

Morocco is heading back to the World Cup quarterfinals

The African powerhouses booked their spot in the final eight with a commanding 3-0 victory over Canada in Saturday's round of 16 clash in Houston. This marks Morocco's second straight run to the quarterfinals, following their historic, groundbreaking semifinal appearance in 2022.

For the co-hosts, the defeat brings an end to a deeply captivating, historic run. Canada—a nation traditionally obsessed with hockey—fell in love with the pitch this summer as the men's team won its first-ever knockout match by edging out South Africa 1-0. While they bow out here, they do so having captured the imagination of an entire country.

The first half was a tense, cagey affair with neither side able to break the deadlock. But just five minutes into the second half, Morocco found their spark.

On the 50th minute, Achraf Hakimi rolled a clever free kick to Azzedine Ounahi, who laced a brilliant, right-footed strike through a crowded box. The ball fizzed into the bottom right corner, putting Morocco up 1-0.

On the 78th minute, Canada desperately searched for an equalizer. Jonathan David had a golden opportunity with a free kick just outside the area, but his effort sailed agonizingly over the crossbar.

Morocco punished the miss, on the 82nd Minute, Brahim Díaz picked out Ounahi in the center of the box, and the midfielder clinically slotted home his second of the night to make it 2-0.

On the 90+3minute, with Canada entirely deflated, Soufiane Rahimi put the icing on the cake, scoring a spectacular third goal deep into stoppage time to trigger wild celebrations.

Ranked sixth in the world, Morocco looks every bit the juggernaut they were expected to be, having already sent the Netherlands packing via a dramatic penalty shootout in the group stage.

The Atlas Lions now march on to Boston Stadium next Thursday, where they will face the winner of the Paraguay-France matchup.