



NOT WELCOME: Galaxy fans don't mince words. KEVORK DJANSEZIAN/GETTY IMAGE

Boo him like Beckham

Galaxy fans not appreciative of soccer celebrity's lack of dedication to MLS

MIAMI (Reuters)—He was supposed to be the man who would take soccer in the U.S. to the next level yet David Beckham is in danger of becoming an embarrassing liability to the game in the country.

On a weekend when 65,000 people turned out for a friendly match in Seattle, 82,000 watched a Gold Cup game in Dallas, and the U.S. national team continued their impressive form with another victory, the soccer news was all about Beckham being booed by his own fans.

The fans wrote their own headlines—"Go Home Fraud" read one bluntly worded banner draped over a section of the Galaxy stadium while another made the point in a more eloquent manner: "Hey Becks, here before you, here after you, here despite you."

American soccer fans were not supposed to be following L.A. Galaxy despite Beckham—the plan was they would fall in love with the team because of the celebrity midfielder.

A significant section of the L.A. fans have turned against Beckham for one simple reason—he turned his back on them.

Beckham's decision to spend the Major League Soccer (MLS) off-season, from January to March, playing on loan for AC Milan in Italy, was grudgingly accepted at the time it was announced. When he decided to stay until the end of the Serie A season and so miss the first half of the MLS campaign it was a different matter.

Sports pundit Jay Mariotti, a regular on radio and television sports talk shows, wrote on Monday: "Beckham came here two years ago intending to lift Major League Soccer to unprecedented heights, but when



SALUTE THE CROWD: David Beckham still saluted the crowd despite its less than warm welcome last Sunday night. GABRIEL BOUYS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

he abruptly abandoned his stated mission in January for more prestigious duty in his native Europe, his purported goal became phony and rather pathetic."

Perhaps, the 34-year-old could have patched up things with his fans, and other supporters of the game in the U.S., if he had returned and apologized for letting them down.

Instead Beckham, whose professionalism and commitment had been questioned by his teammate Landon Donovan, in a new book, thought that making up with Donovan would be enough of a gesture.

It clearly was not.

LOAN DEAL
On his return, Beckham could have

told the L.A. fans: "I am sorry for letting you and the team down but I really felt I needed to finish the season in Italy. Now though I am back with you and 100 percent committed to this club."

He could not say that, however, as he is already eyeing another six-month loan deal to Europe, perhaps to Milan, perhaps to an English team.

"At the moment all I'm concentrating on is being part of this team (L.A.) and being successful with this team. Once the season is over, then I will decide and decide what I do from then on," he said last week.

It is hardly the kind of talk to convince fans he really cares about the long-term future of their team.

What is occupying Beckham's

mind is the need to keep himself in the good books of England manager Fabio Capello, who the midfielder says wants to see him playing in Europe before next year's World Cup in South Africa.

"Leading up to the World Cup, the England manager has made it very clear to me that I need to be playing at a European level," he told reporters last week. "So I will do everything possible... I'll always regret it if I didn't do everything and to give myself a chance to be involved in that."

The puzzling aspect is why, if Beckham's number one priority is playing for England in the World Cup, he chose to come and play in MLS at all?

Perhaps it was the appointment of Capello that changed things, in which case, why has Beckham not sought a permanent transfer away from Galaxy to a club in Europe?

MLS faces a tough task in establishing its credibility among sports fans in the U.S. as a serious professional league and Beckham, rather than showing this is a league that attracts quality foreign players, is merely adding to the belief of some that MLS is not something to be taken too seriously.

There was one positive for MLS that came out of Sunday's anti-Beckham protests: the Galaxy fans showed the world that they are not star-struck kids in awe of the celebrity Beckham but are as passionate, loyal, and as rude as fans anywhere else in the world.

Fans of Manchester United or Real Madrid would not put up with one of their top players spending half the season with another team in another league and Galaxy supporters showed they do not accept such an arrangement either.

Boos and protests, while headline grabbing, are not good for any team or any league. The question now is how long Beckham, L.A. Galaxy, and the MLS are prepared to let the situation continue.

Coach K back for U.S. basketball

LOS ANGELES (Reuters)—Mike Krzyzewski will continue as head coach of the U.S. men's basketball team that will try to defend their Beijing gold medal at the 2012 London Games, officials announced in Las Vegas on Tuesday.

Krzyzewski, the Duke University

coach affectionately known as "Coach K," will bring back his staff of assistants that helped steer a U.S. team led by Kobe Bryant and LeBron James to the 2008 gold after a bronze-medal showing at the Athens Olympics.

"It's obviously a huge honour for me to continue on as United States national coach," Krzyzewski told a news conference. "We want to win another Olympic gold medal and we want to win the 2010 world championship in Turkey."

Joining Coach K on the sidelines again will be Jim Boeheim (Syracuse University), Mike D'Antoni (New York Knicks), and Nate McMillan (Portland Trail Blazers).



SHORT PUTTER: The 6'4" Cink now favours a short putter over a long one. ADRIAN DENNIS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Cink's game overhaul vindicated at British Open

Scraps long putter for short putter

TURNBERRY, Scotland (Reuters)—Stewart Cink said his British Open victory provided total vindication for the wholesale alterations he had recently made to his game.

"When you're having a solid career and you go and just make massive changes, it's a leap of faith to some extent," the 36-year-old told reporters after defeating Tom Watson in a four-hole playoff last Sunday.

"I trusted myself I would be able to transform myself into a new type of golfer and I guess that transformation, with this Claret Jug in my hand, is now complete."

The 6'4" Cink said his golfing overhaul came after a series of poor performances in the latter stages of 2008.

"The second half of the year really stank," said the Ryder Cup stalwart.

