

# Nothing left after Adelaide

## USA-Japan (2-2, 5-4 on PKs)

**Best player.** Probably Frankie Hejduk, who owned the superb Shunsuke Nakamura, or Sasha Victorine, superb in overtime, or maybe Japanese keeper Seigo Narazaki. But the key man was Josh Wolff. He scored through traffic to erase one deficit, then created the 90th-minute PK that forced overtime.

**Disappointment.** Hidetoshi Nakata did little to aid his reputation; the Roma midfielder seemed well out of sorts most of the match, although he challenged Brad Friedel twice, including a near-winner in OT.

**Revelation.** Victorine sat on the bench the first 360 minutes of the Americans' Olympic adventure, but his play in overtime — holding the ball, creating chances — and that decisive spot kick brilliantly heralded his arrival.

**Turning point.** The Yanks were just seconds to defeat when Wolff chased a ball flicked on Chris Albright off a long Friedel free kick into the penalty area and went down when challenged by Tomoyuki Sakai. Peter Vagenas' PK conversion saved the day.

**Referee.** Zimbabwe's Felix Onias Tangawarima might have been fooled by Wolff at the end of regulation, but he missed a clearer PK when Wolff was taken down in overtime.

**Fans.** A sellout crowd at Hindmarsh Stadium greatly appreciated the game of the tournament. Although there were far more Japanese than Americans, support was evenly split.

**History.** The Yanks had played in one Olympic quarterfinal previously, falling to Yugoslavia, 9-1, at the Melbourne Games in 1956. The U.S. squad had a walk-through to the final eight.

**Trivia.** Naohiro Takahara, who netted Japan's second goal, also scored its second in a 3-1 first-stage victory over the Americans at the World Youth (U-20) Championship last year in Nigeria.

**On the bench.** Victorine and Evan Whitfield saw their first action of the Olympics in the extra period. Both fared nicely.

**Reaction.** "I've been involved in a lot of games over the years — World Cup games, World Cup qualifying games. This may have been the most exciting game that I've ever been involved in. I'm just... I'm exhausted." (U.S. coach Clive Charles)

Midfielder John O'Brien had all he could handle with Spaniards David Albelda and Xavi.



TONY QUINN/SOCCERPIXUSA



The Los Angeles Galaxy's Sasha Victorine was one of the heroes in his Olympic debut.



By Scott French

in Adelaide and Sydney

## SA REPORT CARDS

### USA-JAPAN

#### Starters:

Brad Friedel 6  
Frankie Hejduk 8  
Chad McCarty 4  
Danny Califf 5  
Jeff Agoos 6  
John O'Brien 5  
Peter Vagenas 6  
Ben Olsen 4  
Chris Albright 7  
Josh Wolff 6

#### Substitutes:

Landon Donovan 7  
Sasha Victorine 8  
Evan Whitfield 6

### USA-SPAIN

#### Starters:

Brad Friedel 6  
Frankie Hejduk 6  
Danny Califf 4  
Chad McCarty 4  
Jeff Agoos 5  
John O'Brien 5  
Chris Albright 4  
Ramiro Corrales 3  
Peter Vagenas 5  
Josh Wolff 5

#### Substitutes:

Conor Casey 4  
Sasha Victorine 5  
Landon Donovan 3

## USA-Spain (1-3)

**Best player.** Jose Mari was unstoppable, carving up the U.S. defense to create goals for Raul Tamudo and Miguel Angulo in the first 25 minutes, then adding the capper himself in the 87th. Best showing by a U.S. foe in these Games.

**Disappointment.** Danny Califf has been the Yanks' best defender in the Olympics, but this wasn't his night. Jose Mari beat him for the first two goals, he couldn't halt Tamudo in the buildup to Spain's third, and he picked up a yellow card that might have been a red late in the match.

**Revelation.** The Spaniards had impressed just once this tournament, in a 3-0 victory over South Korea in their opener, and reached the semifinals with a dour display against Italy. This was a different team, sharp, sleek and with weapons aplenty. A fully deserved victory.

**Turning point.** Angulo's goal, neatly placed from a sweet feed from Jose Mari, made it 2-0 in the 25th minute. It was over.

**Referee.** Tunisian Mourad Daami took control early, issuing quick yellow cards to Albright and Spain's Carlos Marchena for rough play. He should have kept at it — Marchena should have been dismissed, perhaps Califf — and might have noticed that Jose Mari settled Ivan Amaya's long

ball with his arm before setting up Angulo.

**Fans.** A big crowd at the beautiful Sydney Football Stadium braved the rain — which was coming down in torrents shortly after the final whistle — for a dud of a match. But the Spaniards were fun to watch, and all but the staunchest Yanks were pulling for them by the end.

**History.** The Spaniards, with four players who saw action in the semifinal (goalie Daniel Aranzubia, Marchena, Gabri and Xavi), had a tougher time with the Americans in last year's World Youth Championship in Nigeria, pulling out a 3-2 quarterfinal victory.

**On the bench.** Ben Olsen's ailing left ankle, which had kept him from playing a full 90 minutes for two months before the Games, forced him to the sidelines. Ramiro Corrales was ineffective in his place.

**Reaction.** "We played a very good team tonight. We were just a yard off — I think the effect of the [penalty-kick triumph over Japan in the quarterfinals] took its toll on us. The guys had to work hard every game we've played, and I think it caught up with us tonight." (Charles)

(Scott French is a senior editor at Soccer America.)

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