

BOOKABLE OFFENSE

The Official Fanzine of Sam's Army. Vol. II Issue #1. April/May 1997

“Some People Just Don't Get It...”



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Editor's Corner

Well, another issue is here and we are sure you have already noticed a few changes. Hopefully they will be for the better! The first change is obvious... "*Bookable Offense*" is now bigger! The change in size, from the traditional 8.5" x 11" format folded in half to what you see now, came about because it is much easier to layout in this format plus we have seen a few fanzines out there that look stupendous in this style (check out the "Fanzine-Mania" article on page 20). Our editor "The Turk" has had less work to do because we no longer have to cut articles up to make them fit in the restrictive old format. Please let us know what you think of the format change!

The other change is that this will be the last free issue of "*Bookable Offense*." please refer to the Sam's Army section on page 2 for full details on this change. It was inevitable that this would happen. Thankfully we released six issues under the free policy, but because of the tremendous growth in the Sam's Army membership, Mr. Visa would no longer front the funds to publish for the large numbers on the list. With the larger format and improvement in the printing of photographs (refer to the ink blotches in previous issues we used to call photo's) we believe "B.O." will be an excellent addition to the membership plans presented on page 2.

In the last issue, the Sam's Army "Hot Line" number was incorrectly printed. Whoever owns the number that was printed is surely a soccer fan after all of the calls incorrectly made to their home. The correct number is 716-691-4048 and anyone may call that number 24 hours a day to receive info on Sam's Army events.

In addition to the "Hot Line" number, Sam's Army now has its very own web site. Check out www.sams-army.com and let us know what you think. A very special thank you goes out to Mark Wheeler for introducing Sam's Army and "B.O." to the internet crowd by providing a Sam's Army home page on his web site. Mark has (undoubtedly) the best American soccer web site out there. You can check it out at: <http://www.cs.cmu.edu/~mdwheel/us-soccer/> Also, a thank you to Mike Brininstool who has allowed the Sam's Army e-mail list to function on his server for the past 2 years. Without either of them, Sam's Army would have less than a tenth of the exposure it does now.

This issue is packed with all sorts of good stuff. Thank you to Dan Roudebush who wrote an excellent piece on the lack of player development in this country. Hopefully we will get his views on Project 40. Also, thank you to RJ Routson and Dr. Zachowski for their thoughts on the difference or lack of between MLS and the NASL. John Wright has a great interview with Kasey Keller, as well as, a good hard look at the viability of the US Cup. Mark Spacone takes a look back at the last three U.S. qualifiers, as well as, an interview with Soccer Sam, and an examination if MLS is really playing "The World's Game."

Editor: Mark Spacone (U.S.) - **Co-Editor:** John Wright (U.K.)

Contributors: Dan Roudebush, RJ Routson, and DR. Zachowski. **Cover by** Zachary Taylor.

Special Thanks: Chris Spacone, Dan Hartman, Ed Clough, David Rolls, Mark Wheeler & those on the "net", All the MLS Supporters Clubs.

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Sam's Army®

As always, our "Mission Statement" is: 1) To change the stale atmosphere at U.S. national team home matches. 2) We want to provide a true home field advantage for our teams. 3) Create the same fun and festive atmosphere soccer fans enjoy in other parts of the world here in our own stadiums. 4) Promote the game of soccer.

In order to achieve these goals, it is ESSENTIAL that we travel to all U.S. home matches to STAND and SING TOGETHER in support of our teams. We as fans must come together as one voice in the end zones of our stadiums and create a "Sea of Red" by wearing red to show our UNITY! It is going to take YOU to want to PARTICIPATE if these goals are to be achieved. Certainly there are constraints which prevent people from traveling to games (that is understandable), but if you can hop in a car with four or five friends and drive a few hours to see a match, then do so. World Cup Qualifying is upon us and now more than ever do we need our presence to be felt at U.S. matches. **In our quest to achieve the above, Sam's Army will not tolerate nor promote violent or racist behavior in any form.**

Sam's Army is not limited to just the internet crowd. We use the internet for expediency only. To better communicate with ALL members, we have established the Sam's Army "Hot Line." Anyone can call 716-691-4048 and receive ticket information, Sam's Army events, etc...24 hours a day off of the pre-recorded message. Be sure to have a pen ready when calling!

Membership in Sam's Army has swelled to over 4,000 people across the country and in order to continue growth in Sam's Army, we must take the following step. Although we will continue the free membership policy in Sam's Army, we will also be instituting a paid membership. The purpose in instituting a membership fee is to continue publishing "*Bookable Offense*" and release it on a regular schedule. The Sam's Army section at matches will still be open to anyone who wants to stand and sing in support of our national teams. Below are three plans that have gone into effect beginning April 15, 1997.

PLAN #1: We will continue to offer **FREE** membership in Sam's Army, however, non paying members will only be included on the Sam's Army mailing list and will receive our merchandise brochure. Plan #1 members **CAN** still stand with us at U.S. games.

PLAN #2: Paid membership of \$10.00 per year. a paid membership entitles you to the following: 6 bimonthly issues (April, June, August, October, December, February) of "*Bookable Offense*," 6 bimonthly update letters on non publishing months, discounts on tickets to U.S. matches in the Sam's Army section and a numbered membership card.

Plan #3: The Family Plan. Rather than having to pay a separate membership for each member of your family, plan #3 will allow everyone in your family to be a member under one \$10.00 membership fee. Your family will receive one issue of "*Bookable Offense*" 6 times a year (bimonthly), 6 bimonthly update letters on non publishing months, and a family membership card. All will be sent to one address under your family name, i.e. "The Jones Family." You will also receive discounts on tickets to U.S. matches in the Sam's Army section.

If you received this issue in the mail, you are currently a plan #1 member. If you would like to receive further issues of "*Bookable Offense*" as well as everything described above in plan's #2 or #3, then fill out the membership form on page 4 and mail it in. Your first update letter will be out in May as well as another issue of "B.O." in June.

Until we here from you, be sure to join Sammers at the following schedule of matches on the next page.

Upcoming Sam's Army® events:

U.S. v Mexico April 20, 1997

At press time, the U.S. was preparing for their qualifier against Mexico April 20 at Foxboro stadium. The Sam's Army section was SOLD OUT! That's right, over 600 Sammers converged on Foxboro singing their hearts out in support of the U.S.

We will bring coverage on Sam's Army events from that weekend as well as coverage on U.S. reaction to the result in our update report in May.

NIKE U.S. Women's Victory Tour

Info for the 4/24 match and Women's US Cup'97 were not available as of press time. Call the "Hot Line" for info on those matches at 716-691-4048.

Who: U.S. women's national team v France

When: April 27, 1997 @ 3pm.

Where: Univ. of Tampa

Tickets: Advance sale - \$14.00 for Adult. \$10.00 for Youth U16 plus a \$2.00 service charge per order not per ticket.

Ordering: You may Mail Order ONLY! Send your check or money order made payable to US Soccer to:

USISL, Inc. Attn: Scott DeBolt

14497 N.Dale Mabry, Suite 201

Tampa, FL 33618

Be sure to include your name, address, phone number, number of tickets needed, and that the order is for Sam's Army. All orders must be postmarked by April 18, 1997. If there is a problem, call 813-963-3909.

Seating: Seating is General Admission. Sammers are requested to meet in the stadium to stand together.

Who: U.S. women's national team v S. Korea

When: May 2, 1997 @ 8pm

Where: Uihlein Soccer Facility/Milwaukee

Tickets: \$10.00 for adult and youth. There is no service charge.

Ordering: Telephone orders can be made by calling Mark at 414-358-2510. Have your visa/mastercard ready and let him know tickets are for Sam's Army.

Seating: Seating is General Admission, but Sammers will be converging on the grassy hill behind one of the goals.

Who: U.S. women's national team v S. Korea

When: May 4, 1997 @ 2pm (Central)

Where: St. Charles High School/St. Charles, IL

Tickets: \$12.00 for Adult, \$8.00 for Youth U16 plus a \$3.00 service charge per order not per ticket.

Ordering: You can mail order your tickets by sending a check or money order made payable to IYSA-Tickets to:

IYSA-Tickets

Illinois Youth Soccer Assn

1655 S. Arlington Heights Rd, Suite 201

Arlington Heights, IL 60005

Be sure to include your name, address, phone, number of tickets you would like (Adult & Youth). If there is a problem, call 847-290-1577.

Seating: Is General Admission. Sammers are requested to meet in the stadium in one set of touch line bleachers.

Who: U.S. women's national team v England

When: May 9, 1997 @ 7:30pm (Pacific)

Where: Spartan Stadium/San Jose, CA

Tickets: \$8.00 for adult or youth plus a \$5.00 service charge per order, not per ticket.

Ordering: Telephone orders can be made by calling Trino Martinez at 408-260-6376. Have your credit card ready when calling and let Trino know you would like tickets in the Sam's Army section.

Seating: Sammers will be joining up with The Casbah in the North End Zone (General Admission section) at Spartan Stadium.

Who: U.S. women's national team v England

When: May 11, 1997 @ 2pm (Pacific)

Where: Univ. of Portland/Portland, OR

Tickets: \$12.50 for adult and youth.

Ordering: Telephone 800-992-TIXX or 503-224-TIXX. Have your credit card ready when ordering.

Seating: Sammers are to tell the operator you want tickets in the only Bleacher behind the goal Row E, D, C, B, or A Seats 1-10 in any of those rows.

Sam's Army® Membership Form

----- Cut Here -----

Name: _____

(Permanent) Address: _____

City: _____

State, Zip: _____

Telephone: _____

e-mail: _____

Check One:

Plan #2 _ Plan #3 (Family Plan) _

Amount Enclosed: _____

----- Cut Here -----

Mail To:

Sam's Army
P.O. Box 1606
Amherst, NY 14226-
1606

Please Make All
Checks or Money
Orders Payable to
Sam's Army

SOCCER SAM SHOW!!!



The Soccer Sam Saturday morning radio show, featuring call in guests from the National Team, MLS, A-League, and others in the soccer world, is now the first Soccer Radio Show in the country (and possibly the world) to go Worldwide, Coast-to-Coast, Nation-to-Nation!

Using the technology of Real Audio, internet users are now able to hear the weekly broadcast on demand, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week as heard in Rochester, NY on WHTK - HOT TALK - 1280 every Saturday morning at 10:05am Eastern!

Call in at 716-259-KICK during the show or hit the web at: www.soccersam.com

www.soccersam.com

The Hexagonal's

...Three games in, but has the U.S. played to their potential?

By Mark Spacone

(Ed's: Buckle up for this one..)

The Hexagonal's (the final phase of qualifying for the World Cup in France next year) are in full swing. There are six teams - Mexico, Costa Rica, the U.S., Jamaica, El Salvador, and Canada - competing in this phase of group play. Each team will play each other twice in a home and away series. The top three teams (thank God) with the most points after all games are played this November will earn the right to travel to France and compete on the world's soccer stage.