"The start of this year I spluttered, didn't play great and took some time off... and when I missed the third-round cut at the Players Championship [in May] I decided, okay whatever I'm doing isn't working."

The components of his game Cink wanted to alter the most were

his putting and thinking.

MENTAL OUTLOOK

"It started with the removal of the long putter," said the six-time PGA Tour winner. "I went to the short putter."

"I needed to change my mental outlook too because I really did not have much of a pre-shot routine working. I decided I needed to get something more regimented, a routine I could lean on under pressure."

"I thought if I stayed with the long putter it would be easy for me to fall back into the old warm and fuzzy feelings so I decided to scrap everything and start over with the short putter."

Cink said his confidence started to return when he tied for 27th in last month's U.S. Open.

"I actually believed I could win this [British Open] and in the past few months I probably wouldn't have believed that," he said.

"I never used to be one of the best players to never have won a major but this week I just believed I had something good."

New Yankee Stadium to host Notre Dame—Army in 2010

By KRISTEN MERIWETHER
Epoch Times Staff

The 2010 college football season will see the return of one of the sport's oldest rivalries when Notre Dame plays Army at New Yankee Stadium on November 20. The nationally televised Saturday night game will be the 50th meeting of the two schools.

At the press conference announcing the event, Notre Dame head coach Charlie Weis and Army head coach Rich Ellerson were both presented with Yankees home jerseys with the number 10, representing the year they will play.

Coach Weis said, "As a longtime Yankee fan, I'm thrilled to have the opportunity for Notre Dame to be a part of this event. I think this will be the kind of game that our players will remember long after it's over."

The Notre Dame—Army game will mark the first football game at New Yankee Stadium.

Notre Dame athletics director Jack Swarbrick said, "It's fitting that a Notre Dame—Army game will be the first football event in this fabulous facility—and it's also fitting that the 50th meeting in this great rivalry will take place in a venue with such great tradition for both programs."



ARMY-NOTRE DAME: Rich Ellerson and Charlie Weis are presented with Yankee jerseys. JIM MCISAAC/GETTY IMAGES

According to Lonn Tros, Yankees chief operating officer, the idea of football being played there was always on the table.

"In the planning and construction of this stadium, we had to make certain that the building was winterized, which it was. We are able to use this on a full-season basis, not just for baseball."

Instead of the layout at old Yankee Stadium, where the football

field was from first base to left-centre, fans will view the field with the goal posts from home plate to centre field.

Yankee Stadium hopes to host more Notre Dame—Army games, as well as other college football games. The NHL is also in talks to host future games there as well.

RIVALRY HISTORY
Notre Dame and Army have played

at old Yankee Stadium 22 of the 49 times they have met. The Fighting Irish of Notre Dame have had the most success in the rivalry with a record of 14–5–3 at Yankee Stadium and 37–8–4 overall.

The most memorable game between the two teams was the 1928 matchup at Yankee Stadium. During his halftime speech of a scoreless game, coach Knute Rockne gave his "Win one for the Gipper" speech. The "Gipper" referred to George Gipp, a former Notre Dame football player who had died a few years earlier at the age of 25.

The Notre Dame players took that speech to heart and won the game 12–6.

The speech was ingrained into American pop culture in the 1940 movie "Knute Rockne—All American." Ronald Regan played Rockne and would later use that rally cry in his political campaigns.

Notre Dame is hoping to build on last season's 7–6 record, including a 49–21 win against Hawaii in the Sheraton Hawaii Bowl.

In his first season as Army head coach, Rich Ellerson is hoping to get the program back on track. Army has not won more than three games in each of the past three seasons.

Watson rises 1,269 places in rankings

LONDON (Reuters)—Tom Watson, who came agonizingly close to becoming golf's oldest major champion last weekend, soared a record 1,269 places to 105th in the world rankings.

The 59-year-old American, seeking a record-tying sixth Claret Jug, lost a four-hole playoff for the British Open title to compatriot Stewart Cink at Turnberry last Sunday.

"That is the biggest improvement that we have seen from anybody. It is a record," said Ian Barker, who manages the official rankings.

| MEN'S GOLF RANKINGS | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| Name | | Avg. Points |
| 1. | (1) Tiger Woods (U.S.) | 10.82 |
| 2. | (2) Phil Mickelson (U.S.) | 8.54 |
| 3. | (3) Paul Casey (Britain) | 6.60 |
| 4. | (4) Kenny Perry (U.S.) | 6.22 |
| 5. | (5) Sergio Garcia (Spain) | 6.02 |
| 6. | (6) Steve Stricker (U.S.) | 5.89 |
| 7. | (8) Henrik Stenson (Sweden) | 5.88 |
| 8. | (7) Geoff Ogilvy (Australia) | 5.74 |
| 9. | (33) Stewart Cink (U.S.) | 5.04 |
| 10. | (9) Jim Furyk (U.S.) | 5.01 |
| 11. | (10) Vijay Singh (Fiji) | 4.85 |
| 12. | (11) Martin Kaymer (Germany) | 4.80 |
| 13. | (12) Camilo Villegas (Colombia) | 4.69 |
| 14. | (17) Lee Westwood (Britain) | 4.65 |
| 15. | (13) Sean O'Hair (U.S.) | 4.39 |
| 16. | (14) Padraig Harrington (Ireland) | 4.33 |
| 17. | (15) Anthony Kim (U.S.) | 4.22 |
| 18. | (16) Robert Karlsson (Sweden) | 4.21 |
| 19. | (18) Ian Poulter (Britain) | 3.98 |
| 20. | (19) Lucas Glover (U.S.) | 3.94 |

Rankings as of June 20, previous rankings in parentheses