

Responding to viewers

Michael Cohen, executive producer of all World Cup telecasts on ABC, ESPN and ESPN2, answers some of the viewers' technical questions.

Interview by Will Kuhns

SOCCKER AMERICA: For a few early games, the audio feed was a second or two ahead of the video feed. How did this happen?

MICHAEL COHEN: It only would have happened on the games where our announcers were there—Jack [Edwards] and Ty [Keough]. It was a Host Broadcast service—that's the name of the international distribution point. They provide all the announcer booths for the people at the stadiums. ... So what happened was timing problems in all the Host [booths], and they finally resolved it after our second game.

SA: In some games, the main camera angle is blurry. Why?

MC: We did notice that, but it was on Univision, too, so it was on the main

world feed.

SA: But a lot of people said Univision's picture was clearer.

MC: But it's the same pictures. ... We started looking into people's concerns, and what it came down to was regional cable systems, because it's the exact same feed up to the satellite and the exact same feed down into this country. We run into this situation all the time with MLS broadcasts on the Shootout package. It all comes down to the local distribution points. It's quite frustrating when it happens. It's such a different level of distribution at certain places. There's only so much you can do. I



Michael Cohen

can't speak for ESPN, but I know they're very aware of it.

SA: Why have the ticker at the bottom of every game, and why reveal the scores of earlier games, some of which air later on delay, during the second and third telecasts?

MC: Basically, ESPN2 runs The Bottom Line throughout their programming, and they

weren't going to stop for the World Cup.

As far as giving the scores goes, we live in an age of information right now, and there's not much we can do about people finding out the results. Personally, I think it would be a disservice to our viewers to not show the highlights every chance we can and give the scores. Again, people can find it out anyway. So if we don't show it, they're going to find it elsewhere. We'd rather they see it on our network.

SA: But since soccer fans are so intent on not knowing the score if they're going to watch a taped game, I thought this might be different ...

MC: It's tough to gauge. I think the initial plan was that people watching overnight are the die-hards ... and providing scores and information is a valuable part of what we do. ■

TV viewers across the globe received the same feed from the host broadcaster.

JOHN TODD/ISI/DSA