The U.S. is three matches into their 10 match hexagonal schedule and have accumulated a 1-1-1 record with their next opponent being Mexico at Foxboro Stadium on April 20th. Despite the four points the U.S. has accumulated places them in second behind Mexico, they are barely clinging to that spot and have not played anywhere near their potential.

Why? You may ask....well I'll tell you why. MLS has damaged our once prosperous and flourishing national team to such sub standard depths I am not sure we would even beat Guatemala at this point. Disagree? Tough! The truth hurts!

First off, I want to thank players like John Harkes, Tab Ramos, Alexi Lalas, Eric Wynalda, Joe Max-Moore, Marcello Balboa, Mike Sorber, Cobi Jones, and Brad Friedel for sacrificing their careers to play in MLS. The casual fan may never know how much of a sacrifice this was, but when you consider the above group, on any given week, were honing their skills with and against players like Juergen Klinsmen, Paolo Maldini, Ryan Giggs, Luis Garcia, Hristo Stoichkov, Eric Cantona, George Weah (the list could go on and on...) you could see the loss of skill and pace having to now play against has beens who, without MLS, would be working as a teller at your local bank! Players like Mark Chung, Steve Trittschuh, John Doyle, Tony Meola, (this list is endless and encompasses about 80% of MLS players!) have dragged down the level of our national team players harder than Thomas Dooley dragging down Zaghino on a break away.

Yes, it was a huge sacrifice! A sacrifice to push American soccer to the sporting fore front in this country and it may all be for not when you consider the players lawsuit against MLS (a whole different article). A noble gesture on the players part, but now our national team has trouble competing internationally because of the low level play in MLS.

I am pleading...no...begging players like Kasey

Keller, Ernie Stewart, Claudio Reyna, Jovan Kirovski, Thomas Dooley, David Wagner, and Michael Mason to PLEASE, PLEASE stay in Europe!!! Don't come here to play until you are each 40 years old or until MLS produces a player like Costa Rica's Paulo Wanchope! Our national team needs you there! Trust me, you'll learn more sitting on the bench in Europe than you will playing in MLS. If you don't believe this, give Wynalda or Lalas a call.

U.S. v Jamaica

This was the first hexagonal match the U.S. played and the one thing this match and the others demonstrated is how much Tab Ramos is missed in the midfield. It was away at Jamaica and epitomizes the decline of the U.S. team. The result, 0-0, was heralded as a success by U.S. coach Steve Sampson and the U.S. players (because they came away with one point), but this was a scoreless draw against a team whose nucleus plays in the A-League, our 2nd Division! That's right, they aren't even good enough to play in MLS, if you can even imagine that!

Sampson stated, "It's difficult for the American public to understand how a country of 200 million can compete with a country of 300 million." I would have agreed with this statement ten years ago, but I am one of those people who find this unconscionable, especially when you consider each of our national team players has much more experience from playing in Europe and Latin America than the Jamaicans, we have players who have competed in more World Cup's than the Jamaicans, and U.S. players not currently playing abroad are playing in our Division 1 league - MLS - oh... wait... thats not a benefit is it... please excuse me...

The U.S. should have landed in Kingston, whipped the pants off the Jamaicans on that concrete slab of a field at high noon under the hot sun, made no excuses and say, "Thanks for the three points!" Instead, the Jamaicans carried the play, created more opportunities, and basically dominated. At one point, the U.S. were so poor Kasey Keller had to head the ball out of his box to prevent Jamaica from scoring. Imagine that! Our keeper had to HEAD the ball away! Keepers can use their hands can't they? Please tell me FIFA didn't adopt MLS rules! Oh... MLS hasn't gone that far yet?

Through out the match, Jamaica showed flashes of brilliance such as Williams taking on two U.S. defenders (Agoos, Burns) and creating an opportunity. At one point, Burns had to clear the ball off the goal

line when Whitmore had a clear blast on goal. Another bit of Jamaican strategy (besides creative play) was to play the ball into space behind Lalas and use speed to beat him.

That's right, go after Lalas. A player who was once the defensive core of Padova in Italy's Serie A (undoubtedly the best league in the world). Lalas, a player who was shutting down some of the best attackers in the world - like Roberto Baggio, Giuseppe Signore, Danielle Fonseca, and Gabriella Batistuta - on a weekly basis in Italy came back from Padova faster, more skilled, and had a better read of the game. Now, with only one season of MLS play, Lalas has deteriorated because he is not facing the same level of competition that he did in Italy. Does Brian McBride pose the same threat against Lalas when the Revolution play the Crew as did Batistuta when Fiorentina played Padova? I think not...Lalas and the rest of the U.S. players in MLS have been playing down to the competition and it's showing when they play internationally.

In light of their performance, it's easy to see why the U.S. was content with the tie because the match could have easily gone to Jamaica had it not been for Keller. The highlight for him was making a great one on one save against Boyd. Keller made it look easy and I attribute his great performance directly to his experience of facing Shearer, Cantona, Giggs, Asprilla, Vialli, Fowler, Ravanelli, and all the other current strikers in the English Premier League on a weekly basis. The Jamaicans' efforts must have been like stealing candy from a baby when compared to what he sees week in and week out in England.

U.S. v Canada

This was the first home match for the U.S. The Stanford Stadium crowd was ready and anxious for a U.S. victory. Well, they got the 3-0 victory, but not without raising the same questions as the Jamaican match - that being - why didn't the U.S. dominate against an obviously inferior opponent?

Had it not been for a few dubious offside calls in favor of the U.S. and the inability of Canadians Bunbury and Peschisolido to finish, the U.S. could have been looking at a tie or worse yet, a loss.

Ernie Stewart was brilliant on the right side and that is no surprise being that he plays in Holland rather than the MLS. In other words, his game has not deteriorated like the MLS based players. At one point, Stewart played a ball to Dooley who then played a return ball into space for Stewart to run onto. Stewart collected the ball and attacked the net blowing by the Canadian defender. His cross went to Wynalda who couldn't finish. Stewart was the only U.S. player to split two Canadian defenders by dribbling between

them both. His work was finally rewarded with a goal in the 89th minute when Michael Mason (another European based player making his first appearance for the U.S.) played a beautiful through ball to Stewart who put all of his European training into practice and finished properly.

Back to Eric Wynalda. This was arguably his worst performance since missing a wide open net against Brazil in Gold Cup '96. He had many opportunities to finish, but was just off a bit. Is it merely coincidence this poor performance comes after a year of playing in MLS? Wynalda made great strides as a player while scoring goals in the German Bundesliga. He is the type of player that needs to be continuously challenged in order to perform well. If he is not challenged Wynalda just disappears into the scenery. Golf has become more of a challenge for him than playing in MLS. The problem is when he gets to the national team he is rusty and he misses opportunities that come to him (like in the Canada match) that normally, if he were on his game, would have been sure goals.

U.S. v Costa Rica

We knew this was going to be the toughest test for the U.S. playing in front of the hostile Costa Rican crowd at Saprissa Stadium and facing the speed of attackers Paulo Wanchope and Hernan Medford. Sampson stated that the players were, "Excited about playing there again because in the end what the players want is atmosphere." The U.S. wanted to perform well and shut up the Costa Rican fans who, in the last visit to CR, treated the players with absolutely no respect.

That's right, it was a challenge! A challenge the U.S. felt they could live up to. With that challenge, guess who got on the score sheet? Yep, Eric Wynalda. He hit the equalizer to notch the score at 1 a piece. Harkes played a beautiful ball into space behind the CR defense. Wynalda collected the ball and buried it.

The U.S. started out playing half way decent, but the force of Wanchope, Medford, Gomez, and Solis was too much for the U.S. Seems CR picked up on the strategy of playing the ball into space behind Lalas and utilize speed to beat him. It worked and the first CR goal saw Medford blow past Lalas and the rest of the defense, collect the ball and made Keller feel helpless as it went in the net.

Despite CR going up 1-0, the U.S. fought back when Wynalda equalized. The U.S. found themselves down again 2-1 shortly after when Solis had all day to tee up a blast about 25 yards out that gave Keller no chance. The U.S. fought back again when Lassiter came on in the second half to take full opportunity of a poor CR pass. He beat one defender and did not miss his chance to silence the CR crowd by tying the score at 2.

The tie Sampson was looking for was in his hands
(Continued on P. 24)

KASEY KELLER

... On Life, Soccer, England, and the U.S. National Team...O'Kay, Maybe Just on Soccer

By John Wright

English based Bookable Offense editor **John Wright** caught up with America's No.1 goalkeeper at a Leicester City training session. After his morning workout, we went to a restaurant and chatted about soccer in America, hooliganism stories, Millwall, Sam's Army, London, life in England, vacations, his love of restaurants, his dismay at the away support at USA games, living out in the country for peace and quiet, and his opinion of the USSF. He also gave me the lowdown on players he liked and disliked most in the Premiership (there is a certain 15 Million pound striker in England who loves to come in the box with elbows high and is gaining a reputation as a whiner!). We both agreed that USA games should have segregated ticketing to give American fans a taste of what its like to sit with your own supporters on one side and have the away supporters on the other. He also thinks the US Cup should be done away with or at least have it without the US team and just have Hispanic teams, since it looks like it's going to be held in Southern California during January from now on. Kasey is definitely a guy who will be a voice for the fan for many years to come.

He doesn't support a favorite side in England, just those who help Leicester's cause in climbing up the league table. Kasey thinks MLS should build stadiums just like Millwall's New Den, compact, tight, wide field, 20,000 seats, no running track. Kasey's dream club to play for on the planet is Barcelona. He also wanted fans to know that when he dives in the crowd after a big win, he was kind of hoping we would crowd surf him and pass him around (Consider it done, Kasey!). He's still a Northwest boy. He owns a Range Rover, loves the outdoors, and listens to Nirvana. He said playing at Anfield and Old Trafford is overrated, but St. James' Park (Newcastle) is fantastic. Here's what else he had to say:

BO: You're in the semi-final of the Coca-Cola Cup, if you win that, you're going to Wembley. Could you ever imagined that happening after what occurred last season?

KK: Well, obviously it's been a turn of fortune...with the collapse of Millwall last year and the Olympics and coming back and not knowing if I was going to have to be in the second division all season. It's just nice to finally be up in the Premier League and doing as well as we are and obviously playing well in the cups. We've got a tough couple of games against Wimbledon but we've beaten them once already and there's no reason we can't do it a couple more times...

“...It's just nice to finally be up in the Premier League and doing as well as we are...”

BO: If Millwall hadn't gone down, would you still be there? Did Leicester still want you?

KK: Well, I don't know if I still would have been there or not. I don't know if I would have gone to Leicester but I would have only had this season before I would have become a free transfer, so I don't know if I would have gone or not. The way everything worked out, I'm very happy, things have gone extremely well. Tough to say if I would have gone or not..

