



Chapter 2

Soccer's Uneasy Relationship with the American Media

"The most brilliant propagandist technique will yield no success unless one fundamental principle is borne in mind constantly – it must confine itself to a few points and repeat them over and over."

*Joseph Goebbels
Propaganda Minister, Nazi Germany*

The media's propaganda line on soccer is crystal clear. Soccer isn't a "real" sport. Soccer is boring. Soccer is for pasty faced, unathletic little nerds with thick glasses. Only greasy little foreigners and drunken hooligans care about a bunch of pansies wearing tight little shorts kicking a ball around. Soccer is un-American and downright communistic.

Rewriting and recycling anti-soccer propaganda via the Goebbels Doctrine is as American as apple pie and more pervasive. Tony Kornheiser might be one of the wittiest writers for the *Washington Post* but even he sank to the level of a hack high school newspaper writer by recycling the same stale joke from June, 1990 ("Can the sweeper perform any domestic chores?") before the 1994 World Cup.

The American press singles out soccer using degrading stereotypes that other sports and their fans wouldn't tolerate. There is something unique about soccer in America that gets the media so riled up it has to go to such lengths to mock the sport. This is no half-baked conspiracy theory; it is a documented fact that "sports journalists" single out soccer ignoring the sport, its fans and players and glorifying any shortcomings.

The media's soccer haters can't stand the game, don't understand it and don't want to try. They revel in expressing their ignorance and lose any semblance of rationality. Their power comes from sheer numbers and holding positions of high visibility. Respectable journalists with reputations for excellence in journalism sink to