



Two Teams. Two Continents. Two World Championships. One excuse.

By Kerry Schmidt June 25, 2006

During the past week, the NBA Championship was decided in North America, and the World Cup, in Europa (using the European spelling since it is on their turf), readies for it's "round of 16."

While the final will not be until July 9, the WC is over for the USA. Again.

Let's see. How can I put it diplomatically? **THE US TEAM SUCKED!**

Now this should not surprise that many folks, were it for the buildup.

Madison Avenue spent the two months leading up to the tournament with a large and long ad campaign.

They very carefully molded, fine tuned and then marketed Team USA to everyone.

Magazines, newspapers, cover of "Sports Illustrated," TV galore and any other imaginable modem to brain wash us.

And to a good extent, we bought into the charade, hook, line and sinker.

It was like buying something from an old west snake oil salesman.

We were told we were a contender, but instead we got a skunk.

A crying, whining skunk at that.

By the time you read this, team USA is home, and should be in hiding.

They went 0-2-1. They had a total of four shots on goal in three games, with three of those coming against lowly Ghana.

Perhaps the team focused on the fact that USA was 0-9-1 in Europe.

They got two goals, but the one against Italy was inadvertently kicked in by an Italian player.

Then team USA further embarrassed themselves. Instead of admitting they sucked, they instead began a loud chorus, whining and crying and trying to tell us that they were robbed by bad and prejudicial officiating, among other complaints.

Only in the first game, a lackadaisical, skunk-smelling 3-0 loss to the Czech Republic, did they actually admit that "we did not play like we should have played," said Coach Bruce Arena.

Now there's an understatement.

Only veteran player Eddie Lewis was forthright when he said "...we didn't do a good enough job creating chances and scoring goals." WOW. Glad you told us. We would have kept on wondering.

But other than those two comments, all you heard were excuses. And they were many and loud.

In the 1-1 tie versus Italy, hardly a mention was made that they did not even score their own goal. All Arena said, with some players echoing his comments, was they lost mainly because of bad referee's call.

USA's Eddie Pope was called for two quick yellow cards and thus ejected from the game. Yes, the second call was questionable at best, but to say that one bad call ruined and/or cost them the game? Give me a break!



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Game three. In injury time at the end of the first half, Ghana was given a penalty kick (and scored the winning goal) on another very questionable call by German referee Markus Merk. I guess he was still P.O.'d about losing the war.

One of USA's stars, Landon Donovan went so far as to cry, "I don't want to be a conspiracy theorist "...but in a hundred years, that's (the call) never a penalty kick." Not finished, he added, "I think he had it in for Oguchi (Onyew), because he's so big" (6'4" to the fouled Ghana player who is 5'2")."

Still not done whining, he said, "It's ironic that a German kicks us out of the tournament" I guess he was referring to Germany, fairly, defeating the USA in 2002, thus sending them home.

Note: If you watch the replay, late in the game, Donovan received the ball in front of the Ghana goal with a huge gap open for him to likely score (the replays were many, cementing this fact. Instead, he dribbled three more times, then passed the ball to Claudia Reyna, who quickly lost it. Huge error. Maybe the ref should have yellow-flagged him for stupidity.

Studio Analyst Marcelo Balboa (yo Adrian) sternly stated, "There is no way you lose that ball," and fellow analyst Eric Wynalda called it "a horrible mistake."

As to conspiracy man, Donovan, analyst Tommy Smyth said of him, "He really blew an opportunity to tie the game. He just did not step up."

No wonder Donovan cried and whined the loudest and longest. He sucked more than most.

In every sport you have questionable calls, as Dallas fans (see below) will claim, as well as many an NFL fan. And yes, soccer is a game where the refs do play a huge part, where they can – and in the past have been caught – influence and/or dictate the outcome of a game.

But to try to convince us that our boys (whiney babies) were robbed by prejudice and bad officiating is pure sour grapes. The fact that team USA (Useless, Self-centered Asses) played so poorly was clear. That alone embarrasses us to no end, but to then try to convince us they were not to blame, that victories were taken away from them, is an insult to our common sense.

For those who did not watch at all (probably most of you, if you were smart), you just may have been gullible enough to buy into it.

Do not be so deceived. They flat out choked, sucked and stunk out the place.

I do not know what we will do for 2012, but don't be sucked in by idiotic hype, and please, whoever is on the future team, don't make a fool of yourselves. Own up to your faults. At least you will save some dignity.

PATHETIC!

Not as bad, but the Dallas Mavericks did a pretty good imitation of our soccer losers.