BO: We have loads of 'keepers over here, do you think we'll see some field players in England?

KK: Well, it's getting more and more difficult with the Bosman ruling and how difficult the immigration thing is. I think if a player has an EEC passport, it's going to be a lot easier for him because you look at the type of players they're bringing in and now they really want to bring in big names

and people of that nature that are really going to up the crowd. As of now, there's not a real big American name that can come in and do that. I don't see it happening right away. I talked to a kid the other day who was hoping he could sign for a team but there was just no way he would ever get a work permit. So it's a difficult situation in this country...

BO: Do U.S. players still get slagged in terms of respect amongst English players?

KK: I've really never noticed it too much. I've never had any problems. I don't know if other players have had problems. I've heard stories, but I know plenty of English players who get slagged by the fans and everyone else, so I wouldn't say it's specifically an American thing...

BO: What's your favorite British beer and food?

KK: Well I don't drink beer, it's not my thing, so I don't have a favorite beer. Favorite food? Favorite English food? I don't think there is such thing as a favorite English food! (laughs)...

BO: Did you want to slug Helen Chamberlain on Soccer AM when she kept saying "sacker"?

KK: It was alright, she was pretty funny, but I know what you're saying, there's a lot of overkill, but I got her pretty good in some of the breaks. What you didn't hear was probably better...

BO: If you went into the Azteca Stadium and stuffed Mexico and it resulted in Bora's firing, would you feel vindicated?

KK: I'd be very happy, um, I don't know if vindication is the right word because I think he could be gone before we have that chance. There's

no question there is no love loss between Bora and myself. For whatever reason, I wasn't part of his plans, ya know, no big deal, my career has gone on from there and so has his. But, like I said, I have no real great love for the man. I'd probably have a smile on my face, put it that way...



Photo: Keller In action against T & T during a U.S. World Cup Qualifier.

BO: Any songs the Leicester fans have sung in your honor?

KK: It's tough for me because I can't really hear or understand the big songs. A lot of times it just goes pretty simple and what I hear is usually lots of chants of 'USA' around the pitch when certain things happen or when I come out or if I make a big

BO: Sunil Gulati. Is he a good man for MLS?

KK: I think so far he's been a good man for MLS. Obviously you look at the first year, things have gone well and everyone is pretty happy. Ya know, I've got a few questions. I'm not too sure about this added foreign player and some other things, but I think as of right now I don't think there can be any real complaints. If you look at any company and the people in charge and as long as the company is growing and making money, he's going to be in a job, so, as long as that continues, I think he's the right man until it stops...

BO: If you were commissioner of MLS for one year, what would you change immediately?

KK: It's tough to say because I don't know all the background info on everything, but I think I would try to workout the stadium problems first and foremost. I'd like to see some smaller venues with bigger pitches and I think that would help the game so much. Having a big 120X80 yard pitch for the people to show what they can do, instead of getting stuck on a 110X55 or something. I know were in tough situations, we have these beautiful stadiums in America, it's nice to be able to use them, but, you don't want to get too big, too fast and that would be my other real worry. I'm a little worried that maybe were going a little too much NASL route by bringing in a few too many European stars and Mexican stars, I understand we need the draw and I respect that, but it just

frightens me a little bit right now. It's not too bad at the moment, but its just something I think we need to be a little bit careful of is taking the quick buck and bringing in big names and not developing talent.... instead, saying, 'OK, maybe we need to go a little bit slower here', and build from the American base. Like I said, it's not a problem as of yet, but I'd be a little careful...

BO: Which American sports media personality do you like best?

KK: I do like the combination of Pat Summerall and John Madden quite a bit...

BO: Which sports personality do you dislike most, ie soccer bashers?

KK: Um, who's that asshole for ESPN, Olberman? What a wank, I mean I can understand not having your favorite sports but to be so blatantly against something that is so worldwide and so popular, it's just so close-minded and ridiculous. There's just no real need for it. I'm surprised at the hierarchy who obviously has a vested interest in soccer with ESPN, hasn't kind of put their foot down a little bit...

BO: Do you like Ruby Wax?

KK: Ruby? I've never met Ruby, but she's alright. She puts a lot of American stereotypes into play in this country, but she's alright, she has her place and she's pretty funny.

save. I haven't heard of any elaborate type songs but then again I wouldn't really hear them anyway...

BO: Do you think the US Soccer Federation made a mistake by declining an invitation to the Copa America?

KK: No, not really. I think for long term goals they definitely need to put their efforts towards MLS and MLS isn't going to be what you need if the core of the American stars are playing somewhere in South America. Not to mention, I just come off a ten month season, I don't need a month down in a place in Uruguay. It was a lot of fun, we had a great time down there, and it helped put us on the map. But there is a time when players like myself and Harkes and Ernie Stewart and Dooley need to have a bit of a break. You can't play year round any more if you want to be at your best...

BO: Will American soccer announcers ever get any better? Do you think there is hope for them?

KK: Um, that's a tough call. It is getting better, to be honest. I'll actually watch a game in English and not in Spanish. I used to just watch it in Spanish because they drove me so crazy! Having to explain, "a goalkick is this." it's just so patronizing...

BO: Like "He's the point guard

KK: Yeah, I love the analogies, that's always good too...

BO: If a repeat of the farce of the Gold Cup happened again, would you guys ever refuse to play in it, some of the star players?

KK: Well I know my wife had some problems, its a situation you really don't want to be put in. I don't know if it will come down to refusing to play, but you never know (laughs)...

BO: What about in terms of organization and the way the TV coverage has been and the way it was geared towards Mexico and the Mexican support. Do you guys feel like you got the raw end of the deal on that?

KK: I kind of put it towards who's going to pay the most money for us. Obviously, you'd like to have a little more say in everything, but if the Mexican TV and those people are paying the most money then they should have the most say until the American TV coverage is bigger and stronger...

BO: Would you like to see a merger between CONCACAF and South America?

KK: I think us and Mexico are about the only two who could really be a part of that. Obviously it would make qualifying a hell of a lot more difficult. I don't necessarily want to see that, I want to see a whole different reformat of CONCACAF itself. Sixteen qualifying games is ridiculous in the time frames that they want it done and I think FIFA needs to step in and have international qualifying dates, world wide, just to ensure that I, personally, don't miss this many league games, it's just ridiculous.

BO: The USSF...Out for the interests of soccer or out to make a buck?

KK: You've got to be out to make a little money...To run an organization, you need to have money. You want to look out for the benefits of soccer, but you have to also make money. I think they're out there for the best interests of soccer as well as they can at the time. I think there are some things that will change in the future,

when more people like myself come who gained a lot more experience. You have a lot of people running it who never grew up with the game and they've put themselves into a situation where, no fault of their own, but they just don't quite have the experience in the game because it was never there in America. I think when a lot more players start coming through the ranks, who have been there and spent time in Europe and pro leagues in America, that's when the improvements will occur. And when I start taking my kids to games and to practice with them and show my kids in the back yard. My dad could never show me anything in the backyard, he never played the game, but he could teach me how to throw a football and how to throw a baseball, but its time when I can teach my kids what to do and that's when the real improvement will come...

BO: It's France '98, first round first game. Who's your starting 11 including you? (laughs)

KK: That's tough to say. You don't know who's playing well, who's playing where, who's doing whatever. (Pause) I'd like to put Ronaldo up front, I think, other than that well have to wait and see...

BO: Finally, what would you like to say to Sam's Army?

KK: Thanks for the tremendous support so far and keep it going. Continue to get people involved in the game. I think it all goes back for me, not being involved, was sitting in the crowd in the Colombia game in the WC and it was the biggest win in American soccer history and the crowd's like (in a mocking voice), "Ah, OK, it's time to go home now." No one really understood. They wanted to do something, but they just didn't know what to do. I think Sam's Army is really an almost educational tool to the masses and if they can continue to grow and have their presence everywhere and people will start to have fun and realize there is a lot more to the game then just sitting there and applauding when someone scores. That is a very important part of US Soccer, getting the fan involvement and that's what they're doing and more power. Keep growing.

(Bookable Offense would like to thank Kasey for taking the time to sit and speak with us. We wish him the best in England and we will surely see him during the U.S.'s World Cup qualifying campaign.)



Photo: Keller clears the ball against Canada in the Hexagonal's.

HAS THE US CUP WORN OUT IT'S USEFULNESS?

By John Wright

Do we need to play the US Cup during World Cup qualifying years? Do we need to play the US Cup period? The answer is a loud NO.

This last January (US Cup '97) should have been the final installment of this mini tournament. The past tournaments gave Steve Sampson the opportunity to evaluate players in a competitive tournament setting against decent opposition (while also exposing to everyone our gaping holes in the back four).

But with MLS going full throttle, we now find ourselves in a position US Soccer has never found itself in before: a crowded fixtures list. Just look at what has

been/is on offer this past year to present:

- March-October '97 - 2nd MLS Season.
- March-June '97 - 2nd round of World Cup qual's.
- Feb '97 - 2 game tour of China.
- Jan '97 - US Cup '97.
- Nov/Dec '96 - 1st Round of World Cup qualifiers.
- April/Oct '96 MLS Inaugural Season (what soccer fans have been craving for).
- August '96 - Friendly against El Salvador.
- June '96 - US Cup '96.
- May '96 - Scotland Friendly.
- January '96 - Gold Cup (we won't soon forget about that fiasco!).

In reality, there is now a choice instead of taking whatever game is presented by USSF. Like the ad for the Virginia Slims ciggs says, "You've Come a Long Way Baby!"

The US Cup was created as a "dry run" for USA '94. The first four tournaments ('92, '93, '95, '96) were great. Personally, I got to see England, Ireland, Brazil, Germany, Colombia, Nigeria, and Mexico and enjoyed every one of them (even if the results weren't what I'd wished). Given the schedule above and a solid dose of MLS regular season, playoff, and championship games and it's easy to see fans will have all they can handle.

IT'S TIME TO PUT THE US CUP TO REST!

It has SERVED A NOBLE PURPOSE and can place itself among one of the greatest US Soccer events in



PHOTO: The U.S. takes US Cup'95 (photo by Dr. Victor Lupi)

our history. The quality of opponents has become substantially worse, as US Cup'97 can attest (Had the U.S. presented the same roster as US Cup'96, Peru and Denmark wouldn't have had a chance). Couple this with low attendance figures during this past US Cup (not

even 30,000 for US/Mex!!! IN L.A.!!!???) and it's easy to see fans know a dog when they see one. Let's face it, there is just no room for it anymore.

However, you must look at US Soccer's major sponsors and see if they are willing to see US Cup come to an end. Most sponsors don't know the difference between Gold Cup and Copa America, much less anything else about soccer, but they've been sold and convinced that the US Cup is a major inter-

national tournament and that a buck can be made. They might not be so keen on letting those revenues go. If sponsors do not want to make the switch, look for the usually passive USSF to again do as they are told, without showing any signs of resistance.

