Great Britain secured their place in the semi-finals of the FIBA Women's Basketball World Cup Pre-Qualifiers with a commanding 75-61 win over host nation Rwanda on Thursday night in Kigali.

The victory not only propelled GB to the next stage but also showcased their spirit and adaptability throughout a challenging encounter.

The match, held at Kigali Arena, saw Great Britain face a critical task: they needed to win to advance, while Rwanda had to avoid losing by 35 points or more to secure their semi-final spot. Despite a rocky start, where GB struggled to find their rhythm and Rwanda quickly built a 10-2 lead, Great Britain's determination and tactical adjustments turned the game in their favor.

Great Britain's coach, Anna Montanana, praised her team's performance post-game. "This was the next step for us in the group," Montanana said. "We knew that it would be a very challenging game for us. We knew we needed to win to get to the next round, and I'm super happy for the team, the way they executed everything we worked at this morning, and I see an improvement every day."

The first quarter saw Rwanda's impressive shooting prowess, with the hosts hitting 68% from the field. However, a strategic timeout by Montanana helped Great Britain reset and refocus. The result was a stellar 14-0 run that gave GB a 16-10 lead by the end of the first period. The British team continued their defensive and offensive momentum, holding Rwanda scoreless for the remainder of the first quarter and building a solid 45-23 lead by halftime.

Holly Winterburn led the charge for Great Britain, finishing with 15 points, seven rebounds, and six assists, despite a tough collision midway through the third quarter. Her performance was pivotal, particularly in the face of Rwanda's aggressive defense and spirited home crowd. "This was an important win for us," said Maya Price, who contributed 12 points. "We knew Rwanda would come out with a lot of energy, and we knew we would have to match that and go above and beyond."

The second half saw Great Britain maintaining their lead with a composed offensive display. Although Rwanda mounted a brief comeback, reducing the deficit with a 10-0 run, Great Britain's steady performance and strategic play ensured they kept control of the game. The final quarter saw GB's lead fluctuate, but they ultimately sealed the win with Winterburn's crucial plays.

Rwanda’s Bella Murekatete led her team with 17 points but found it challenging to match Great Britain’s defensive intensity and offensive execution. Despite their efforts, the hosts could not overcome the deficit, and Great Britain advanced to the semi-finals.

With this victory, Great Britain will face Hungary on Saturday in the semi-finals. The win not only highlights GB’s potential but also sets the stage for an exciting finish to the tournament.