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Uniroos bounce USA to move to basketball semi

The Uniroos are through to a massive Saturday night semi-final against the home team Chinese Taipei at the 20,000 seat Taipei Arena after a 76-69 point win over the USA in a sudden-death quarter-final at Taiwan Heping Gymnasium.

With a guaranteed medal on the line the Uniroos fought back from an early deficit to hold the US to just seven points in the third quarter, thanks to strong defense and big rebounds from Darcee Garbin (James Cook University) and Lauren Scherf (Victoria University). Heading into half-time with a two-point lead, the Uniroos never looked back, and despite a strong surge from the USA in the final term, went on to win by seven points.

Garbin described the win as one of the most exciting games she's ever played in.

"Any time you beat the USA it's great," an elated Garbin said after the win.

"We've been together for three weeks and that's a school that's been together for years. We could have thrown it in after the first quarter but we came back and stuck together and it paid off."

"Chinese Taipei at Taipei Arena in front of 20,000 – it's going to be a big game but I'm sure the girls will be up and ready to go."

Head coach Chris Lucas, a dual-WNBL championship-winning coach with Townsville in 2015-16, and current Adelaide Lightning coach said the girls had worked hard in the three weeks they've been together and they deserved the result.

"I think the second quarter really set it up... to hold that quality team to just seven points gave us a bit of belief and our big focus was to do a job on them on the rebounds and we did that really well," Lucas said.

"Even when they made a run at us in the final quarter we were really composed."

With a game high 20 rebounds and three, three pointers, Garbin was the steel for the Uniroos.

"I've coached Darcee in the WNBL and she's a highly intelligent player, she doesn't take bad shots, but her rebounding tonight was unbelievable, but overall it was a fantastic team result."

"We need to enjoy the atmosphere against Taipei get in our own bubble and concentrate on what we can do."

In most sports at the Universiade, the USA is represented by a single college program, in basketball its top-ten ranked Maryland, with the 2015 Final Four side a well drilled combination versus the relative team inexperience of the Uniroos.

The USA commenced the sudden death quarter-final quickly, racing to an 13-5 lead half way through the opening term, with five players hitting the score sheet. The Uniroos, courtesy of top scorer for the term Alex Wilson (TAFE NSW) dragged back some ground but the US had a handy 21-13 lead at the first break.

In a huge 2nd term for the Uniroos Kristy Wallace (Baylor University) had the hot hand, adding 11 points for the half, assisted by Wilson's 14 and strong rebounding from Lauren Scherf (Victoria University) with 9 and Garbin with 11. The Uniroos turned a 7 point deficit into a three-point lead at the half - AUS 36-USA 33.

Strong third period, with the Uniroos opening an eight, then 10 and eventually a 13-point margin before a 56-45 lead at the final break.

USA scored the first three baskets of the final term to chop the margin to an anxiety-inducing five points before two big three-pointers to Darcee Garbin got it back to 13. Garbin, Wilson and Scherf were all on fire in the final term holding off the USA to move into the semi-final on Saturday.

The Emerging Boomers took on the winless Mozambique on their final pool game, searching for a spot in the top two and a spot in the quarter finals. With Jack McVeigh (20 points) and Kyle Adnam (13 points leading the way the Uniroos prevailed 87-58. It will leave them in third place in the pool behind Lithuania and Israel after two wins and three losses from their five matches. The team now heads to the 9th-12th playoffs.