And what of ABC and ESPN? Will they be willing to travel to such locations as Brazil, Argentina, and Mexico City instead of Boston, DC, and Los Angeles? They might not show any matches and look at the fall of the US Cup as just another one of soccer failures in the USA. Although we, as true soccer fans, know that this would be a good move, we might lose at least three potential games on national television, something crucially important in the marketing and exposure of soccer in America. Just another factor the USSF will have to decide on.

Just look at this likely, but certainly not in the near future, scenario...the merger of CONMEBOL (S. America) and CONCACAF (N. Amer and C. Amer, and Caribbean). If this occurs, Southern California, with it's large Hispanic population, would be a prime consideration for host and one day eating up the Gold Cup. FIFA now thinks with \$\$\$ and the USA has proven to be a money maker for the cronies in charge. Fans will just have to put up with a dog with different fleas. Don't bet against it.

MLS - Season #2

...Oh the Agony...

By Mark Spacone

The second season of MLS is underway and if you thought the pressure was on organizers and players last year to perform well, it has doubled this year. However, I would like to be the first to thank Commissioner Doug Logan for getting rid of the canned music while the game is being played. I watched two matches to date and have yet to hear any "Jock Rock." It gives the opportunity to MLS Supporters Clubs and other fans to create their own genuine, passionate atmosphere. Despite this nice change, there are still a few things I must get off my chest.

Not only is the low level competition in MLS dragging down our national team players (see page 5 "Hexagonals") but it seems the league is promoting negative play.

A few years back, FIFA instituted a revolutionary rule to diminish negative play in soccer matches. That rule abolished the pass back to a goalkeeper. That is, a keeper could no longer pick up a ball with his hands after a field player passed the ball (with his feet) to the keeper. The reasoning behind this rule change was to prevent time wasting and promote positive play, that is, to prompt teams to go forward rather than backward to their keeper in protecting a lead or tie. To their credit, FIFA is looking to limit this action further to prevent any time wasting with pass backs to the keeper.

MLS, however, has yet to catch on to this idea of promoting positive play and the league seems predicated on wasting time. Although the referee is to have command of the clock in MLS, it really appears that he doesn't. The time is kept on the scoreboard so that fans know exactly how much of it is remaining in a match. In theory, this is a good idea, but in practice, it has become a disaster.

Abuse of the clock came in many forms last year. Injured players ate up minutes at a time while being treated on the field. In any other league around the world, the referee would add this wasted time at the end of the half. The same would apply when players deliberately boot the ball out of play or when players are being booked. In MLS, however, all of the above situations are used to deliberately waste time and the referee was helpless in preventing this time from slipping away.

Let's take a look at how some matches ended in MLS last year and this year:

- 8/8/96 - N.E. v L.A. - L.A. won the match 1-0 and the match ended with the ball out of play. It was a throw-in in favor of L.A., but with the one goal lead, L.A. refused to put the ball back into play, so they wasted the remaining seconds of the match with the ball out of play.

- 8/10/96 - Dal. v T.B. - At least 30 of the remaining 1 min 50 sec. were run off the clock as a yellow card was issued. At 32 seconds, the ball was put out of play and was sent back into play with only 18 seconds left on the clock. Time ends with ball in play.

- 8/14/96 - N.Y. v N.E. - Game ends with ball out of play.

- 8/17/96 - N.Y. v T.B. - A minute and a half ran off the clock during a scuffle. The game ends with Meola taking his time to play a short goal kick with 7 sec. on the clock. Everyone stood around and waited for time to run out realizing there was no time or point to do anything.

- 8/21/96 - N.Y. v D.C. - At least 2 min. were run off the clock due to an injury and a scuffle on the field. The game ends with the ball headed out of play from a Meola punt. With 1 sec. left on the clock, the ensuing throw in was never taken.

- 8/22/96 - Dal. v S.J. - Game ends with ball out of play.

- 9/4/96 - N.Y. v T.B. - Time wasting galore. Game ends on an offside call. The ball was never put back into play.

This Year

- 3/22/97 - N.Y. v S.J. - T.B. broke a 1-1 tie by scoring with 32 seconds remaining in the match. 20 seconds were wasted off the clock due to the ensuing T.B. goal celebration and when the ball was put back into play with about 12 seconds remaining, it was played out of bounds. The match ended with the ball out of play.

- 3/29/97 - L.A. v D.C. - The first half ended with L.A. on a 4v2 break and the score notched at zero. Threatening to break the 0-0 tie, the clock ran out thus crushing the most positive occurrence all match. The match stayed at 0-0 and went to the dreaded shootout.

The above account is just a sampling of how matches ended on a dead ball situation, out of play or the clock killing a scoring opportunity. Hardly ever does a match end in this manner when the referee has complete control of the clock. Not only did L.A. run out of time this year while attacking, last year, Roy Lassiter of Tampa Bay had a goal disallowed because it was ruled the ball did not cross the line before the clock hit zero. That would have been a goal in every other league in the world because the referee would have added time that was wasted through out the match.

I am always reminded of my interview with Commissioner Logan just before the inaugural season where he stated, "We are committed to play the international game as played in 190 other countries" (B.O. #5 March/April 1996). The clock situation alone, as seen above, sets MLS apart from every other league in the world. The reasoning (as far as I can see) why the clock still runs this way is TV.

Due to MLS having to purchase the time on ESPN to televise matches, possibly they can not afford to run over the 2 hour time slot allotted to them, thus the word may be to keep the clock running to prevent going over which would then raise the cost of broadcast time. If this is so, I can understand that, but explain this is why things are so. If MLS is waiting until '99 to change how the clock operates (because at that time they will have a network with a vested interest in the game and want to promote it, unlike ESPN), then tell us...I can put up with it for another year, but without any word, it gives the impression they have no plans to change.

The clock is only one aspect of how MLS is not playing the same brand of soccer throughout the world. MLS is dead set on not having any ties. Their solution is the shootout. That cheap circus like spectacle borrowed from indoor soccer and the NASL. Again, this is not used in any other major league in the world but yet we have it. Why? (The shootout certainly is not going to help our national team players based in MLS when it comes time for them to participate in a World Cup match decided on penalty kicks).

Let me first state, if we had promotion/relegation and the top five MLS teams played in Cup competition against other CONCACAF clubs, then I would not yield on the idea of breaking ties. Neither of those scenarios exist and for the sake of compromise, I'd accept matches not ending in ties, but lets use the next logical tool that already exists in the soccer world, that being penalty kick's.

The loudest voice on the abolishment of the shootout has been fans. It was published in the April 7, 1997 issue of "Soccer America" that 65% of 1,050 fans polled were against the shootout. Commissioner Logan was quoted in that article dismissing the results of the poll because it was most likely the die hard soccer fan who responded. Is he saying that the main core of soccer fans in this country who support MLS by attending matches, who purchase MLS merchandise, and who support soccer on every level, voiced their opinion about the league in that poll, but their voice has no bearing on MLS decision making? I thought the saying in business is, "The customer is always right!"

Last year, we had a presidential election in this country. It was evident how important poll results were in the race between the candidates. Each day CNN,

ABC, and others came out with their results. Those results were based on a cross section of only 1,000 - 1,500 people across the country. For a presidential election, it is fine to project the new leader of our country using only 1,000-1,500 respondents to a poll as fair representation of the entire country and have that poll be accepted as valid and scientific. When 1,050 soccer fans respond to a poll, however, the result is dismissed as coming from "fringe" members of the soccer community and in no way reflect the attitude of the general population and their views carry no weight.

Without those "fringe" soccer fans, MLS would not have the support it does. People are not coming out to see MLS matches because its MLS and they want to see game time wasted and the circus like shootout! They are coming out to matches because they know if they don't and this league flops, chances are there will never be another pro league in this country.

One interesting result of the "Soccer America" poll - 353 respondents would accept a tie as a result. This lead the other choices (OT, shootout, and penalty kicks). However, there was still an over whelming combined majority (698 respondents) who were against games ending in ties. Again, I can accept this idea of no ties, but lets break them using standards and methods that already exist in the soccer world and not try to re-invent the wheel. We know TV time is a problem for MLS and they can't run the risk of 30 minutes of sudden death OT. So, the next best tool used throughout the world to break ties would be PK's.

The mentality among business people towards soccer has to change from "Change the game in order to make it mainstream" to "Market the REAL game the proper way (i.e., proper telecasts, pre/post game show, highlight show, no games on artificial turf, etc) to the main stream." REAL soccer has never been marketed properly to the American public. It is time for proven businessmen like Commissioner Logan, Alan Rothenberg, and Sunil Gulati to realize this and bring the REAL version to the people. When they do, the crowds will come.

MLS has taken two steps in the right direction. The first was not enlarging the goals last year. The second was canning the "jock rock" this year. Now they must take two more steps for this league to be legitimate. First, turn complete control of the clock back to the referee and diminish negative play. Second, (if MLS is unwilling to accept ties) use PK's to break ties rather than the shootout. The current handling of the clock and the shootout have no redeeming qualities in promotion of the sport. Just take a look at how the '97 season opener between the MetroStars and the Clash ended if you have any doubts about the above observations.

Learn Them, Live

...Sam's Army Songs. WARNING: For Use

Every soccer fan must add a copy of Verdi's aria "*The Triumphant March*" from his opera "*Aida*" to their collection. The melody sounds great when sung by a whole section of soccer fans at matches.

"Oh When The Yanks"

Oh when the Yanks,
Go marchin' in,
Oh when the Yanks go marchin' in,
Oh I want to be in that number,
When the Yanks go marchin' in!

"Over There"

Over there, over there,
Send the word, send the word, over there,
That the Yanks are comin',
The Yanks are comin',
and we won't be runnin' anymore!

"We Love You U.S."

We love you U.S., oh yes we do,
We love you U.S., we do,
We love you U.S., we do,
OH U.S. WE LOVE YOU!

"Let's Go U.S., Ole"

Let's go U.S., OLE,
Let's go U.S., O-La,
Let's go U.S., OLE,
Let's go U.S. 'Le O La!

"We're all part of Sam's Army"

We're all part of Sam's Army,
We're all out to win the group,
Oh we'll really shake 'em up,
When we win the World Cup,
Cause the U.S. is the greatest Football Team!

"If You Want To Go To Paris"

If you want to go to Paris,
clap your hands (CLAP, CLAP),
If you want to go to Paris,
clap your hands (CLAP, CLAP),
If you want to go to Paris,
If you want to go to Paris,
If you want to go to Paris,
Clap Your hands (CLAP, CLAP)!

"The O.Z. March"

(From "The Wizard of Oz")
Cobi Jones, Joonneess! or Claudio, ooohhh, oh!

