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U.S. Women's Soccer Team's Big Loss

Leading scorer is lost for Olympics because of broken leg

By [Maureen Ker](#) | July 28, 2008

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Forward Abby Wambach signals for the team doctors after sustaining a injury to her leg during the International Friendly Match between Brazil and the United States at the Torero Stadium July 16, 2008 in San Diego, California. (Photo: ©Donald Miralle/Getty Images/AFP/NewsCom)

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Is it possible to still strike gold in Beijing?

That's the question U.S. Women's Soccer fans are asking after top forward, Abby Wambach, broke her leg just three weeks before the Olympics.

Wambach collided violently into Brazil defender Andreia Rosa during a friendly match on July 17 and had to be carried off the field. It was later determined that Wambach had fractured her left leg and will be out for 12 weeks, forcing her to miss the Olympics. American defender Cat Whitehill and midfielder Leslie Osborne were also injured.

"My heart sank," forward Natasha Kai said about Wambach's injury. "We need her. She's a big piece of a great team."

The U.S. Women's Soccer team begins Olympic play August 6 against Norway.

It would have been Wambach's second time to the Olympics. She was part of the 2004 team that won the gold medal in Athens.

Despite the loss of their leading striker, the U.S. team won over Brazil with a 1-0 score. The win brings the U.S.'s 2008 record to 21-0-1. Its impressive record has kept the team at the top of the FIFA (International Federation of Association Football) rankings.

But despite the U.S. team's solid rankings this year, they have been on shaky ground ever since losing to Brazil during the World Cup last year. The Brazilians crushed the Americans during the semifinals, with a 4-0 win. Now with Wambach's injury, their dream to bring home Olympic gold is further threatened.

"I was very emotional," said U.S. captain Lindsay Tarpley, after witnessing Wambach being carried off the field. "She is one of my best friends."

U.S. coach Pia Sundhage is cautious about her team's prospects at the Olympics, saying "It's one thing to play good games over the year, it's another thing to perform on a given day," Sundhage said.

Wambach, however, is optimistic about her team's ability to win at the Olympics.

"Obviously, it's devastating," Wambach said from the emergency room after her injury. "But above everything else, I'm only one player, and you can never win a championship with just one player. I have the utmost confidence in this team bringing home the gold."

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