

Six ways to liven up the World Cup

MARK SMITH

Sports Editor



Well, here we are sports fans. It's the middle of the summer (at least summer school) and things are looking pretty bleak.

Basketball just finished its season after two months of playoffs and football is another two months away. The sports world is stuck in limbo with only baseball and this crazy thing called the World Cup to tide us over.

Baseball's a good game. Both of the teams from the state of Texas are doing quite well. The Astros are in second place in the National League's Central Division, six games over .500 and 3 1/2 games behind division-leading Cincinnati.

The Rangers, meanwhile, are seven games under .500 and leading the American League Worst Division. Whoops, West Division. Sorry, must have slipped.

But baseball has been going on since April 4. The renewed interest in the grand old game is starting to waver. But the All-Star break is approaching, so maybe things will pick up a little.

It might be good for the World Cup to be here.

I'll admit that growing up in southeast Texas I did not do a whole lot to advance my knowledge of soccer. As matter of fact, the only thing I did know for sure about soccer until my junior year of high school was that you couldn't use your hands.

That's no fun. Well, you can't really appreciate a sport until you've tried to play it yourself. Intramurals can really broaden your horizons in that respect.

Soccer is an interesting game. It's appeal is that it presents almost constant action to the audience.

There are no timeouts or breaks for commercials. There is no seventh-inning stretch or pause for free throws.

There is just the round black and white spotted ball moving continuously around a huge, grass field.

The only drawback (and this is coming from an American who is used to watching basketball, baseball and football) is that the scoring is few and far between.

They should jazz it up a little. To do that they could adopt some rules from American sports.

• Rule 1 - Get rid of that silly off-sides rule. In American football, you don't see defensive backs complaining about their man being behind them when the quarterback threw the pass.

• Rule 2 - Hey, make them get it across mid-field in 10 seconds like in basketball. Soccer doesn't have enough fast breaks, they need a little incentive.

• Rule 3 - Install a 24 second shot clock. That way the shots on goal at the end of the game would be more like 68-54 than 13-10.

• Rule 4 - Make the goal the entire width of the field. It works in football.

• Rule 5 - Instead of allowing players to remain on the field after a yellow card, send them to a penalty box for two minutes. Then you could have power plays and man advantages.

• Rule 6 - If a player is fouled, let him have two free shots at the goal. That way the fans in the end zones can wave those cool balloons to distract the shooter.

One might think these rules would change the whole face of soccer. It wouldn't be the same game at all. But, hey, soccer doesn't need to entice more fans to the stadiums. The arenas are packed with fans that are wild and exuberant and defend the honor of their teams with great vehemence (as evidenced by the English fans.)

Maybe, the rest of the countries in the world realize something that offense-is-everything thinking Americans sometimes forget. Fan support is not indelibly linked to scoring.

Sure, fans come to see their team win, but they come to see how they win. The fans come to see the athleticism of the teams involved and say, "How do they do that?"

Slocum agrees with bowl changes

Constance Parten
THE BATTALION

Dallas may be losing the New Year's Day Cotton Bowl game after hosting the event for 58 years.

NCAA commissioners are reducing the number of college bowl games played on New Year's Day to only four starting in 1996. The Rose Bowl and three other bowl games will make up the New Year's Day Bowl Coalition.

This move will reduce postseason clutter and answer demands for a national playoff. Nine bowls submitted bids last week including the Cotton Bowl.

Texas A&M head football coach R.C. Slocum said the change will be very good for the teams and television networks.

"A New Year's Day bowl game used to be very prestigious," Slocum said. "The way it's set up now, fans can't watch all the teams they want to, and the networks lose money because they can't air all the games."

The Mobil Cotton Bowl Athletic Association bid \$12 million last week to make the Cotton Bowl part of the new coalition, but it may not be enough.

"...we need to go after the Cotton Bowl. If it's not in Dallas, it's just not the Cotton Bowl."

—Larry Duncan, Cotton Bowl council member

The leaders in the bidding so far are the Gator, Fiesta and Orange Bowls. Each of them bid more than twice the amount submitted by the Cotton Bowl.