"You've Got To Get That Ball"

(To the tune of, "He's Got The Whole World")
You've got to get that ball,
IN THE NET,
You've got to get that ball,
IN THE NET,
You've got to get that ball,
IN THE NET,
You've got to get it in the net!

"Hey Harksie"

(From John Valby's "Hey La Dee...")
Hey Harksie, Harksie, Harksie,
Hey Harksie, Harksie oh,
Hey Harksie, Harksie, Harksie,
Hey Harksie GET A GOAL!!!

The Beatles Medley

Get your hands in the air for the next three!!!

"All We Are Saying"

(To the tune, "Give Peace a Chance")
All we are saying,
is give us a goal! (Repeat)

"Na, Na, Na, Naaaa, U-S-A"

(To the tune, "Hey Jude")
Naaa, Naaa, Na, Na NA Na, Naaaa
Naaa, Naaa, Naaa, Naaaaa,
U-S-A!!!

"We All Cheer For The Red, White & Blue"

(To the tune, "Yellow Submarine")
We all cheer for the Red, White & Blue,
The Red, White, and Blue,
The Red, White, and Blue! (Repeat from the top)

"OLE, OLE"

(You will recognize this when you hear it!)
Ole, Ole, Ole, Ole, U S of A!!! (Repeat)

Them, Love Them

At U.S. Games Only...

“The Banana Splits Theme Song”

(Yes, you will recognize this one as well!!!)

“We Are”

We are, we are, we are, Sam’s Army! (Repeat)

“Call & Response”

Caller: Everywhere we go!

Group: Everywhere we go!

Caller: People want to know!

Group: People want to know!

Caller: Who we are!

Group: Who we are!

Caller: So we tell them!

Group: So we tell them!

Caller: We are Sam’s Army!

Group: We are Sam’s Army!

Caller: Mighty, mighty, Army!

Group: Mighty, mighty, Army!

“Here We Go!”

Here we go, here we go, here we go! (Repeat)

Chants & Cheers!

The following are to be done in unison. Get your hands in the air for these!!!

“You Only Sing When Your Winning!”

“You’ll Never Beat The U.S.!”

“OLE (Clap, Clap), Ooh Oh (Clap,clap),
OLE (Clap, Clap), Ooh oh (Clap, Clap)”

“Come On U.S.!”

“U.S., U.S.A.!”

“U.S.A.! (Clap, Clap, Clap)”

“Its All Over!”

“Hey, hey, hey, Goodbye!”

CHECK OUT OUR WEB SITE!

We are just a click away...

- Sam’s Army event info!

- Sam’s Army merchandise!

www.sams-army.com

- How to purchase match tickets!

- Links to other great soccer sites!

Thunder Disappearing?

...(With apologies to Bob Segar)

By Dan Roudebush

(Editor's Note: Written prior to the announcement of Project 40, Dan Roudebush takes an in depth view at player development in the U.S. We hope to have a follow up to this article to see if Project 40 has in fact addressed the problems presented in this piece.)

Worried about declining MLS attendance?

Remember 1980? Just twelve years after starting up, NASL average attendance thundered to an all time high of 6.1 mil, averaging 14,997 with 24 teams. Then a short four years later in 1984 the league was down to nine teams and folded the year after.

Why did the league go down the tubes?

1) NASL reliance on college as a source for U.S. players:

A sampling of the 1984 NASL handbook reveals that for the nine teams the average number of North American players on the roster (not on the field) was 8. League rules initially stated only four N. American players (Canadian teams played in the NASL) had to be on the field. The idea was to draft collegians as the league grew and work them into the lineup. The latter never happened as the last thing the coaches wanted was someone who couldn't play with their foreign imports. The draft thus ended up as a publicity gimmick to assuage the U.S. and Canadian public.

2) NASL reliance on foreign players

NASL owners were unwilling to spend up front money for younger player development. Instead, to hold down expenses, second and third

division junkers were brought in and the leagues play deteriorated.

3) No synergy with U.S. national team. And you guessed it, the U.S. continued to do horrible in the World Cup qualifying matches.

4) No NASL junior player development program.

From 1968-1984 a period of 16 years, the NASL could not build a league based on U.S. players. Why? There was no attempt to develop junior U.S. players similar to other leagues overseas. Quality players could have been produced in three to four years at the outside. If they had, the league might still be here.

So how about the MLS? How does it stack up to the NASL? Can it avoid the above mistakes?

Initially the fans have turned out. The new league is sometimes entertaining and fans have been starved for pro soccer. The all star game demonstrated good players have been signed. But the overall quality is not there as the league duplicates NASL mistakes.

1) Reliance on colleges for U.S. players.

Yes the number of collegiate players has increased, but the quality of collegiate play only marginally.

In 1995 there were 676 NCAA teams, an increase of 30% over 1980, with an increase in the collegiate player base of around 3,000. (This estimate does not account for transfers from the NAIA so the actual increase is far less). More importantly we have seen more players available to enter at the college level. The colleges themselves have been able to make better selections. So we

have seen a FEW more college grads capable of playing in the MLS, but not that many.

The failure of the U.S. men's Olympic soccer team, composed of recent U.S. college graduates, is a direct reflection on the MLS who touted those players. A failure predicable on the basis of past patterns. Sampson even admits it will be hard to get quality league players that can push the U.S. to the next level of international competitiveness. Hell, without some new "D" he might not even qualify for France!

As one Soccer America editor said on line, "We have in the USA one of the largest selections of mediocre players to be found in the world."

2) Continued MLS reliance on foreign players.

Recognizing this lack of quality, and seeing the drop off from initial attendance the league now wants to follow in NASL footsteps and has increased the number of foreign players. At the same time, it's announced that they want to expand to 16 teams by the year 2004. Wanna bet that more foreigners are brought in to keep the "quality up."

3) Until the hexagonal conflicts with the current MLS schedule, there has been improved synergy with the U.S. national team and the MLS. A plus over the NASL attempts.

U.S. fans want to see U.S. players, and they want to see them do well on the international scene. The MLS knows this. They made every effort to cash in on the U.S. "success" in the 1994 WC by signing as many of the "stars" as they could. They also reversed the

NASL rules. Instead of four U.S. players on the field now it's only four foreigners.

A marketing synergism between the MLS and the U.S. WC qualifying matches is a great way to increase

the visibility of soccer in the pro sport market place. But it works both ways. We are not a nation that

tolerates losing. The MLS has a stake in the development of the U.S. national team.

4) No MLS junior player development program.

Yet the MLS does nothing to establish a development league for players graduating from High School or identified as potential professional talent at even younger years. U.S. players like O'Brien, Kirovski, and others are forced to make their own way overseas.

Instead, the MLS signs agreements with USISL teams to park older reserve players, either foreigners or older American college grads with little hope of improving their game to a high international standard. Unlike minor league baseball the lower USISL clubs receive no supplements for player salaries.

More foreign players, reliance on the USSF/College system for U.S. players, and no money for junior player development. Yeah I remember...I remember...the sound of thunder!

OK what's to be done? The major hole in the MLS program involves the development of younger U.S. players. Quality player ID and competitive training is the only thing holding us back. There is no way for the U.S. to develop a Raul, Ronaldo, Kluyvert, etc. since there is no system for providing top notch

instruction, competition, simultaneous health care, and assistance with character development/maturity. This seriously effects recruiting of younger world class athletes who might be playing sev-

"...MLS investors and sponsors are asked to put money into an organization that has the equivalent of a zero R&D budget..."

eral sports. In med-iocrity reliance on collegians, the MLS is missing some important numbers; players that do not go to college.

The 1984 Statistical Abstract of the U.S. states that in 1990 80 % of the U.S. population over 25 failed to graduate from HS.

Where are all those young players that fall in this category, particularly our minorities in the Hispanic community that could bring some future quality to the MLS? Probably in the same place as in the ODP program. OUT!

Recently the education situation has not been as bleak. Over two thirds of HS graduates attend one year of college or more. But that leaves one third of 2.7 million graduates, or roughly 900,000 not attending college.

Consider HS soccer players. In 1994 a total of 272,000 boys played. If one third were seniors that's, 90,0000 players available annually. A third don't go to college, so that leaves 30,000 out there some where. What happens to them? If one tenth of one percent had the potential to make it to the pros that's 300 prospects a year. Can the MLS ignore this potential? And we aren't even counting club players in the 900,000 pool that don't participate in HS sports.

If we want to play with the football powers then we need a system for young PROFESSIONAL player development that does not rely on the collegiate level of play.

What the MLS Central organization seems unwilling to recognize is the development of pro players is the business of the pros. It is not the business of the USSF, an amateur organization, or colleges.

Fans should ask their clubs to come up with some sort of comprehensive plan to:1) identify, 2) recruit, and 3) train U.S. youth players of potential international caliber.

1) Identification is in itself a problem. The U.S. is a vast geography with a large population. The stats say we have around 3.6 million male players between 12 and 18.

2) Develop a feeder system for these programs that recruits identified soccer players that are also potential world class athletes. Some possibilities include: Conducting publicized annual tryouts similar to those the MLS held across the country, but limited to U19; individual MLS clubs establishing ties with the higher quality amateur clubs; or the MLS taking over from USSF the international teams for U19. Establishing an elite player program similar to Australia's, etc. Recruited young players have to know that a FUNDED system is there. Otherwise why bother? U.S. football, baseball, basketball, and track compete for the top athletes U.S. soccer needs to compete on the international level.

Preliminary contact with fan clubs of the MLS franchise indicated no knowledge that any of the above points were being executed.

3) Some possible avenues for training include: funding for lower division USISL clubs similar to minor league baseball; each individual club to establish a reserve team(s) of U19; or the establishment of an apprentice

program.

The lack of funding for such a program can only lead to long term disaster. MLS investors and sponsors are asked to put money into an organization that has the equivalent of a zero R&D budget, or an oil company without exploration field expense. Something they would never do for a major company with issued stock.

The MLS investors aren't stupid. They recognize the need to keep building the league so that it can compete in the U.S. sports market. If a factual case is made for junior player investment, they will give direction to those who can implement the idea, Logan and Gulati. But pressure from Rothenberg, who left off a piece of the operating costs, may prevent them from presenting such a need. With another college combine taking place this past February indicates Rothenberg won't admit to this mistake.

Instead the brain trust seem bent on hyping average attendance exceeding their forecasts. But this is inflated by the early large Galaxy/Metro games as was the NASL by the Cosmos. Look at the mean. Further, an attendance target is just that. A target that was originally underestimated.

MLS will reportedly lose around \$12-15 mill this year. As the Bosman decision permits the equivalent of free agency to run through the major football country ranks they may lose even more competing for good players on the world market. Every scout in Europe will be scrounging around Africa, Brazil, and Chile trying to find potential replacement players for high priced free agents. The MLS can't even hang onto Alvarez for example.

