

Leon disappointed in Women's World Cup finish

By Jake Courtepatte

Four years after a disappointing finish on home turf in the largest women's tournament in the world, King's Adriana Leon had high hopes for this year's Canadian squad at the FIFA World Cup in France.

One of a handful of returning players from the 2015 tournament that saw Canada fall early in Toronto, this incarnation of the red and white seemed destined for success.

"We're ranked fifth in the world, we are a good team and we're excited to step on the field on Monday," said Leon shortly before Canada kicked off the tournament with an opening match-up against Cameroon. "We feel pretty comfortable when people say this is the best Canadian team there has ever been."

Yet it was a devastating case of *deja-vu* for the Canadians. A lack of firepower spelled yet another early exit from the tournament, this time knocked out by Sweden in the Round of 16.

Leon, who came into the match in the 64th minute to replace Nichelle Prince, put her strong attacking game to good use in getting off a pair of shots late in the match, though both missed the target. She told a media scrum after the match she was "disappointed" with the team's early exit.

"It's a hard outcome to take in," said Leon. "We feel like we put our best out there, and it just wasn't enough."

Growing up in Maple, Ontario, Leon's parents moved the family to King City when she was 16 years old in 2008. She was still attending classes at The Country Day School the first time she was called up to represent her country internationally, playing in the U-20 World Cup a year later.

Since then, her career has taken her to all corners of the globe, from Cyprus, to Japan, to Germany, and Brazil.

It was in 2012 that she joined the senior squad and got the opportunity to play alongside her childhood idol, Christine Sinclair. She scored the only goal in a 1-0 win over China PR, and has now found the back of the net fourteen times since joining the senior team, including a six-goal performance at October's tournament, where Canada finished runners-up to the United States.

Now, seven years later, Leon may have taken to the pitch with her idol for the final time on the World Cup stage, after Sinclair tied the world record in taking part in her fifth World Cup tournament.

"Someone like that, she leaves a legacy no matter what," said Leon. "She's one of the greatest players in history."

With the disappointing tournament behind her, Leon and her international teammates will now be looking towards competing at the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo next year, and improving on back-to-back bronze medal finishes.

Leon was a player on both the rugby and volleyball programs at The Country Day School as well.