

# US ADVANCES TO GOLD MEDAL GAME

Aug. 22, 2004, 10:28 a.m. (ET)

Athens, GREECE --- The USA Softball team moved one step closer to taking home its third consecutive Olympic gold medal after a decisive 5-0 victory over rival Australia on Sunday afternoon. Having yet to allow a run in Olympic competition, the U.S. improved to a perfect 8-0 as two-time gold medalist Lisa Fernandez (Long Beach, CA) led from the circle with a three hit complete game performance. Outscoring its opponents 46-0, the U.S. advances to Monday's gold medal match-up at 4 p.m. (Athens time) against the Aussies once again who defeated Japan in the bronze medal game 3-0 .on Sunday evening to earn a spot in the gold medal game.

A pitcher's duel through the first three innings, starting pitcher and two-time Olympic veteran Fernandez, hitting .556, once again had clutch a hit to put the U.S. on top 1-0. With runners at first and second compliments of an infield base hit from speedster Natasha Watley (Irvine, CA) and a hit by pitch to Crystl Bustos (Canyon Country, CA), the 5'6" superstar drove a high fly ball just over the centerfielder's head for a stand-up double.

Her third double of the Games, the Fernandez hit scored Leah O'Brien Amico (Chino Hills, CA) who reached earlier on a fielder's choice. Looking to add a security run, the U.S. loaded the bases and brought the crowd to its feet with an intentional walk to Stacey Nuveman (La Verne, CA). The pitching of Australian Melanie Roche, however, shut down the rally with back-to-back strikeouts to Lovieanne Jung (Fountain Valley, CA) and Kelly Kretschman (Indian Harbour Beach, FL) to end the inning.

It was textbook softball for the U.S. in the bottom of the fifth as it added three insurance runs off a combination of hits. A lead-off walk to Jessica Mendoza (Camarillo, CA), a fly out from Berg and another infield slap hit from Watley put runners on first and second. A single through the right side from Amico then advanced the runners to load the bags bringing the lethal swing of Bustos to the plate.

The crowd exploded as she rocked a two RBI single to the left field gap scoring Watley and Mendoza. A hit by pitch to Fernandez again loaded the bases for power-hitter Nuveman who executed perfectly on a sacrifice fly to leftfield for the RBI to plate Amico for a comfortable 4-0 lead.

The arm of Fernandez continued to quiet the Aussies offensively, but the bat of Kretschman rocked the stadium with a solo shot to deep right field to push the lead in the sixth to 5-0 and bring the fans to their feet.

"I knew I had to change my game plan today in order to stay one step ahead of my opponent," Fernandez said. "Australia is a very good hitting team and I knew I had to keep them off balance if I was going to be successful today."

"That is what makes Lisa Fernandez so good," said head coach Mike Candrea "She had a whole different game plan today."

Leading the team in extra base hits with five (three doubles, one triple, one home run), Kretschman is currently batting .333 for Team USA. Fernandez continues to top the charts in batting with a .550 average and eight RBI.

"This team has yet to meet its peak performance," said Candrea. "Today was a very

good game but we still have our best ahead of us.”

The 2004 Olympic Games have been the most successful thus far for the USA squad. The U.S. has secured many of the records for an Olympic Games and could capture even more tomorrow.

Here are just a few things that show the dominance of the USA squad in 2004:

## THE NUMBERS SO FAR FOR USA.....

### HITTING

--- As a Team, the U.S. is hitting .344

--- Runs For in competition: 46

--- 4 of the 8 games have been run-rule victories

--- The U.S. has scored 46 runs through eight games. In 1996, they totaled 41 runs in nine games. In 2000, through 10 games they totaled 25 runs.

--- In 5 of the 8 games, the U.S. scored has scored in the first inning

--- Fernandez leads team with .550 (11 of 20) in hitting and also in RBI (9), in 2000 she was .097 going 3-of-31 – 2 RBI

### PITCHING

--- The U.S. pitching staff has held its opponents to a .088 batting average.

