The Houston 7s Cup Quarterfinals served the women 7s sphere well, producing four thrilling matches as teams vied for final four berths.

The games were so tight that one even necessitated overtime. Australia and South Africa exchanged leads throughout their knockout, with Shontelle Stowers' try and Tricia Brown's conversion giving the Aussies the lead after two-and-a-half minutes. South Africa's Tash Hofmeester closed the gap before the half, and then teammate Zenay Jordaan's try nine seconds put RSA ahead. Yolanda Meuring came through with the boot, and South Africa held onto the 12-7 until the fifth minute, when Ellia Green's try and Brown's second conversion tied it up.

But the better team shown through in overtime, and a minute into sudden death. Ili Batibassaga capitalized on an overload inside South Africa's 22 meter for the win.

With the comeback win, Australia shares something in common with their Cup semifinal opponent, USA. Read more about the USA's tense win over Russia here , and Eagle standout Nathalie Marchino's reaction
here
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Canada nearly upset favorites New Zealand in their bout (right, Paul Rudman photo), scoring in the first 30 seconds. Jen Kish gathered Magali Harvey's kickoff at full speed, offloaded to Mandy Marchak, who nearly dove over the line. Just before she hit the turf, she found Kayla Moleschi for the try.

The crowd was stunned but showed the North Americans the proper respect they deserved.

It took some time for New Zealand to find a crack in Canada's defense, but Linda Itunu literally created one after a massive hit that took Marchak off her feet. An offensive penalty was called, and the Kiwis quick sent the ball away from contact. Kayla McAlister slipped between sliding defenders. Harvey chased her down to Canada's 22 meter, but Portia Woodman was there to switch back inside for the try. Kelly Brazier hit the extras for the 7-5 lead into the break.

New Zealand pushed their lead out to 12-5 after Canada was penalized in the scrum on their own 22 meter. Brazier quick-tapped through and pushed off a retreating defense for the try.

Down but not out, Canada took advantage of a New Zealand scrum penalty as well. Deep in their end, Kish did well to cut through the otherwise solid Kiwi defense, and Moleschi took the final pass into the corner, 12-10.

The all important conversion was too steep for Marchak, and there the score stood after nearly five mintues.

New Zealand looked to score again, as Carla Hohepa first froze Moleschi on the sideline and then shifted into second gear. Harvey came darting across the field and put a fantastic cover tackle on the NZ star.

Shortly afterward, Canada was awarded a lineout around their 22 meter, but the jumper took the ball into their opposition, which allowed New Zealand's defense to flatten up. As the ball worked out, the Kiwis pressure heavily and forced a knock-on from a typically sound Kish. The game ended shortly afterward, and New Zealand's preparing for England.

England started incredibly strong against the Netherlands, using their pressure defense to force the Netherlands to knock on the kickoff – which Heather Fisher cleaned up and Joanne Watmore scored from the wing (it was her first touch all tournament after returning from injury

yesterday).

Four minutes later, Fisher dotted down again and Katy McLean converted, 12-0 to England.

Fisher was involved in the genesis of the next score, but not in a positive way. She was penalized for hitting the ballcarrier without the ball, and Netherlands answered with a superb series of perfect offloads, dekes and feeds. They took advantage of England's propensity to shoot up on defense, and the support was on point. Laros dotted down in the corner and then made a stellar conversion, 12-7 into the break.

Fisher regained momentum for England after the kickoff – similar to the way she's done all tournament.

She struck through the line into open field. Lorraine Laros stood – initially – between Fisher and the tryline, but the power runner stiff-armed her way past the sweeper for the try. Katy McLean converted for the 19-7 lead.

England broke down in the second half a bit, as a couple of key knock-ons prevented more scoring opportunities. Netherlands put the final stamp on the game with a Kelly van Harskamp try in the corner, which Laros converted. It was too little too late, but the score remained respectable, 19-14.