Even after they won the first two games, they complained about the officiating.

But then when they started losing, well, it was ALL the ref's fault!

The truth is, they just choked down the stretch.

Look at the stats. Dallas jumped out to leads – some very big – in the four games they lost. They shot nearly 50% in the first half of those four games.



But in the third quarters, they shot 39%, and in the deciding fourth quarter, they were at 29%

One TV analyst said that in the final two minutes of those four losses, the Mavs shot a horrible 16%.

That, my friends, is called choking. Big time.

To all Mavericks' fans, I was neutral in this series. I have met Shaq several times and he is a great guy. But Mavs Coach Avery Johnson is a good ole Nawleeeeeeeens boy, so homey there.

Yes, Dallas just flat out choked, and like their soccer whiners above, it was all the refs fault.

In game three, after blowing a 13-point lead (choke city) with 6:34 left, the coach and players whined long and loud about bad calls. None in particular, just bad officiating. Never mind that in the closing seconds, Nowitzki missed a crucial free throw with three seconds left that would have tied the game. Choke, baby.

In the closing minutes in overtime of game 5, after Dallas had blown a 16 point lead, the refs stole the game (and the championship) from them in the last two seconds.

With 1.9 seconds left, MVP Dwayne Wade drove through three Mavs, including Dirk (Caption Cry Baby) Nowitzki, who was called for a foul.

While replays clearly showed he was hacked on the arm – look at how the ball dramatically changed directions – Dallas, whined like never before.

Wade hit both free throws for a 1-point lead.

Then, after Wade had hit the first, Johnson wildly gave the time out sign to one of his players. He kept doing so for 3-4 seconds. After getting the TO sign “not once, but twice,” according to the ref, he called time out. This was after the first shot, but before the second and it was their final time out, meaning they would have to take the ball the full court.

Well, Johnson (AKA Squeaky) was still screaming the next day, saying the ref should have “clearly known” that he meant for the TO too be after Wade’s second shot. Yes, refs must be mind readers!

After the game, analyst Scottie Pippen – he of the 6-championship rings – said, “Two of the three players Wade drove through both fouled him. Nowitzki’s was too obvious to not call.

And of the time out, Pippen and all his colleagues were unanimous in casting the blame on Johnson.

“He (Johnson) kept giving the (TO) signal, but he never verbally yelled to his young player that he wanted it taken after the second foul shot,” he said.

Then he added, “In all my years, when the coach signaled for the TO, he loudly verbalized it to the intended player. Just giving the sign to a young player in the final seconds of a tight playoff game is not enough. You can’t expect the player to know when he wanted the TO, so the blame clearly goes to (Johnson) there.”

No matter. Cry and whine, blame it on the refs.

Forget that you blew the 13-point lead late in the game.

Forget that Nowitzki, a 90% free throw shooter, hit but 3 of 7 in those closing minutes. If he had hit just hit 5 of 7, Mavs win and are up three games to two.



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Wade, on the other hand, also shot seven free throws down the stretch. He made all seven.

Doesn't matter, according to the Mavs' magical mentality.

After the game, Mavs' owner Mark Cuban gave an alleged profanity laced speech to not only the refs, but to NBA Commissioner David Stern, who was in attendance.

Cost Cuban \$250,000.

NOTE: Remember that Cuban was wearing Jerry Stackhouse's jersey for game five.

Stackhouse was suspended for the game due to a flagrant foul on Shaq. If Stackhouse just hits Shaq with his chest and shoulders, as he did initially, no problem. But clearly you could see him throw a forearm shiver that would make an NFL lineman proud.

The analysts predicted that Stackhouse should, and would be suspended

No way the Mavs screamed.

Cameras followed Nowitzki into the tunnel and we saw him kick a stationary bike and a table. Cute.

Maybe we should send him back to his own country, Germany, so he can beat us.

Forget that Dallas, once again, blew a large lead in deciding game six.

Bottom line: It's not how you start, it's how you finish. In all six games, the Mavs took a good early lead, but in the final four, they flat out blew it.

Just **CHOK**E, baby, just **CHOK**E, to paraphrase Oakland owner Al Davis.

So, you had one international choke and whine episode by our soccer team, thus embarrassing our entire country for all the world to see.

At least in the Mavericks' case, they only embarrassed themselves.

And, since the WC was on, probably no one outside the USA saw their pitiful blame game.

That's a good thing, since the whole world saw the "Giant USA" at its worst behavior.

Oh well, in a couple of months the NFL will start up, and losing fans and players can blame the refs every week.

Still unable to partake of my single malt, but soon.