

USA SOCCER: The buzz is growing

Written by Editorial Staff
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Has it happened yet? Have you been bitten by the bug? Have you become, for lack of a better word, a soccer freak?

If you haven't, you are missing out on a very special moment. If you have (or if you were one all along), well ain't it fun!

One thing we have discovered during the 2010 World Cup being held in South Africa: Soccer is alive and well in the good 'ole U.S.A. No, soccer hasn't reached the heights of America's major sports. And it probably never will. It won't replace football. It won't take the place of basketball or baseball. NASCAR will most likely always be more popular and so will golf, if only because it is a sport that we all can play.

But soccer is making headway. Lots of headway.

Don't believe it? Hop on the computer and go to www.youtube.com. Once there, type "the world's reaction to Landon Donovan's goal" in the YouTube search box. It is a 5 minute video that captures reactions from across the country — and world — after USA soccer star Donovan's last-second goal that beat Algeria and propelled the U.S. squad out of World Cup group play. It is a video that will swell your heart with patriotic spirit. If it doesn't, it may be time to get your heart checked. Thoroughly.

We wrote in this space last week that USA soccer needed a "1980-Olympic hockey moment" for the sport to really take off. It is doubtful that can happen because there are simply too many talented teams outside of the U.S. in the World Cup. But if the Americans can beat Ghana at 1 p.m. Central time Saturday, the buzz will grow. A subsequent win against an opponent to be determined would put the U.S. squad into the semifinals, and turn that buzz into a roar. And it will give soccer a boost in this country that it has never had.

American sports fanatics love two things: Underdogs and team spirit. The USA squad is certainly an underdog from this point on — and with 300 million people waiting for something to cheer for, there is plenty of team spirit to be tapped.

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Perhaps the Americans will fall on Saturday, and all of the buzz will quickly die down. But if they win, well, this is one bandwagon you may want to jump on quickly.