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## Rooney Leads Team USA to Golden Finish



By [Heather Rule](#) - February 22, 2018

She made the save look so simple. It all came down to one save in the sixth round of a shootout, and 20-year-old Maddie Rooney.

Game over. Gold medal.

"It's indescribable," Rooney told NBCSN in a postgame interview. "I can't believe we did it."

The Andover native and [first-time Olympian](#) made 29 saves to help the USA women's hockey team win a gold medal for the first time in 20 years with a 3-2 shootout victory over rival Canada. Team

USA went into the third period down 2-1 before tying the game with 6:21 left in regulation. A 20-minute overtime period wasn't enough to decide a winner, so it was on to the shootout.

That's right; another extra-session game in this heated USA-Canada rivalry in women's hockey. Canada won the gold with an overtime victory over the United States in 2014 at the Sochi games, for those that hadn't heard that tidbit.

Fingernails were probably raw all over the country. Sports don't get much more pressure-filled than this.



**#TokyoOlympics**

@NBCOlympics

.@TeamUSA IS GOLDEN!

The @usahockey women take down rival Canada for their first gold since 1998! #WinterOlympics #BestOfUS [bit.ly/2EdfERq](https://bit.ly/2EdfERq)



50.8K 1:19 AM - Feb 22, 2018

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Maybe fans were feeling it, but before the overtime, Rooney looked as focused and composed as ever — just like she had throughout the Olympics. After a couple of stops in the shootout, the TV camera caught her with a smile showing through her Minnesota-pride goalie mask.

Her game plan for the shootout was simple. She said afterward that she was just taking it one player at a time and just wanted to “bounce back” if Canada scored.

“When it came down to one shooter to win it, I just said ‘it’s one more,’” Rooney said in her televised postgame interview. “And then gold medal.”

She stopped four-of-six shooters. Canada's Meghan Agosta scored the first time around, but in the sudden death sixth round, Rooney made the gold-medal-winning save.

Jocelyne Lamoureux-Davidson scored the game-winning goal for USA. It was a triple-deke that is worth watching the highlight over and over again. In her postgame, TV interview, she said she's been working on the play and calls it "Oops, I did it again."

Once the overtime ended in a tie, fans on social media immediately bashed the shootout format deciding such an important game. Often times, tournament outcomes are sudden-death overtime affairs until someone scores.

Rooney didn't seem to mind.

"The shootout was awesome," she said.

The win for the women came 38 years to the day – Feb. 22 – that the men's team ended the Soviet Union's streak of four straight gold medals. In 2018, the women ended Canada's streak of four straight gold medals. The victory also snapped a five-game losing streak to Canada, which beat the United States 2-1 in the preliminary round.

It's tough to make comparisons to the Miracle on Ice in 1980, but this gold medal game will certainly take its high place in Team USA history. The storyline had followed the team around as they prepared for these Olympics: The women's hockey team hadn't won a gold medal since 1998 in Nagano, Japan.

Head coach Robb Stauber was asked about the 20-year gap after one of the preparation games against Canada this past December.

"I think for us, it's not necessarily about the 20 years," Stauber said. "But more about 'it's time.'"

"We've got to bring home a gold medal."

Finally, they did.

Hilary Knight gave her team a 1-0 lead with 25.4 seconds left in the first period off a pretty redirection on a Sidney Morin shot. Canada scored the next two goals in the second period to take a 2-1 lead.

Team USA got plenty of chances and defended well into the third period looking to even the score. The other Lamoureux sister, Monique Lamoureux-Morando, scored the tying goal in the third period on a breakaway.

With less than two minutes left in overtime, Canada went on the power play. This is where Rooney made the save of the game, the tournament and perhaps in the entire history of all levels of hockey

ever. Not to exaggerate at all.

Rebecca Johnston had the puck for Canada on the left side of the net with nearing a minute to play in overtime. Rooney made an acrobatic save, moving quickly to the open part of the net and getting a piece of the shot. It deflected wide.

The save was so good that two Canadian players looked to raise their sticks in jubilation – until they realized the puck didn't go in the net.



**NHL on NBC**

@NHLonNBCSports

.@maddie\_rooney35 is a @TeamUSA hero and everyone wants a hug!



2,927 1:20 AM - Feb 22, 2018

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The shootout had Minnesota written all over it. Gigi Marvin, the oldest member of the team and a Warroad native, got the shootout scoring started with a goal. Gophers player Amanda Kessel scored as well. Then, of course, there was Rooney's effort.

In December, she was in the net for the [2-1 overtime loss to Canada at Xcel Energy Center as part of "The Time Is Now Tour"](#) in preparation for the Olympics. Rooney, who played youth hockey with boys before joining the Andover High School boys' hockey team during her senior season, shifted her focus from a season at University of Minnesota-Duluth to making the Olympic team.

At that time, she commented on how the training process was a humbling one.

"I can feel myself improving and just looking forward to what's to come," Rooney said in December.

Well, now she can look forward to a lifetime of bragging rights with a gold medal attached.

## HEATHER RULE



Heather is a freelance sports reporter and blogger covering everything from the Minnesota Wild to high school sports to IndyCar racing. She's also a social media guru for MLB. She has a background in news reporting but can usually be found watching/Tweeting about sports. She's a journalism graduate from the University of St. Thomas.



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