They were able to do so in part because of an offer made by CBS.

CBS approached the three bowls with a \$300 million offer for a six year package. The offer would almost certainly assure CBS the chance to televise a title game each season.

Not only is the Cotton Bowl not competing financially to keep the game on New Year's Day, but political problems may move the Cotton Bowl out of Dallas completely.

Cotton Bowl Athletic Association president John Crawford was removed from the Dallas Sports and Entertainment Assessment Group last week.

Dallas Mayor Steve Bartlett removed Crawford after he had prepared a proposal to move the Cotton Bowl to Texas Stadium.

Crawford had prepared the proposal to move the Cotton Bowl to Irving without consulting fellow group members. This move is viewed by several Dallas leaders as a betrayal, especially now.

Dallas is currently trying to stave off attempts by suburban areas to attract two of their professional sports teams, the Stars and the Mavericks.

"It scares me that that might have been undermined too," council member Larry Duncan told the Dallas Morning News.

Coach Slocum said moving the game to Texas Stadium would be great for the fans and the teams.

"Texas Stadium offers a lot more than the Cotton Bowl," Slocum said.

"There is easier access to the stadium, and the fans will be completely out of the January weather if the plans to finish the roof go through."

Nevertheless, the Cotton Bowl needs Dallas and Dallas definitely needs the Cotton Bowl. The New Year's Day game attracts 25 million television viewers and brings roughly \$20 million into the local economy.

Dallas is willing to spend \$4 million on improvements to the stadium and add \$3 million to the Cotton Bowl Athletic Association's bid to the NCAA. But the Cotton Bowl would have to stay in Dallas.

"We can't afford to lose this one," Duncan said. "We need to regroup with folks we can trust...who still have a commitment to Dallas, Texas, and we need to go after the Cotton Bowl. If it's not in Dallas, it's just not the Cotton Bowl."

Aggies rich in superstitions

A&M baseball team uses personal rituals to hang on to their winning streaks

By Joshua Arterbury
THE BATTALION

A wise man once said, "You throw the ball, you hit the ball, you catch the ball." A seemingly simple definition of one of America's most revered games: baseball.

But his words, although trite to prove his point, were much deeper than their apparent intention. Baseball is more than just a boys game. Baseball is an institution rich with history, tradition and passion, fueled by the undying devotion of its players and the fanatics who follow it.

And with Divine Right...God gave us the religion of baseball. To have and to hold. To love and to cherish.

Glorious teams were built around the new-found religion to honor the baseball gods. Babe Ruth, Lou Gehrig, Mickey Mantle, Roger Maris, Willie Mays, Henry Aaron and Nolan Ryan were players that became martyrs for what they accomplished during their calls to duty.

And as a symbol of ultimate respect, the numbers they wore in heated battle for their cause stand alone, atop the columns of the hallowed parks they played in. And in turn, they become the baseball gods to which millions of fans pay homage each year in Cooperstown, New York.

And like other contemporary religions, baseball fans gather to pay respect in glorious cathedrals that the foul hearted refer to as stadiums. They are not simply "ball parks," rather they are designed inspirations for the congregations to gather and feel the religious epiphany of the sport they love.

The majestic beauty of baseball transcends that of a mere religious experience. It's a symbolic baptism of complete submergence into the entirety of baseball. And no one is immune to its glory.

Players and fans alike consume themselves with the love of winning and the hatred of losing.

As a result, the "boys of summer" have developed a series of personal rituals to keep their winning streaks alive and their losing streaks away.

Some call the antics of baseball players superstition, but others claim the rituals are part of baseball.

After all, every religion possesses certain rituals that involve the communion of body and spirit. But most teams opt for a more subtle approach to inspiration.

The Texas Aggie baseball team is full of rituals and superstitions that they use to hold on to their winning ways.

During the 1994 season the Aggies shared their team prayer exactly 18 minutes before the start of every game to ensure time for the baseball gods to make the appropriate adjustments before the first pitch.

Designated hitter Billy Harlan feels more comfortable when he respectfully places Will Clark's baseball card under his hat while he plays.

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Stew Milne/The Battalion

Where's the lifeguard?

