Smith on target as US sink Mexico in Olympic warm-up

AFP- Sophia Smith scored the only goal as the United States warmed up for the Olympics with a 1-0 victory over Mexico in New Jersey on Saturday.
Portland Thorns striker Smith rounded off a superb team move with an emphatic finish on 64 minutes to seal a deserved win for Emma Hayes's youthful US Olympic squad at the Red Bull Arena.

Mexico had scored a 2-0 defeat over the Americans when the teams last met in February during the CONCACAF Women's Gold Cup in California.

But that shock loss – only the second time ever Mexico have beaten the US women – seemed like a distant memory on Saturday after a dominant performance by the four-time Olympic champions.

Hayes controversially omitted veteran striker and two-time World Cup-winner Alex Morgan from her 18-strong squad for the Olympics, where the Americans are chasing their first gold medal since the 2012 London games.

However the movement of Smith and attacking partners Trinity Rodman and Mallory Swanson on Saturday suggested that the US women will be among the main contenders for gold in France.

Smith in particular carved out a number of promising chances and only some desperate goalkeeping from Mexico stopper Stephany Barrera prevented the home team from scoring more.

Barrera pulled off superb saves to deny Smith in the 22nd and 52nd minutes, before Smith finally broke the deadlock in the second half.

Rose Lavelle's pass released Rodman down the right, who in

turn fed Swanson in the penalty area who unselfishly laid off to Smith, who cut inside and curled a shot past Barerra.

“We have such dynamic players up front I think we can create in so many ways,” Smith said after the win. “I should have put away a few more. But I think it goes to show the different ways we’re creating and working together.”

The US play Costa Rica in a final friendly on Tuesday before heading to France for the Olympics, where they will open their campaign against Zambia in Nice on July 25.

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