The MLS, league or teams combined, could carry 400 junior players for around \$4.8 mil salary plus medical for \$6 mil a year. In

two to three years at the outside, MLS wouldn't have to worry about bringing in more foreign players. The price for developing players will be cheap in comparison to the salaries MLS may have to pay for foreign talent.

The net cost of a development program over increased foreign player salaries would probably only be in the \$3-4 mill range versus the \$6 mill raw. In light of expansion plans, development costs are something any good accountant would advise the MLS brain trust to consider.

Without young prospects, new investors will know that the number of the league's U.S. players are insufficient to provide any new team with reasonable chances. For a much lower cost than a buy in, Huizenga, et al could support two or three USISL teams, develop his own players and climb the promotion ladder. All in two-three years or for less than \$4 million. Or three or four investors could band together and do a repeat of the old AFL by concentrating on signing teenagers.

We suggest that the player development issue be resolved prior to the end of the '97 season to capitalize on publicity opportunities. The existence of development players will increase next years attendance as the true fan, like baseball, knows what players are in the organizations quiver, and follows with eager anticipation the young players budding career.

In summary, the U.S. college system and USSF are unable to provide professional players that can compete on the international level, Olympic or World Cup. But success here influences MLS success and vice versa. A young player development program for U.S. professionals is needed for the MLS to compete in the U.S. sport market and the international

football arena.

Project 40 will grab a few younger players before they enter college, but it doesn't really change the current development pipeline. ODP cannot compete with overseas professional development. Clubs have to be released to develop their own players and this means providing signing protection, perhaps a takeoff on the current "discovery" protection.

(Sources: 1984 Official North American Soccer League Guide; Soccer Industry Council stats; Statistical Abstract for the U.S.; Official Athletic College Guide; Mark Wheeler's Web page; Soccer America.)

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Please submit pieces that have not appeared in any other publication or on the internet.

All submissions for the June issue must be received by June 1, 1997

Smells Like the NASL

...Is MLS Treading the Same Dangerous Waters as it's Predecessor?

By RJ Routson & DR Zachowski

When the MLS season started last year, our hopes were high. We finally would have a first division soccer league in the good old US of A! Alas, as the season unfolded, it smelled more and more like the NASL high jinks than first division soccer. Here are some points to consider.

The NASL screwed around with rule changes in an attempt to make the game better. In the MLS, we have the return of the dreaded shootout if a game, heaven forbid, ends in a tie. For the love of PELE!!! What's wrong with a tie?!? Say the Clash comes roaring back from three goals down at half time to earn a tie, do we reward the effort with a well deserved point? Of course not! In the MLS, we go to a shootout and the winner brings home a point, with the loser getting nothing. No other first division league has such a stupid rule. It seems to us, the officials at MLS should reconsider the shootout and drop it off a high cliff. We urge you to send the MLS your opinion on the shootout.

The salary cap...does it exist or what? Another chapter from the NASL...if one salary cap amount is not enough, just raise it to a new level and keep draining more and more money from the league. Speaking of the cap, player rosters were changing faster than diapers in a maternity ward! New players were coming in from all over and the concept of discovery players seemed a bit strange.

The MLS powers now want to increase their rosters to 20 players and have added another foreign player to keep the level of play even. Last season standings show, as late into the season as 7/30/97, only the Revolution and Columbus were out of it. The teams were evenly matched and it is our belief that there are plenty of MLS caliber players in the USA.

By the way, "The Revolution Should Not Be

Televised" at anytime!

How about the huge fashion risk the MLS took last season? Sources tell us that Mazda had a crack team of investigators checking out the rotary engine logo. They were stalled by blinding colors of the L.A. uniform. Sunglasses, preferably welding goggles, may speed along their investigation.

The T.B. Mutiny is a joke! Can anyone explain their logo to me? Is it a spider or a refugee spacecraft from the Star Trek spin off shows? Does anybody have a clue? Does anybody care?

Next we have the Crew from that great manufacturing center Columbus, Ohio. The last time we were in that city the only plant we saw was a brewery! Yet here we have three hard hat dudes with Pittsburgh colors.

The Revolution had a good idea with the flag logo, but what happened to the uniform? The fashion police have issued a summons to the designers of the MLS uniforms for numerous visual violations. Rumor has it, a settlement was reached and the result are the uniforms you see today. Oh boy! We can't wait to update you on those puppies.

What is this I hear from the city of brotherly love? They want a new stadium and the MLS can play in it if and when it is built? Playing dates for the MLS team will come after the Eagles and Phillies set their schedules. Let's hope the MLS doesn't let too much money fall down that drain.

One of the best run professional franchises is the Rochester Raging Rhinos. They have blended indoor and outdoor players into an exciting team with an attacking style of play. The Rochester model could - should be checked out by the MLS leaders if they didn't see enough of the A-league Rhinos beating MLS teams Tampa Bay Mutiny or Colorado Rapids in the US Open Cup!

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"Feel The Kick!"

...A Weekly TV Show and a National Radio Show Dedicated to Soccer? It's True!

By Mark Spacone

The first time I heard of Soccer Sam, my brother and I were at a Rochester Rhinos game doing a Sam's Army flyer campaign. We were decked out in our Sam's Army T's proudly spreading the word about what we were up to. Just about every person who saw our T's would mention something about Soccer Sam. The whole day was then dedicated to explaining we were not Soccer Sam's Army. Seemed everyone but us knew who this guy was. We had to find out!

Turns out, Soccer Sam (a.k.a. Sam Fantauzzo) is a true soccer nut in every sense of the word. He is so well known in the Western NY area because he produces a weekly half hour TV show and a weekly one hour radio show, both dedicated to soccer. They are not highlight shows and as Soccer Sam explains, they are, "A cross between 'Waynes World' and 'Wide World of Sports'." The idea behind both shows is to promote soccer and have fun doing it.

It all began back in 1995, as Commissioner of the Irondequoit soccer league, Sam Fantauzzo produced a 2 hour all star soccer game which aired around Thanksgiving of that year on Rochester cable's public access channel. The response was huge and Sam's alter-ego, "Soccer Sam" was born.

Because of the tremendous response and support from the first show, Soccer Sam pitched the idea of a one hour spot to be aired each week on public access. As Sam explains, "They (Time Warner cable) thought I was crazy." Seems crazy is exactly what was needed because the Soccer Sam Show is off of public access and has become a weekly half hour show (10pm Friday's and 12:30pm Saturday's) on the "WB" network in Rochester. They have also received a spot on Buffalo's suburban public access cable station (Adelphia/Ch. 18) on Sunday's at 5:30pm. The TV show's success has spawned a one hour NATIONAL call in Soccer Radio Show (Saturday's at 10:05am) 1280 am in Rochester.

The radio show is certainly the first national soccer call in show in this country and may even be the first world wide call in soccer show. Anyone with internet access, can listen to the Soccer Sam radio program live or down load it from the web at a later date. Call in's are welcomed with open arms. "The phone board lights up" with calls during the radio show, explains Sam. Each week features guest callers from the national teams, MLS, A-League, etc...

My favorite highlight of the radio show occurred when Preki was a call in guest. I was on my way to Richmond, VA for the World Cup qualifier between the U.S. and Trinidad. Preki, a naturalized citizen, was about to earn his second cap as a national team player. The interview was fun and informative, but I nearly swerved into the opposite lane of traffic because I was laughing so hard when Soccer Sam asked Preki to name the first American President. After a few seconds of silence, Preki (being a good sport about the whole thing) sheepishly replied, "Ah, George Washington?" The studio erupted with applause and I had to pull over and wipe the tears out of my eyes from laughter.

To listen live using the technology of RealAudio or to call into the show, type in www.soccersam.com on your web browser and click on the radio broadcast. You may call into the show during the live broadcast on Saturday morning by telephoning: **716-222-1280**.

Soccer Sam has had a passion for the game since he was a kid attending Rochester Lancer games during the days of the NASL. "My dad and my uncle took me to my first game when I was 12 and I never missed a game from that point on," explains Sam. The bug has stayed with him since as a player, coach, and commissioner of a 500 member adult league. As owner/operator of Rochester Pizza Products, Sam has been working double time keeping his business and the Soccer Sam shows rolling. "It's a labor of love," he says, "It's fun promoting the game I love."

This love for the game is evident in the work Sam has done in getting both a TV and radio show off the ground. It is becoming so successful, a push is being made to syndicate the TV show. Matt Cox, Marketing Director of the Raging Rhinos (Rochester's A-league franchise), understands the impact Soccer Sam has made in the Rochester community saying, "Everything Soccer Sam does is an asset to us...He brings back the passion for the game..."

With help from his wife Linda, his small staff (John Catalano, John Camelio, and Cindy Wallace), and his host of characters (Chris "Chili Pepper" Futbol, Brother Anthony, Rocco The Barber, Vic "The Squid" Calimari, and Jacky-O) that appear on the show every week, Sam is forging a soccer trail that has never been traveled in this country. All you need to do now is call into the radio show and see exactly what Soccer Sam is up to.

Fanzine - Mania

...Independent Soccer Publications Help Create American Soccer "Culture"

By Mark Spacone

Since 1994, soccer fanzine publication has been on the rise all across the world and especially here in the U.S. Starved for information on the sport, soccer fans have taken a bold step to become their own outlet for soccer news.

Computers, the growth of the internet and strides in copy machine technology have enabled the amateur publisher, with an undying love for the game, to gather information, lay it out on their home computer, and xerox enough copies of their unique publication to distribute to other fans around the country.

Because of this, soccer is taking hold at the grass roots level in the U.S. Fans are now getting a healthy diet of news, match reports, event information, and candid editorials from independent soccer fanzines because such information is so badly ignored by the main stream press. Not to mention each fanzine establishes a forum for fans to address any area of the game that they desire. Be it praise or criticism, the written contributions are passionate, opinionated, and come straight from the mouth of the soccer community. Hence the name, "Fanzine." They are magazines produced by the fan.

There are now many independent publications out there offering coverage on soccer events. Be it the national teams, MLS, A-League, USISL, or amateur games, there is a fanzine out there that touches all or part of that spectrum.

With the simplicity in production of 'zines and the start of MLS, these publications have sprouted up in just about every MLS city, creating a soccer culture

drastically missing in this country for 50 years or more.

Shawn Ferdinand, editor and publisher of, "All Played Out" (a publication geared towards MLS) believes, "Fanzines familiarize fans with soccer traditions...that soccer fans should participate at matches." He continues, "Fanzines are important because soccer people are publishing them rather than business people who know little about the sport." Because of this, there is more care given to fanzine content as compared to major publications that wouldn't think twice about leaving soccer news on the editing room floor.

Frank Dell'Apa, editor of the first American fanzine, "Alive and Kicking" and current sports writer for the "Boston Globe" feels fanzines produce, "Great, spontaneous stuff. They capture the essence of the game." He went on to say because of fanzines, "Soccer fans are more sophisticated now and they should be respected for their knowledge."