--- Runs Against in competition: 0

--- In 49.0 innings pitched the U.S. has totaled 55 Ks (1.21 per inning) and a 0.00 ERA

--- 5 of the 8 games have been one hit performances

--- U.S. has allowed just 14 hits in 8 games,

only one extra base hit has been allowed and came in the semi's against Australia

--- Of 11 home runs in the tournament -U.S. has 6, Bustos with three home runs

--- Of Watley's 12 hits, 10 have been infield hits – Three of which came in the Australia semi-final with her 3-for-4 outing

### TEAM

--- Best start ever in Olympic competition for a USA Softball Team - 8-0

--- 78-0 Win streak, last lost on July 13, 2003 against USA Elite (USA 'B' Team)

--- With 8 shutouts in 2004, the U.S. now totals 18 shutouts in Olympic competition since 1996

### THROUGH ALL GAMES (Round Robin and Playoffs)

#### ON PACE TO SET OLYMPIC RECORDS...

--- Highest Team Batting average: .296- USA (1996) NOW..... .344

--- Highest Slugging %: .465- JAPAN (1996) NOW..... .543

--- Most Hits: 70- USA (1996) NOW..... 64

--- Most Batters Hit By Pitch: 7- USA (2000) NOW.....5

--- Highest Fielding Percentage: .989- JAPAN (2000) NOW.....975

--- Lowest Earned Run Average: 0.25- USA (2000) NOW.....0.00

--- Highest Batting Average: .524 (Chika Kodama, Japan (1996) NOW.... Fernandez

.550

--- Most Hits: 13, Chanfung Zhang, China (1996) NOW..... Watley, 12 (through 8 games)

--- Most Home Runs: 4, Haruka Saito, Japan (1996) & Peta Edebone, Australia (2000)

NOW..... Bustos, 3 (2004)

--- Most Runs Batted In: 9, Shelia Cornell, USA (1996) NOW..... Fernandez, 8 (2004)

--- Most Runs Scored: 9, Chanfung Zhang, China (1996) NOW.... Watley, 8 (2004)

#### OLYMPIC RECORDS BROKEN.....

--- Most Doubles: 11- USA (2004) ..... Was 10- Australia (1996)

--- Most Triples: 3- USA (2004) ..... Was 2- Japan (1996)

--- Most Runs Batted In: 42- USA (2004)..... Was 32- USA (1996)

--- Most Runs Scored: 46- USA (2004) ..... Was 41- USA (1996)

--- Fewest Runs Allowed: 0- USA (2004)..... Was 7- Australia, China and USA (2000)

--- Most Stolen Bases: 8- USA (2004)..... Was 7- Japan (2000)

--- Most Shutouts: 8- USA (2004)..... Was 5- USA & China (2000).

--- Fewest Runs Allowed: 0- Fernandez, Finch, Osterman, Harrigan (2004)

.... Was Fernandez, USA (29.2 innings in 2000)

--- Most Stolen Bases: 5- USA, Natasha Watley (2004)..... Was 3, Jackie Smith, N. Z. (2000)

#### OLYMPIC RECORDS TIED...

--- Most runs Scored in a Game: 10 – Four Teams Tied (China 1996 & 2000, USA, Australia, and Chinese Taipei once each in 1996)

\*\*\*\* (2004) USA Defeated Australia in Round Robin 10-0 in five innings

--- Most Consecutive Victories: 8- JAPAN (2000) NOW.....8

--- Most Wins: 8 – USA (1996) & JAPAN (2000) NOW.....8

--- Most Hits, Game: 4—Chika Kodama, Japan (July 27, 1996 vs. Chinese Taipei)

NOW.....4 - Natasha Watley, USA (August 14, 2004 vs. Italy)

--- Most Doubles: 3, Yoshiko Fujimoto, Japan (1996) NOW.....3- Kretschman USA, (2004)

--- Most Triples, Game: 1, Chika Kodama, Japan (twice in 1996) and Lisa Kersten, New Zealand (2000) NOW..... USA, Topping, Watley, Kretschman, Mendoza (2004)

--- Most Stolen Bases in a Game, Game: 2- Emi Tsukada, Japan (July 27, 1996 vs. Chinese Taipei)

NOW..... 2-Natasha Watley, USA (August 13, 2004 vs. Australia)

#### USA vs. AUSTRALIA

OLYMPIC RECORD: 3-2

1996 Olympics- L, 2-1 (10 innings) W- Harding/ L-Fernandez

2000 Olympics- L, 2-1 (13 innings), W- Harding/ L- Fernandez

(Fernandez sets an Olympic record with 25 Ks)

W, 1-0 (7 innings) W-Fernandez, L- Hardie

2004 Olympics – W, 10-0 (5 innings) W- Fernandez/ L, Wilkins  
W, 5-0 (7 innings)- Semi-Finals, W, Fernandez/ L, Roche

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