

THE group stages of the World Cup have finished and by the time this is published the quarterfinals would have started, but for me it still seems like the tournament has not really got off the ground. While many people may laugh at my opinion, pointing to the football fever that has seemingly taken over the rest of the world. I will stick to my opinion and elaborate on it.

This year's World Cup is a little too bland for me, in general the games have been average bordering on boring. When it is all said and done this tournament may be called a success, but the people who call it a success could hardly have been talking about the football played. These are the times when success means commercially profitable; enough people have gone to see the matches, enough merchandise has been sold and the sponsors have filled their pockets, but what about the games themselves? This year the World Cup has been played in fine FIFA spirit, there have been a few red cards here and there but in general there have been very few talking points (Italy's and Portugal's game aside).

But let's be honest. What makes a tournament interesting is when there is something to talk about, the last time around Italy were dumped out of the World Cup with a series of refereeing blunders. People were up in arms and later that year a block of public toilets in Rome was named after the referee in that game. That is the sort of emotion that is missing from this year's World Cup. While I will admit no one intentionally wants an incident ridden World Cup what I would like to add is that no one wants one completely incident free. Graham Poll the English referee added some spice to the tournament by issuing three yellow cards to Josip Simunic of Croatia before sending him off, but that was just a one off. Sure enough there have been calls for dubious off sides but in general this tournament seems to have been played in a wholly good natured manner. Call me Lucifer but all I wanted was a little more "action".

Aside from that aspect of the game one of my major complaints about the World Cup is the commentary. This year the commentary has been particularly unpalatable. While I am not sure as to who the commentators are and for which network they work, all I have to say is that their commentary has been utterly shambolic. Firstly their

Englishness seems to get in the way of everything they say, and at best they could be called politically incorrect. The very distinct nature of their comments leaves one with the feeling that England and the West have "allowed" inferior nations to compete in the World Cup. They seem to live in colonial times, when the rest of the world was inhabited by barbarians. I will be the first to agree that commentary is eventually the opinion of the person commentating, but during this World Cup the opinions spouted by the commentators have been heavily biased. The devil has a forked tongue because of his apparent double speak; the same could be said of the commentators this time. Even their praise for the lesser teams seems loaded with social commentary and

World Cup Woes

NADER RAHMAN



South Korean midfielder Park Ji Sung (C) and his teammates gather during a training session at the Ulrich-Haberland-Stadion in Leverkusen.

comes across as backhanded.

For them every African team has struggled to get to the tournament and still lives in the Dark Continent, they seem to think that merely a goal in a lost game is good enough for them. Their praise for the Africans seems to be limited to their speed and physical strength, the skill and artistry can only come from the more established footballing nations. The Asian nations suffer the same fate, their players are all portrayed to be small, wiry and full of agility. A decent goal by them could only be called luck, and there is a possibility that their foreign coach had something to do with it. Their praise for the smaller teams is as effusive as it is sarcastic. I cannot possibly explain the extent of their