Dell'Apa also agrees that fanzines have become sort of an educational tool, in that, fans are learning about soccer culture and how to act at matches. Back in the days of NASL, he recounts, "Fans saw their input as going to the game was enough...Fans now know how to participate at the game. They don't want to be told how to cheer, they want to generate their own fun."

Soccer fans are now clamoring to get their hands on every and any independent soccer publication out there. Both for the information value and the collectible value.

Independent fanzines have also been effective in converting and introducing non fans to a world of

passion not associated with the big three American sports.

The first known fanzine, as mentioned, "Alive and Kicking" appeared in the U.S. prior to USA'94. It was published by Frank Dell'Apa and his wife Joan Wilder. It attempted to create a stir about the game and the World Cup which took the country by storm. Despite the good intentions, decent writing, and care given to the sport by the writers, it (sadly) went in and out of production just as quickly as the event it was trying to hype.

In 1994, the soccer bug had turned into a flu for John Wright and myself and as John likes to say, "The inebriated idea of publishing a fanzine" became a sobering reality. The first issue of "Bookable Offense" was published that October and has continued since.

The following fanzines are currently published in the U.S. "There is good stuff out there. Fanzines don't bump into each other there is so much variety out there." says Dell'Apa. They combine MLS news, national news, and humor. A sense of humor is a prerequisite for reading the following 'zines and the easily offended may not want to subscribe.

"All Played Out: Frayed Nerves in Major League Soccer"(The name should give you a good idea of what this fanzine is about)

Write to Shawn Ferdinand at:
97 Wild Orchid Crescent
Markham, Ontario L6C 1X1 Canada

"The Stars and Beyond"

This is a fanzine geared towards the NY MetroStars and its publishing quality is very good. A sub-
(Continued on P. 24)

What Ever Happened To.... Fernando Clavejo?



Who Gives A Toss?!?

(Ed's: Well....will we get any hate mail for this months selection....yeah, maybe from Bora!)

Believe It or Don't!

An interesting story has developed over the past month. It seems the finding of German born Michael Mason for the U.S. national team had ties to Sam's Army. It was reported in a few papers that a Sammer e-mailed Steve Sampson to let him know Mason, who plays for Hamburg in the German Bundesliga and who's father is American (thus allowing him to play for either Germany or the U.S., but not both), exists. On a tour to see his European based players, coach Sampson went to check out Mason. The rest they say is history as Mason became a naturalized U.S. citizen and made his debut for the U.S. national team against Canada on March 23, 1997. If this sounds strange, Sampson may just do the same for Michael's twin brother Marco who plays in the German third division. Whoever that unidentified Sammer was, keep up the good work! Its enough to try and get people to sing at U.S. matches, but now we have to recruit as well.....Believe It or Don't!

WHAT HAVE WE DONE?!?



Back in June'95, something occurred that would forever change the face of U.S. soccer. The debut of Sam's Army. The adjacent photo shows the very first contingent of Sammers to ever attend a match. Coincidentally, that match took place at Foxboro Stadium (US Cup'95 U.S. v Nigeria) where the U.S. must return to play a qualifier against Mexico on April 20th. Sam's Army is returning to Foxboro as well and yes the main group in that photo will be there, but so will 600 others who have joined us since this whole crazy thing started. Who was it that once said, "What a long strange trip its been?" Our goal of an entire endzone full of Sammers has yet to be achieved, but we are on the way!!!

...news and notes

Compiled by J.W. & M.S.

Did you ever wonder why the clock and score graphics are continuously on the screen during **ESPN's** telecasts of MLS and national team matches? Why? They just clutter the screen and obstruct the view of the match. Leave the sponsors logo there, but when is a genius in production going to come up with the idea of flashing the clock and score every ten minutes rather than throughout the entire match?!?...With USA players, coaches, and administrators in utter disbelief about the lack of U.S. fans at home W.C. Qualifiers (i.e., US/Guatemala last November), it's time for **Segregated Ticketing** to be introduced to the American public. Instead of having already silenced American fans scattered through out the crowd amongst the louder, more boisterous opposing fans, lets get like minded fans sitting together in the same sections. Yes, it might blow the USSF's bubble, infringing on their "family atmosphere" with, "Everyone-gets-along-in-American-Stadiums-with-a-rah-rah-feel-to-the-game." Yeah right! The atmosphere has been awful and needs a drastic look into. That's all that needs to be done. We don't need police lines between the groups (people can move freely like they should), but the majority of fans will stick with their own fans. At least American fans will be able to cheer a home goal instead of getting snarling looks from the away fans behind you, in front of you, and on both sides of you...Shame about **Tab Ramos**, he will be sorely missed in the midfield. It's a safe bet that we'll qualify anyway, but let's pray he's healed up in time for crunch games "South Of The Boarder" and Costa Rica.

We all know this is his last WC, let's hope he's responsible for helping us get there...Speaking of atmosphere at games, where are the small **Flags** on sale at games? These would light up the crowd. But no, the USSF cronies continue to pawn off the same old merchandise that no real fan would ever consider. Does the USSF ever do research? Or ask the fans what they would like? How much longer are fans going to put up with whatever the USSF says? Probably as long as we sit and keep peaceful and quite. Maybe when there is no Sam's Army presence at home games they will have a look...The schedule for the **Hexagonals** (final round of WC qualifying for CONCACAF) has come out and with three games in March, one in April, one in June, then resuming with one in September/October, and three in November, it is obvious CONCACAF thinks highly of MLS given that no games are taking place during the bulk of the season. Step a side Mexican League and leave the cases of Tecate and Corona behind. We're taking over the joint!...**El Salvador**, I'd be the first one on the plane to Costa Rica, Mexico, or any other Central American nation, except this one. Even other *Centro-Americanos* think they are the worst behaved, most thuggish fans on the planet. Their behavior in Anaheim from their ex-pat community during the '96 Gold Cup was disgraceful. Imagine what they'd do to any traveling away fan in their own country, with a WC berth at stake...Speaking of El Salvador, (from John McCall) Part of **Sam's Army History** was torn down. Construction crews



PHOTO © 1996 David Rollis

Photo: Tab Ramos, in action against Trinidad and Tobago, is sorely missed in the Hexagonal's.

(maybe they were from Columbus) disassembled the upper level of the northern end of Anaheim Stadium. The stadium is being converted to baseball only, and the capacity is being reduced. Last January, Sam's Army was on the lower level of the north end of the stadium when Salvadoran's up on the now disappeared upper level expressed their displeasure at the results by raining batteries, hot dogs, and other items (I shouldn't mention in case there are kids reading) onto the heads of Sammers below. Please correct me if I'm wrong, but it was the first time that American soccer fans were attacked, as opposed to being laughed at or pitied. Truly a historic evening.....Just what has happened to the Strike Force from **Trinidad and Tobago**? They were a goal away from qualifying for Italia'90, we're robbed of a place in the W. Germany WC in '74 by dodgy refereeing, and have won the Shell Cup two times on the trot. Now they go out of WC qualifying without a win with the national team in disarray on the field and off. Yeah, we were lucky to win on that epic away encounter in 1989, but other than that, they have been merely a reflection of what Caribbean football is all about. Inferior technique, poor coaching, and a limited source of players to draw from, coupled with no professional league, will do nothing even in perhaps the easiest region to qualify from, CONCACAF. A 1 million plus nation should not be expected to pull off miracles. So lets stop the fluffy, dreamy love affair with the islanders and their calypso. T&T stink and they would bring nothing to any WC, well dancing females, maybe...I got a look in at a recent appearance of **Kasey Keller** and **Juergen Sommer** on Sky TV's "Soccer AM." The boy's had so many unoffensive, political answers about MLS, you'd have thought Sunil Gulati reached into the coffers and wired them a fast endorsement payment. They both thought the media coverage of the game was "good" and "getting better." Huh?!? Guy's, you've been in England far too long. The media coverage is ghastly! When every man, woman, and child in America know the names of some MLS teams, maybe, maybe we will believe you. Naw, when every man, woman, and child know that there is a professional soccer league in existence in the USA, maybe we will believe you. The letters of the alphabet begin with M...L...S.....Yes, the second MLS season is upon us and you would think the useless chatter by **T V Analyst's** would have diminished during the game this season. Sorry to say, but we still hear the blabbering of commentators when the ball is anywhere between the two penalty areas. Only when the ball has crossed the 18 yard line do the analysts begin to call the action. The only way to understand this problem is to watch a MetroStars match on the tube when they are playing on artificial turf. Just try to distinguish which players have the ball at mid field or which player just made a great move. The grid iron lines on the field make it impossible to do it from home and the analysts don't care to tell us. They assume the viewer doesn't want to know because they believe talking about Matt Knowles going to high school with Mia Hamm's cousin or Doctor Khumalo not being a real doctor is more interesting than the actual game. **WHO CARES!!! CALL THE GAME!!!**...While we are talking about TV, why doesn't MLS sell the rights to televise matches to **CBS** rather than pay for air time on ESPN? The CBS sports department must be near death losing the NFL and having to rely on NASCAR and Golf. An agreement like this would be beneficial to both parties. MLS would save millions because they would no longer have to pay the ignoramuses at ESPN; soccer would then be accessible to anyone with a TV (you don't need cable to get CBS); and MLS would even stand to make a buck or two if they were to sell the TV rights to CBS for, well, a buck or two! CBS would certainly be able to turn a profit off of soccer if the price for the rights was low enough and with a vested interest in the sport CBS would certainly market and treat soccer with the dignity it deserves, unlike ESPN. Imagine, we may even see a post game show (somebody wake me up!)...The biggest rumor, however, is that **Rupert Murdoch** may make a play for MLS rights next year. Start saying your prayers that this doesn't happen because Murdoch will no doubt turn MLS into a pay per view venture. What a mistake that would be for soccer, the fans, MLS, and Murdoch! How many people will actually be willing to lay down \$\$\$ to watch MLS per match?!? My guess is even less than those who watch MLS now for the price of their cable bill...Did you ever wonder why the term "**Long Ball**" has become taboo but "direct game" is so much more acceptable? They look one in the same, ah, maybe its me...Have you noticed how the **NFL** this past Super Bowl and the year before began presenting the trophy on the field rather than in the locker room? Seems to me they took this time honored soccer tradition right from the World Cup, FA Cup, UEFA Cups, and other tournaments!!!...Its great having to watch half of MLS matches and most U.S. national team away matches on **Univision** when we don't understand a lick of Spanish. What a great way to market the game to the mainstream American soccer public, throw soccer on a foreign language station...genius...pure genius!!!