Junior high and high school students attend swimming camp at Texas A&M. The campers workout, train and are videotaped to improve technique. The camps are a week long, Monday through Friday, and run all summer.

Germany ousts S. Korea

DALLAS (AP) — Germany, wilting from oppressive heat and the unwavering South Korean attack in the second half, barely held on for a 3-2 victory Monday to win its first-round game at the World Cup.

The defending champions took a 3-0 lead on two goals by Juergen Klinsmann and one by Karlheinz Riedle in the first 37 minutes.

They seemed ready to cruise into the next round by routing the Koreans, who never have won a World Cup game.

Then, in temperatures reaching 120 degrees at the Cotton Bowl, the Germans fell apart. South Korea, which was eliminated in Group C with an 0-1-2 record, pressed the attack and got goals from Hwang Sun-hong in the 52nd minute and Hong Myung-bo in the 63rd.

German goalkeeper Bodo Illgner made three stunning late saves to preserve the slim margin.

"We had luck in the end but the team fought all the way," German coach Berti Vogts said.

"In the second half our team was disorganized and the Koreans turned on incredible power. It was our mistakes that got them going. The German team fought hard and you can't blame them in that respect. But we were in a huge mess and that will need a critical analysis," Vogts said.

With his teammates visibly tired and rarely chasing down loose balls, Illgner dived to save shots from Ko Jeong-woon and Choi Young-il. He raced off the goal line to foil Seo Jung-won as the Koreans repeatedly tore the experienced German defense apart.

"In the first half we were intimidated by the Germans," said Korean coach Kim Ho. "But during the break I told them to play as in practice, to play normally."

With its victory, Germany guaranteed it will play July 2 at Chicago. By eliminating South Korea, it also assured the United States — if it advances — of playing at Stanford, Calif., in the second round against Brazil or Sweden.

Klinsmann scored the goal of the tournament in the 12th minute. Thomas Haessler passed from the right side and Klinsmann, with his back to the net, scooped the ball up with his right foot and hooked a waist-high left-footed volley inside the goalpost.



Box scores on Page 4

Sampras, Navratilova advance; Agassi defeated

WIMBLEDON, England (AP) — Top-seeded Pete Sampras, yet to lose a set in four matches, powered his way into the Wimbledon quarterfinals today, and Todd Martin thwarted a comeback bid by former champion Andre Agassi.

Michael Chang routed French Open champion Sergi Bruguera in a battle of baseliners, and four American women — led by Martina Navratilova — also charged into the quarterfinals. Navratilova, in her farewell Wimbledon at age 37, beat Helena Sukova 6-1, 6-2, slamming an ace on match point to

move a step closer to her 10th title.

Sampras defeated Daniel Vacek of the Czech Republic 6-4, 6-1, 7-6 (7-5) in only 87 minutes, the third time the defending champion was able to win a match in less than an hour and a half.

The sixth-seeded, reached the quarterfinals for the second straight year with a 6-3, 7-5, 6-7 (7-0), 4-6, 6-1 victory over Agassi, the No. 12 seed. Agassi, who won the title in 1992, had the crowd on its feet as he won the



fourth set. But Martin bore down in the fifth, winning the last game at love.

"He really raised his level of play," Agassi said of the last set. "He started taking big chances and it just seemed like it was working for him. I didn't really have an answer for him."

Though Martin hit 22 aces, he bristled at suggestions his play was one-dimensional.

"I won the match in all areas of my game, not just my serve," he said.

Fourth-seeded Goran Ivanisevic, another big server, lost his first set in four matches, but beat Alexander Volkov of Russia 7-6 (7-3), 7-6 (8-6), 4-6, 6-2.

Chang, a former French Open champion seeded 10th, dominated the eighth-seeded Bruguera 6-4, 7-6 (9-7), 6-0 to get past the fourth round for the first time in seven Wimbledons.

Chang will play Sampras in the quarterfinals, and Martin will play unseeded Wayne Ferreira of South Africa.

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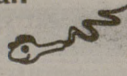
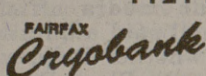
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