Written by Jackie Finlan
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At the half, the USA Women trail England 5-3 during the teams' first Nations Cup match.

The Eagles have held up their end of the bargain, promising stiff defense and following through. Although the percentage of first-up tackles could improve, the Eagles have been bursting off the line and pressuring England to kick behind the defense.

While the American back three haven't dropped any of the several clearing kicks that England's Katy McLean has sent into USA territory, the Eagles also haven't made the best decisions in the counterattack. One such misstep helped set up England's try in the second quarter. With several players in position for a kick, Vix Folayan's return landed in the arms of fullback Danielle Waterman, who sidestepped her way deep into USA territory. Quick ball from the ruck allowed McLean to outrace Lynelle Kugler to the try line for the 5-0 lead.

The USA was able to put some points on the board before half, when the Eagles stole an England lineout and then drew a penalty. Inside center Pam Kosanke hit a great sideline kick to pull within two, 5-3.

England had a couple of occasions to widen the lead, but fullback Sam Pankey did a good job coraling and stalling the poaching English defenders on a kick ahead, and the USA defense turned over the ball when England looked ready to punch the ball over.

The USA hasn't had a successful lineout yet but has stolen a couple of England's. The Eagle offense, however, has missed a couple of opportunities, whether through an errant pass or penalty.

Stay tuned for more detail.