(Fanzines Cont. From P. 20)
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All Checks, Money Orders, and International Money Orders should be made payable to Ron Ferguson and should be sent to: The Stares and Beyond
PO Box #220
Long Valley, NJ 07853
"Pictures of Chairman Mao"

A great name for a great fanzine. It is a publication put out by New England Revolution fans (get it... ..Revolution...Chairman Mao...). It is published 8 times per year and a subscription is:
U.S. \$12.00, Canada \$18.00 (U.S.), Europe \$25.00 (U.S.) All Checks, Money Orders, and International Money Orders should be made payable to Guy Keeley and sent to: Pictures of Chairman Mao
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"Bazaar Times"
This is a fanzine put out by the Clash supporters club, The Casbah. Subscriptions are available by sending \$12.00 for 6 issues to:
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A sample copy may be obtained by sending a SASE to: Dave Bohn
3421 El Camino Real#3
Atherton, CA 94027.

"Time Sheet"
A fanzine geared toward Columbus Crew fans. It comes out monthly (during the season). For a copy, send a dollar per issue to:Time Sheet c/o Matt Bernhardt
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Columbus, OH 43201

"A Kick In The Ass"
When they publish this fanzine, it is one of the funniest looks at soccer

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P.O. Box 250397
NYC, NY 10025

"From The Nest"
D.C. United supporters club The Screaming Eagles are beginning this fanzine tentatively named "From The Nest." For subscription info, write to:
Screaming Eagles
499 National Press Building
Washington, DC 20045

If you would like to have your fanzine listed in future issues of "B.O." then send us a copy, as well as, subscription info to:
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Amherst, NY 14226-1606

(Hexagonals Cont. From p. 6)
and with the CR coach (whoever it was that week) deciding to first protect the 2-1 lead by substituting Medford and then protecting a 2-2 tie when the U.S. drew level again by substituting Wanchope (I thought this guy signed his death wish by taking the two most effective players off when the game was still very close...at least on the score sheet), Sampson answered by bringing in Peter Vermes for Claudio Reyna. Yes, Peter Vermes, the guy who was so looking forward to that bank teller job before the start of MLS. Reyna had a horrible game, but Vermes couldn't have added anything to the U.S. game plan on Reyna's worst day! Where was Sorber? The result was CR getting the winner and although Lalas is pointed to as the man who was smoked (yes, he was) the play actually began when Harkes lost possession about 30 yards out and Vermes did a great impression of a pylon as Wallace blew by him just outside the penalty area.

Each time the U.S. equalized, you could see the pressure mounting on

the CR players. The U.S. had chances to take control. At times, they moved the ball o.k., but with errand passes (when I say errand, I mean right to the feet of the opposition...it was incredible!) by Harkes, Reyna, and others, the spark went out as quickly as it was ignited. Given also that CR went into a shell to protect a lead and then save a tie by pulling out Medford and Wanchope it was evident how the U.S., barely holding there own, was frustrating CR. But when you bring in Peter Vermes and do not have the ability to string together three decent passes, you are going to lose.

Many people are pointing at Sampson, but does he have anything to work with anymore? The MLS based players are not providing anything for him because they are mired in a crappy league. Harkes has played one decent half (against Trinidad and Tobago in Richmond, VA) in the past year. Cobi Jones has lost all of what he learned in England, and players like Tony Sanneh and Peter Vermes will only expedite Sampsons departure as U.S. coach. Its no wonder Sampson has brought in players like David Wagner and Michael Mason (naturalized Americans) to boost the performance of the team. He has to in order to shake the cob webs out of the MLS core players, but if he continues to use throw backs like Vermes and call up has beens like John Doyle, then Sampson will have nobody to blame for those decisions but himself.

At the expense of being redundant, MLS is not doing our national team any good. The last three matches prove that. Rumor has it Padova is interested in Wynalda. Let him go! In fact, our MLS based national team players should pay their clubs to ship them abroad. Its the only way the U.S. will regain the form that saw a great run of victories over teams like Argentina and domination of Mexico.

Your Letters:

Dear B.O.:

As John Wright wrote in issue #6, the Euro96 hype certainly paid off. That's if one is to believe his astonishingly off-beam remarks about crowd behavior. For the record, at least three organized group attacks were made on Scottish fans in London, one of them a large-scale effort which involved surrounding Trafalgar Square, plus a large number of isolated incidents. I - with my wife - was subjected to abuse, as well as other incidents I witnessed, and many have written to me since about what happened to them.

But this pales into insignificance beside what happened after Germany's victory over the E***ish (I should explain - my computer now has a facility which prevents printing of obscene words which might upset small children). There were riots in at least 15 *ng*is* towns. There was thousands of pounds worth of damage to cars (guess which makes?), houses and public facilities. Innocent German families-tourists who knew nothing of the game-were attacked. In short, same old story: Bad losers, bad winners.

And now they have the gall to cite this 'triumph' as justification for a World Cup bid. This, after Germany supported their Euro96 application on the under-standing of reciprocal support for a German bid for WC 2006.

What I find unforgivable in John's article, though, is his matter-of-fact description of a Scots fan being shoved around by surrounding Eng**** fans after they scored. So that's all right then? NO IT BLOODY WELL ISN'T. That isn't what international football is all about, it's a disgrace and should be utterly condemned. What

was a Scots fan doing among the ***lish, you may ask. I'll tell you - there were many, and they had no choice. For a match for which in the past the Scots would normally take up more than 90,000 tickets, we were officially offered about 10,000 LESS than other teams who came from afar and brought little to no support.

The conclusion is that En***sh 'fans' have no concept of what motivates supporters of other international teams - the friendly atmosphere which, ironically, John describes so well in his other article. Two qualifiers outside London, things were not so bad - we were well received in Birmingham; and for the future, I really do hope that E*g*i*h fans learned from what they saw among other supporters. Yes, we did applaud them back. I'm still washing my hands.

We had a fine old time with the Brummies, the Swiss and our old mates the Dutch. But aside from all that, the quality of football was 95% pish, and excitement levels accordingly dire. The whole thing was duff: negative games, many empty stadia, too many penalties and all played out against a background of hysterical xenophobia in the *n*I*s* press. Don't believe the hype. P.S. For full Euro96 trip reports check out the Tartan Army pages on www.ontonet.be/~ont082/tartan.html

Kenny Bell
San Jose, Costa Rica

Dear B.O.:

You Scum! Desmond Armstrong played his ass off for the USA! He played out of position, covering at sweeper, after Balboa got hurt in the run-up to USA'94. This hurt his chances for playing in the World

Cup, but he did it for the good of the team.

Admittedly, he lacks the "skills" (whining, face-spitting) of some "more" famous players, but he deserves a lot better than, "Whatever Happened To - Desmond Armstrong? Who Gives A Toss" in B.O. #6.

Chris Svendsgaard
Pearl River, New York

Dear B.O./Sam's Army:

I am a poor college student with a passion for soccer. Lately I feel that the soccer world has passed me by. I live in Gainesville, FL, a town that recognizes football as the only sport. I have become fed up with the Gators and whatever championship they won. I constantly wish these crazed Gator fans could be taught about the best game in the world - SOCCER.

I have made long drives to Orlando (for the Olympics), and also to Tampa (for MLS). I do not mind the long drives now and then, but every time I want to see a soccer game I have to drive more than two hours. When I receive information from MLS about upcoming games, the games have already been played because mail takes longer to get to me.

I have faithfully cheered for the U.S., but the U.S. plays most of their games up north or in California, never anywhere close to Florida. I know it is impossible for the U.S. to play in every state and every city. I just feel that I am not part of the team because I am so far away from every game.

I believe this might be why people are not soccer fans. If the sport doesn't come to them then they lose interest. Fans want to feel included and important, not like an outcast never allowed to watch.

Darcie Vance
Gainesville, FL

MVP Scarf Recipients:

At each U.S. national team home match, Sammers in the stands have begun a tradition of selecting an MVP player and presenting him with an MVP Sam's Army scarf. The custom scarf includes the date of the match and the opponent. The following players have received an MVP scarf (Who will get it on 4/20? That is yet to be determined...):

1-13-96	U.S. v Trinidad & Tobago (Gold Cup)	Eric Wynalda
1-16-96	U.S. v El Salvador (Gold Cup)	Marcelo Balboa
1-18-96	U.S. v Brazil (Gold Cup)	Mike Burns
5-26-96	U.S. v Scotland (Friendly)	Cobi Jones
6-9-96	U.S. v Ireland (US Cup)	Claudio Reyna
6-13-96	U.S. v Bolivia (US Cup)	Thomas Dooley
6-16-96	U.S. v Mexico (US Cup)	Brad Friedel
11-3-96	U.S. v Guatemala (WCQ)	Kasey Keller
11-10-96	U.S. v Trinidad & Tobago (WCQ)	Thomas Dooley
12-14-96	U.S. v Costa Rica (WCQ)	Jeff Agoos
3-16-97	U.S. v Canada (WCQ)	Ernie Stewart
4-20-97	U.S. v Mexico (WCQ)	????????????

U.S. World Cup '98 Qualifying Schedule:

- U.S. v Mexico. April 20, 1997
- U.S. at El Salvador. June 29, 1997
- U.S. v Costa Rica. September, 7 1997
- U.S. v Jamaica. October 3, 1997
- U.S. at Mexico. November 2, 1997
- U.S. at Canada November 9, 1997
- U.S. v El Salvador November 16, 1997

World Cup '98 Qualifying Standings in CONCACAF

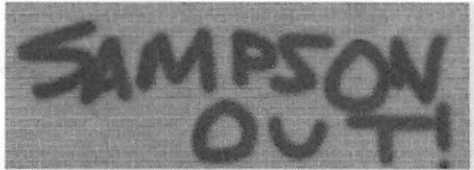
The Top Three Teams Advance to France Next Year:

Team	GP	W	T	L	GF	GA	P
Mexico	3	2	1	0	10	0	7
USA	3	1	1	1	5	3	4
Costa Rica	2	1	1	0	3	2	4
Jamaica	2	0	1	1	0	6	1
El Salvador	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
Canada	3	0	1	2	0	7	1

Cool Web Sites:

Mark Wheeler's Soccer Page:
www.cs.cmu.edu/~mdwheel/us-soccer/

Oliver Tse's Soccer On TV Page:
www.soccerTV.com



That's the writing on
the wall over at
Soccer America
Online,
where fans log on to
make their voices
heard on the
(Soccer) American
Graffiti wall.

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should he go?

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the debate at
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Soccer Photographers and reporters wanted for MLS matches. Call Shawn at "All Played Out" at: 905-887-5492

***Sports Historian** Seeking The Following* Media/Press Guides: NASL 1968, 1969, or 1984; MISL 1979/80 Contact: Inger Kuzych at 8336 Kings Ridge Ct Springfield, VA 22153

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\$3.25 ea., 6-11 \$3.00 ea., 12 \$2.75 ea.



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\$97 - \$128.....	\$7.00
\$129 - \$160.....	\$8.00
\$161 - \$192.....	\$9.00

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Shipping:				
2-3 day Priority Mail Add \$3				
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