USWNT 0-0 Czech

Yes, the FIFA ratings are often off but for the #1 to tie the #24 is a bit unusual, I wonder if the US drops, their opponent is sure to rise in the rankings in a big way. The US is not really in turmoil so much as turnover, but still must win their games, there is a proud history here that should not be lost in such times as these. Yes, the home team is not in season, that was not the issue, yes that they do not play together much and had many new pieces did seem to be a cause for this, yet another poor showing, but they were the better team, the GK for Czech team, the starter for PSG did stand on her head, making save after save, many of these shots were right at her, good positioning, maybe?

The USA Defense went largely untested, the issues were with the midfield and more so the forwards, it is all their job to get it past the GK, right? Yes, the defense did have a 5 person backline a good deal of the time, yes, the US did some different things, not enough different things as they met with no success. When higher crosses do not work, they were being knocked away by the defenders, change it up, done. A few long shots were taken, some were blocked, saved, more went high and/or wide, no worry, adjust. Onto playing balls over the top, an exercise in futility as they were offside so often. Shoot, keep shooting, trying to beat numerous opponents in the area, with 5 back is not a wise choice given the tight spaces, quicker shots, would help, bring the defender to you, then you beat them. Creating an overload with more of your players on a side then getting a few forward on the other may work, figure it out.

Not much of an issue was present as far as miscommunication due to the lack of familiarity between players. Players were supporting fairly well, moving off the ball, the ball was held well but not getting forward well, that with such numbers should be done with speed. At one point early it was 70% v 30% possession in favor of the home team, it is so overrated of a stat, here is proof positive of that.

If I had to pinpoint what I felt was the biggest issue, it was the shots taken by the US. So many went at the ‘keeper. Lavelle did well getting off a few distant ones, but they did not follow with faking one, then taking on her mark, some were off target. There were a few dangerous free kicks from a bit beyond the area, none on did any damage, some were not even on frame. At the end of the day if you do not score you most certainly will not win, yes games, big games have been won on but one shot, own goals are rather rare. First time shots are most effective as the GK has a harder time with them, defenders do not have much of a chance to get set on defending. All the ball movement for the sake of ball movement does nothing if it does not get you in on goal.

Just 3 players had the US losing over 400 caps, vital in games for experience, those players not called in Morgan, Press, injured Ertz, etc. should have made the difference, hope is hardly lost. Those absent are well known entities, they are all but plug and play, those on this roster, however need to get worked into the team or not.

Lavelle had a good game, ditto for Smith, Sanchez as a sub did little, Macario hardly had the impact hoped for, upon entry, Rodman did a few good things, but the timing just was not there. O’Hara was rather involved in the offense at the start then faded, Cook did nothing to distinguish herself, Davidson was rather active, as was Fox. Sauerbrunn, getting cap #200, did not have enough time to impact the game, Sullivan did hot hurt her cause, Gautrat did little. Those on the bench who I feel may have been able to of made a difference would be Williams, I would hope Hatch coming off her goal filling season & Huerta. I fully expect to see all that did not play see the field in the next game, then the better players in these games get most of the time in the last game. If the rankings mean anything, New Zealand will be a stronger opponent if only by those 2 spots higher than the last team the US faced.