

Australia (3-2) vs. Canada (3-1) – 05/08/2006



Renee Straumietis at third base, Shae Lilywhite at shortstop, and rookie Lauren Vella playing secondbase.

### **Australia (4-2) destroys Canada's (3-2) gold medal hopes w/ 10 hits & 4 stolen bases**

Taipei City, Taiwan- Aussie Hearts Simone Wearne came on to throw the final out of the Australian 2006 Women's World Cup campaign. The Australians (4-2) won in their last game by a score of 9-4. Potentially Australia could finish third depending how Canada (3-2) does on Sunday or how tiebreakers fall. Though if Australia does tie for third with Canada, they will know they beat them head to head.

Australia's offensive effort was balanced and solid throughout a lineup that produced 9 earned runs on 10 hits, accentuated by 4 stolen bases in five chances. Rightfielder Brooke Maclean led the way with 3 hits from three at-bats, including 3 RBI's and two runs scored. Amy McCann and Renee Straumietis each had two hits.

On defense, the Australians were extremely solid. It really showed up as infielders 3B Renee Straumietis, SS Shae Lilywhite, and 2B Lauren Vella handled a combined 13 of the 21 Canadian outs, including a double play.

Canada had seven hits against starting pitcher Alisa Davidson over 5 innings and three hits against reliever Alisa Ruggerio in 1.2 innings. Having given up one earned run, Davidson started the 6th before giving way to reliever Alisa Ruggerio after runners got on base and before an out was recorded. The Canadian run that subsequently scored in the 6th was charged to Davidson, her second earned run of the game. In the top of the 7th, Ruggerio yielded two earned runs herself. That's where Simone Wearne came in to closeout the game with two outs to seal the Australian victory.

Being that both teams had an equal number of hits (10) and a similar number reached base on walks (5 AUS - 4 CAN), the difference in the game seemed to be defense. Australia's infield was sparkling, giving up no errors on thirteen plays. The Canadians infielders made 3 errors on thirteen plays. Though it should be noted that all Australian runs were earned (meaning Canadian errors did not help them score).

Also, defense made a difference regarding baserunning. The Australians stole 4 bases in five attempts against Canada. In contrast, Canada-like the Japanese two days earlier-made no attempt to steal a base on left-handed catcher Kelly Manzie.

Other Notes:

-Australia's successful effort was a huge lift to the hopes of the Japanese and American contingents tied with records of 4-1. Canada's (3-2) fall from grace creates a true championship game on the final day.

-At 10 a.m. local time Sunday, the longstanding favorites Japan and America square off again. This will be an unexpected duplication of both the 2004 World Series Championship game and the inaugural 2004 Women's World Cup. Japan's veteran Energen team won the first matchup in Uozu, Japan. A group of high school age Japanese national all-stars fell to the USA in the Women's World Cup championship game in Edmonton, Canada.

-Japan and America having the best records is not a surprise. But to have a round-robin tournament offer a championship game on its final day is an unexpected joy. Thank you Australia. Thank you to the gods of tournament scheduling. Good luck to the Japanese and the Americans.