stats

	Player	GP	G	A	Pts	Pen
#6	Laura Veharanta (Calf)	7	8	4	12	6
#96	Kayla Demint (Calf)	7	7	1	8	2
#5	Courtney Orner (AZ)	7	2	3	5	2
#3	Lisa Giovanelli (CT)	7	2	2	4	0
#17	Kathleen Savino (CT)	7	1	3	4	2
#87	Celeste Loyatho (Calf)	7	3	1	4	4
#79	Allie Era (AZ)	7	1	2	3	0

#74 Chelsi Wells (CO)	7	2	0	2	0
#34 Kelly McCormack (NY)	7	0	2	2	0
#7 Jennifer Munhofen (AT)	7	0	1	1	4
#22 Charlotte Nicholson (NY)	7	0	1	1	8
#44 Nicole Giannino (NY)	7	0	0	0	4

GOALIES

#27 Jetta Rackleff (OR)	120 min	3 GA	1.00 GAA
#1 Amber Carey (Calf)	160 min	5GA	1.60 GAA