

## Sport

# Rothenberg on his own now

LOS ANGELES, July 19: The World Cup's rave reviews are ringing in Alan Rothenberg's ears, but the mastermind of USA '94 will find it harder to establish his major league soccer next year, reports AFP.

By most measures the cup has been a spectacular success. Though Rothenberg's hope for 100 per cent sell-out of all stadiums did not materialise, organisers could boast of a record total attendance of 3,567,415 through 59 matches, well above the 2,517,348 total in Italy in 1990.

US television ratings have also exceeded expectations, confounding critics who said football could never catch on as a spectator sport here.

ABC's network coverage averaged 4.45 million households for 10 games, including the hugely popular United States v Brazil second round match on the July 4 holiday.

"We still face the fact some people hate soccer," said FIFA spokesman Guido Tognoni. "But now we can sell soccer in the United States."

But Tognoni knows that the new pro league will have to be sold on a much smaller scale than the cup, which drew fans as much for its air of spectacle as for its football.

"If 20 per cent of the fans who attended the World Cup come back for Major League soccer, it will be a success," Tognoni said. "But it is a difficult job for Alan to preserve the support and enthusiasm

he has gained. It is more difficult to start a league than it is to put on a World Cup.

"He had our support and we brought the teams. From now on, he will be a lonely man. He will be alone wolf."

As usual, Rothenberg is undaunted. With the new league still deciding where to locate five of its 12 teams, Rothenberg has announced a four-year deal with Nike to outfit six clubs for four years.

"We're going to be a speed-training team over the next couple of months," he said of the league.

But questions remain about where the players will come from.

Six of the United States 22-man World Cup squad already play overseas and many more hope to sign with foreign clubs on the basis of their World Cup performances.

Top players are concerned about salaries and the level of play in the MLS, and are waiting to see how the first season goes before committing themselves.

"They have to come up with the money," says John Harkes, now with English league club Derby County.

The US Soccer Federation will also have to settle on a direction for the national team.

Serbian Bora Milutinovic, who was overseen the the World Cup campaigns of three countries, says he would like to stay on as US coach, but nothing will be decided until after USSF elections later this summer.

"We can't stop here," says midfielder Mike Sorber. "We have to build."

"I've never seen anything like this in Stockholm."

## Swedes get heroes' welcome

STOCKHOLM, July 19: More than 100,000 Swedes cast off traditional reserve today to cheer their national soccer side through the streets of Stockholm on their return from the World Cup, where the team reached the last four, reports Reuter.

Two Swedish airforce jets accompanied a Boeing 767 plane carrying from the United States, where Sweden were beaten 1-0 in the semifinals by eventual winners Brazil.

Sweden beat Bulgaria 4-0 in the play-off for third place, completing the country's most successful World Cup since 1958, when they were beaten 1-0 in the final, also by Brazil.

The Swedish team, which had not been expected to get as far as the semifinals, drove in a cortege of vintage cars through Stockholm streets lined a dozen deep with cheering people.

Office workers leaned from their windows, cheering as the team drove by.

The team then drove to a central Stockholm Park, where around 50,000 fans reserved the loudest cheers for team coach Tommy Svensson, strikers Tomas Brolin and Martin Dahlin and charismatic goalkeeper Thomas Ravell.

Prime Minister Carl Bildt, lagging in opinion polls, followed the team from Stockholm Airport to the city centre, possibly hoping some of the soccer team's popularity might rub off on his government.

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## Lalas may join Coventry

LONDON, July 19: US World Cup defender Alexi Lalas is considering a 500,000 pound (\$82,000 dollars) move to the English Premier league side Coventry, reports Reuter.

Highly-regarded Swiss referee Kurt Roethlisberger, rated by some observers as a favourite to officiate in the final, was unceremoniously sent packing after denying Belgium's Josip Weber an apparent penalty in their 3-2 second loss to Germany in the semi-finals.

Conversely, there were dismissals that looked harsh. Sometime nervy match officials obeyed FIFA's foul play edict to the letter. The red-carding of Sweden captain Jonas Thern is a case in point with his innocuous-looking challenge on Brazilian Dunga in the semi-finals.

FIFA trumpeted that never before had referees been more intensively drilled in preparation for a World Cup.

In a release at the start of the tournament, the sport's governing body said: "The 1994 World Cup symbolises a new generation of younger, more dynamic match officials — not just outwardly recognisable by their colourful, stylish uniforms, but by their readiness to implement the laws more positively.

"That means, quite simply, encouraging attacking play and shielding creative genius on the field more effectively from technically inferior opponent, who delve in dirty tricks to stop it."

FIFA, stung by criticism of refereeing standards at Italia '90 with even Blatter then among the loudest to complain, took measures to ensure there would be no repeat in the United States.

"There is more fair play on the field," said Blatter. "The referees have strictly implemented the laws of the game and we are very satisfied with the performances of the referees and linesmen."

But you can't please everyone about the referees.

Bulgaria's match-winning striker Hristo Stoichkov blamed French referee Joel Quiniou for his country's 2-1 semifinal defeat to Italy.

The three men, who won a combined total of 266 Test caps, all retired from the game last season.

Their membership of the world's most famous cricket club was confirmed on Tuesday by MCC (Marylebone Cricket Club) secretary Roger Knight.

Meanwhile, a head of South Africa's first Test at Lord's for 29 years, former Springbok stars Graeme Pollock and Barry Richards have been made honorary life members of the club.

The same tribute has gone to Jeff Dujon (West Indies), Norman Gifford (England), Derek Shaeleton (England), Mudassar Nazar, Abdul Qadir, Wasim Raja (Pakistan), Ian Smith (New Zealand) and Harbans Singh (Singapore).

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Without Perec in the line-up, Americans swept the top three places, Natasha Kaiserman leading the way with a winning time of 50.92.

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The men's 100 metres was also missing its star attraction, Olympic champion Linford

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LOS ANGELES, July 19: If not for anything else, the 1994 World Cup will be chronicled as the tournament where FIFA took no prisoners in its fight against foul play, reports AFP.

Yellow cards were up by almost a third on Italia '90 and although dismissals from red cards were much the same as four years ago, transgressors felt the full weight of judicial substitution.

Italian defender Mauro Tassotti created World Cup history when he became the first player suspended after a foul by video.

In a decision that even Tassotti's bloodied Spanish victim, Luis Enrique, called excessive, the 34-year-old AC Milan rightback was banished for eight matches, effectively ending his international playing days.

"We decided we had to make an example of him," said disciplinary committee chairman Marcel Mathier, whose panel reviewed the videotape 10 times before reaching its decision.

Defender Leonardo missed out on Brazil's first World Cup final in 24 years when he was booted out for four matches for elbowing US midfielder Tab Ramos in a second round game.

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