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U.S. future in soccer on display

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Under-21 national team playing at A&M's stadium

The generation that hopes to replace American soccer stars such as Mia Hamm and Brandi Chastain will be on display tonight in Huntsville.

"Some of these girls will play in future World Cups, if not the next World Cup," said Bill Irwin, coach of the United States Under-21 women's team.

His young players will face Trinidad & Tobago's full team at 7:30 tonight at Louis Crews Stadium on the Alabama A&M campus.

The U.S. women will have momentum from a 2-0 victory over China on Sunday at Legion Field in Birmingham.

"We're happy to be in Alabama with this group of players," Irwin said Monday after a practice at A&M. "The organizers have put on a tremendous event.

"We had a good game against China. We had 10,000 people at the game and it was tremendous for these players to play in that atmosphere."

The U.S. team had 20 shots, including 11 shots on goal, Sunday and held China to two shots.

"We missed a few chances," Irwin said. "It could have been more (goals for the Americans), but that's the nature of the game. We played well. I was happy with the performance of the team."

Canada defeated Mexico 1-0 in the opener in Birmingham. Canada plays Argentina tonight in Montgomery in the six-team, nine-match Futbol Internacional Tournament.

The U.S. team, China and Trinidad & Tobago are in bracket A. Argentina, Canada and Mexico are in bracket B. The two group winners play for the championship at 7:30 p.m. Saturday at Baker High School stadium in Mobile.

The U.S. roster includes Stanford's Rachel Buehler, who is in Residency Training Camp with the full women's national team.

Kelsey Carpenter, who plays at Texas, scored for the U.S. team in the 57th minute Sunday, and Kelley O'Hara added a goal in the 74th. Amanda Poach, who plays at Santa Clara, had both assists.

Irwin said top players for the national team include Poach, Buehler, O'Hara, forward Danesha Adams and center/midfielder Angie Woznuk.

Irwin said he didn't know much about Trinidad and Tobago.

"They saw us play (Sunday) so they know a lot more about us than we know about them. We're going to put on a good spectacle for the people of Huntsville.

"The people will enjoy watching the girls play."

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