

Sauerbrunn Honored In From Of Home-Crowd, Cooke Scores Game-Winner On Her Birthday, USWNT Beats Ireland 1-0

by Bradley Piros, Reporter
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ST. LOUIS - On a perfect night for soccer, The United States Women's National Team hosted the Republic of Ireland in an international friendly at CITY PARK in Downtown West.

It was a night of celebration for the red, white, and blue in front of a near-sell-out crowd of 22,294.

Prior to the match, St. Louis' very own Becky Sauerbrunn was honored for playing in her 200th cap (international team appearance). She achieved that milestone last year on Feb. 17 in a 0-0 tie to the Czech Republic.

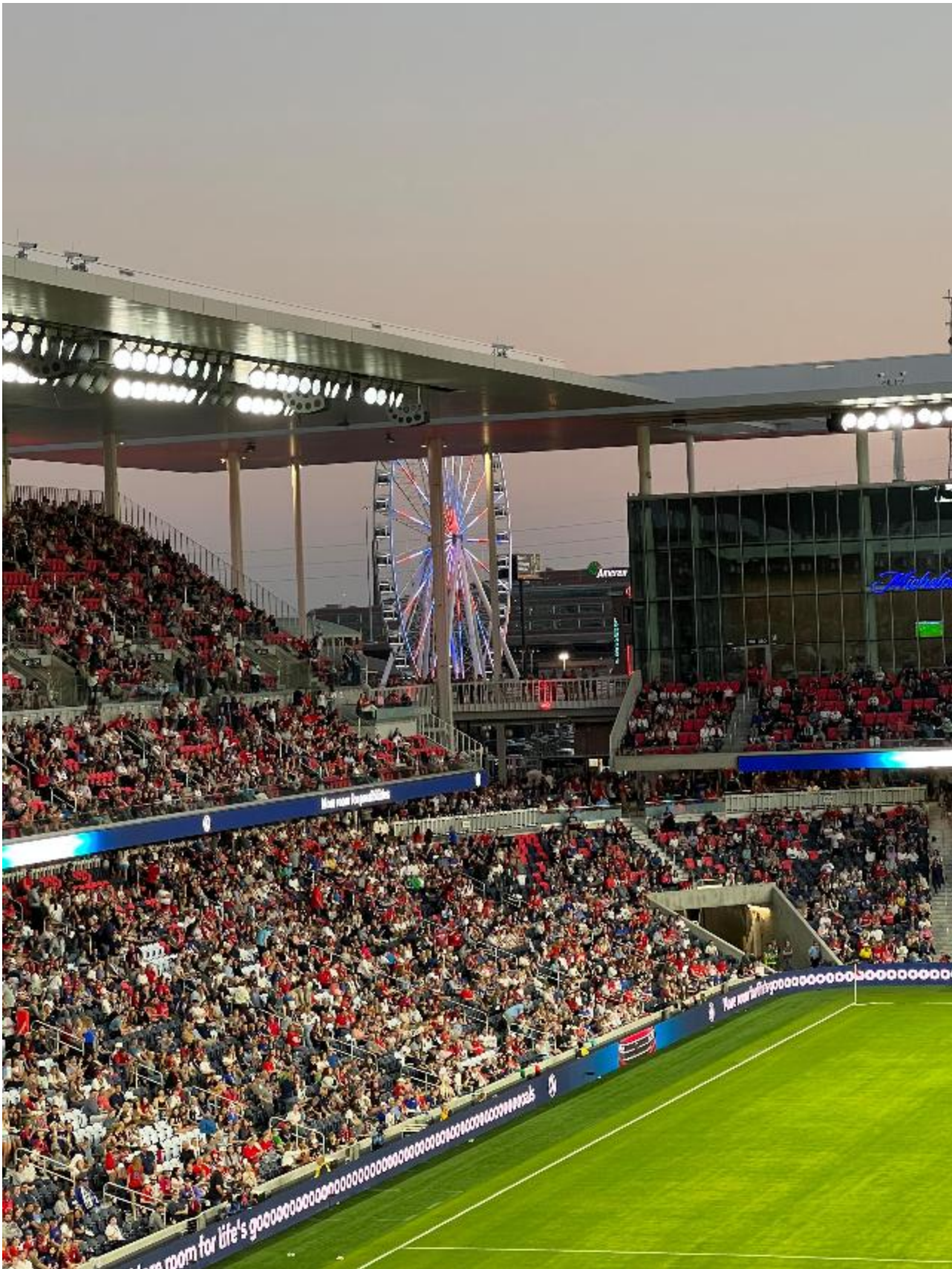
She became the 12th USWNT player to reach 200 caps. She joins the list of: Kristine Lilly (354 caps), Carli Lloyd (316), Christie Pearce Rampone (311), Mia Hamm (276), Julie Foudy (274), Abby Wambach (255), Joy Fawcett (241), Heather O'Reilly (231), Tiffeny Milbrett (206), Hope Solo (202), and Kate Markgraf (201).

On the night it was Sauerbrunn, a central defender and the team's captain, that had the best chance early on. In the 3rd minute she connected on a header from a corner kick, but her shot rattled off the crossbar. It was nearly her first international goal, in her hometown, but it was not to be.

Sauerbrunn was substituted off in the 29th minute to a loud, standing ovation.

It was meant to be for defender Alana Cook. Thanks to her first international goal in the 43rd minute, the USWNT went on to win 1-0. The ball came to her in some open space, and with no hesitation, she rocketed a shot from about 40 yards out over the Ireland keeper, Courtney Brosnan.

What went on to be the game-winning goal came on Cook's 26th birthday, becoming just the third USWNT player to score on their birthday, the other two players being Mia Hamm and Alex Morgan.



With the goal, Cook became the 117th player to score for the USWNT and the second defender to score for the USA this year.

Defensively, the U.S. was sound in the second half. USWNT goalkeeper Casey Murphy was tested a couple of times throughout the match but went on to get the shutout. It was the 10th of her career.

She became the ninth goalkeeper in USWNT history to reach double-digit shutouts. She joins Hope Solo (102 shutouts), Briana Scurry (72), Alyssa Naeher (53), Nicole Barnhart (24), Siri Mullinix (21), Mary Harvey (13), Saskia Webber (13) and Amy Allmann Griffin (10).

The win made it back-to-back shutouts over the Republic of Ireland as the USWNT won 2-0 on Saturday, April 8, at Q2 Stadium in Austin, Texas.

These were the last two international friendly matches before the USWNT has to decide its 23-woman roster for the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup held in Australia and New Zealand this summer.

The United States will play a World Cup Send-Off Match against Wales on Sunday, July 9 at 3 p.m. from PayPal Park in San Jose, California.

After that, it'll be time for the World Cup. The U.S. is in Group E with Vietnam, Netherlands, and Portugal. The USWNT will play Vietnam in their opening match on Friday, July 21, at 8 p.m. in Auckland, New Zealand.

