



ON THE PITCH

# U.S. WOMEN'S CEREBRAL PALSYPALSY NATIONAL TEAM CROWNED 2026 IFCPF WORLD CUP CHAMPIONS AFTER EXCITING 3-2 COMEBACK WIN OVER POWERHOUSE AUSTRALIA

CATARINA GUIMARAES, JESSLYN KUHNEL AND ANNIE WICKETT EACH SCORE SECOND HALF GOALS TO COMPLETE COMEBACK; KUHNEL WINS TOURNAMENT'S MOST VALUABLE PLAYER AWARD

OCTOBER 24, 2026



**ATLANTA (Oct. 23, 2026)** -- The U.S. Women's Cerebral Palsy (CP) National Team earned a hard-fought come back 3-2 win against Australia to become 2026 IFCPF World Cup Champions at the Arthur M. Blank U.S. Soccer National Training Center in Fayetteville, Ga.

The contest was a rematch of the 2024 IFCPF World Cup final, where Australia won the title.

Catarina Guimaraes, Jesslyn Kuhnelt and Annie Wickett led the USA's comeback effort with timely second half goals and overcame a first half 2-0 deficit.

Australia set the tone early in the match and pressured the American defense

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visitors eventually broke through in the seventh minute when Annmarie De Uriarte fired a shot just outside the box and into the back of the net.

The U.S. responded well to the first goal, played with urgency, generated 16 quality shots and increased pressure in the attacking third.

Australia defended the attack well with multiple key saves and last second interventions by their defenders to keep the home team scoreless. With the U.S. attack playing a higher line, Australia's Georgia Beikoff hit a lofted shot from midfield that was placed perfectly between the crossbar and the outstretched hands of the American's goalkeeper Catarina Guimaraes which doubled Australia's lead.

The U.S. attack continued looking for a goal and created space through the formidable Australian defense but were unable to score in the first half and went into the break down 2-0.

In the second half, American Michelle Cross played a corner kick short and found Guimaraes at the top of the box. Guimaraes received the ball and hit a low driven shot that the Australian goalkeeper was able to get a hand on, but the ball had already crossed the line. The strike gave the U.S. their first goal of the World Cup final in the 28th minute.

Five minutes later, Guimaraes sent a perfectly accurate curved shot to the far corner where Kuhnelt was positioned and guided the ball in with her upper body for the second U.S. goal.

With the game tied 2-2, the Americans kept chasing the third goal and had multiple shots that went wide or were stopped by the defense.

Already in stoppage time, Wickett won the ball in midfield and carved through the Australian defense. She evaded a tackle at midfield and drove up the right side. Wickett sped past another Australian defender and dribbled into the box, patiently set up her shot and delivered a powerful right-footed shot that deflected off a defender and past the goalkeeper to give the Americans their first lead of the match.

Two of Australia's last-ditch efforts were saved expertly in goal by second half substitute Gabriella Scotto, who punched one clear with her left hand and made a kick save on another just before the final whistle. Putting Scotto into goal and moving Guimaraes into the field was part of the second-half tactical gambit by head coach Chris Maravalli that helped enable the Americans incredible comeback.

U-S-A chants erupted throughout the crowd from the hundreds in attendance that witnessed the heroic efforts of Wickett and her teammates as they withstood multiple shots on goal from Australia in the closing minutes and delivered the Americans the 2026 IFCPF World Cup trophy.

#### ADDITIONAL NOTES:

- This is the first tournament head coach Chris Maravalli has won with the team.
- Jesselyn Kuhnelt was named Most Valuable Player of the 2026 IFCPF World

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- The Americans are 17W-2L-1D all-time and have outscored opponents 151-26 since beginning play in 2022. The field of seven teams competing in the IFCPF Women's World Cup marks the largest women's competition in the history of women's CP soccer.
- The U.S. and Finland met for the first time at a World Cup in the group-stage opener.
- The last time the U.S. faced Japan, it won 12-0 to reach the 2024 Women's World Cup final, but the team's drew 1-1 in the inaugural 2022 Women's World Cup.
- Janie Richardson and goalkeeper Gabriella Scotto made their World Cup debut as second half substitutes in the first group play match against Finland.
- Kuhnel continues to be the program's all-time leading scorer, with 27 goals in 17 caps.
- The reigning IFCPF Women's Intercontinental Cup champions, the U.S. won the inaugural IFCPF Women's World Cup in 2022 and finished as a runner-up to Australia in 2024.
- The field of seven teams competing in the IFCPF Women's World Cup marks the largest women's competition in the history of women's CP soccer.

-U.S. WOMEN'S CEREBRAL PALSY (CP) NATIONAL TEAM MATCH REPORT-

**Match:** U.S. Women's Cerebral Palsy (CP) National Team vs. Australia

**Date:** October 23, 2026

**Competition:** 2026 IFCPF World Cup – Final

**Venue:** Arthur M. Blank U.S. Soccer National Training Center; Fayetteville, Ga.

**Kickoff:** 4 p.m. ET

**Weather:** 74 degrees, sunny

**Attendance:** 200

| Scoring Summary | 1 | 2 | F |
|-----------------|---|---|---|
| USA             | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| AUS             | 2 | 0 | 2 |

|                                           |             |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------|
| AUS – Annmarie De Uriarte                 | 7th minute  |
| AUS – Georgia Beikoff                     | 19th minute |
| USA – Catarina Guimaraes                  | 28th minute |
| USA – Jesslyn Kuhnel (Catarina Guimaraes) | 33rd minute |
| USA – Annie Wickett                       | 50+2        |

Lineups:



USA: 7-Catarina Guimares (Capt.); 3-Annie Wickett, 4-Michelle Cross; 8-Kaia Spencer (12-Gabriella Scotto, 26),10-Jesslyn Kuhnel

*Substitutes: 5-Joey Emma Martin, 6-Janie Richardson, 9-Leah Glaser, 11-Isabella Stankunas*

*Head coach: Chris Maravalli*

AUS: 6-Katelyn Smith (Capt.); 1-Carly Salmon (10-Georgia Beikoff, 15), 3-Tahlia Blanshard, 7-Eloise Northam, 8-Annmarie De Uriarte

*Substitutes: 2-Trinity McPhie, 4-Tamsin Colley, 5-Lainee Harrison, 9-Leah Spaine*

*Head coach: Charlotte Ercil*

#### Stats Summary: USA / AUS

Shots: 16 / 11

Shots on Goal: 7 / 4

Saves: 2 / 4

Corner Kicks: 8 / 4

Fouls: 1 / 5

#### Misconduct Summary:

NONE

#### Officials:

Referee: Scott Henry (ENG)

Assistant Referee 1/2: Keith Strout (ENG)

Fourth Official: Margaret Domka (USA)

Fifth Official: Keet Hee (MAL)

*For more information on the sport or to inquire about athlete eligibility, please contact U.S. Soccer's Extended National Teams Department via email at [extendednt@ussoccer.org](mailto:extendednt@ussoccer.org).*

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