

Reliving U.S. World Cup thrills

Documentary of the U.S. quarterfinal run at the 2002 World Cup is sure to inspire.

BY MIKE WOITALLA

Of all the disappointment coming out of the United States' 1998 World Cup performance, one of the most frustrating aspects had to be the inability to extract satisfying highlights out of its three games.

When Brian McBride scored the lone goal U.S., against Iran, it was a scrappy affair that didn't even hit the back of the net. There would be no exciting footage to accompany MLS broadcasts. Nothing would hit the nation's TV screens and catch the attention of those Americans who generally ignore soccer.

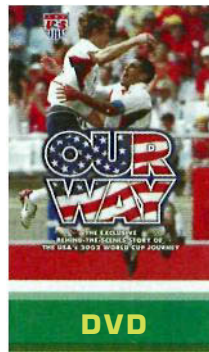
The Americans' run at the 2002 World Cup could hardly have been scripted any better. Of the seven goals in five games, several were spectacular. McBride, for one, offered a beautiful diving header in the win over Portugal. There were, on Bruce Arena's team, the kind of individual sparks that turn players into heroes for youngsters.

Bruce Arena impressed with his calm demeanor in the locker room.

"Our Way: The Exclusive Behind-the-Scenes Story" is a 60-minute documentary — plus 10 minutes of outtakes and more replays of the goals — that chronicles the United States' 2002 World Cup campaign. (Available on VHS or DVD for \$30 at ussoccerstore.com.)

The game highlights provide the most enjoyment. One is reminded of how John O'Brien dribbled out of his own half before lofting a perfect pass for Clint Mathis to finish against South Korea. How superbly Claudio Reyna helped set up McBride's goal against Mexico and how close the captain came to chipping Oliver Kahn from the center circle. How Landon Donovan toyed with German defenders shortly after the kickoff.

One imagines this be-



ing shown at soccer camps across the nation and inspiring youngsters to sprint back to the field to emulate.

Much of the behind-the-scenes stuff is trite, but the amiability of the players comes across.

Coaches should pay attention to the locker room footage. Whether

before the game, at halftime, after good or bad results, Arena is calm and composed — almost gentle with his players. He is, by all accounts, a fierce competitor. But he's not brimstone and fire. One senses he has deep respect and affection for his men.

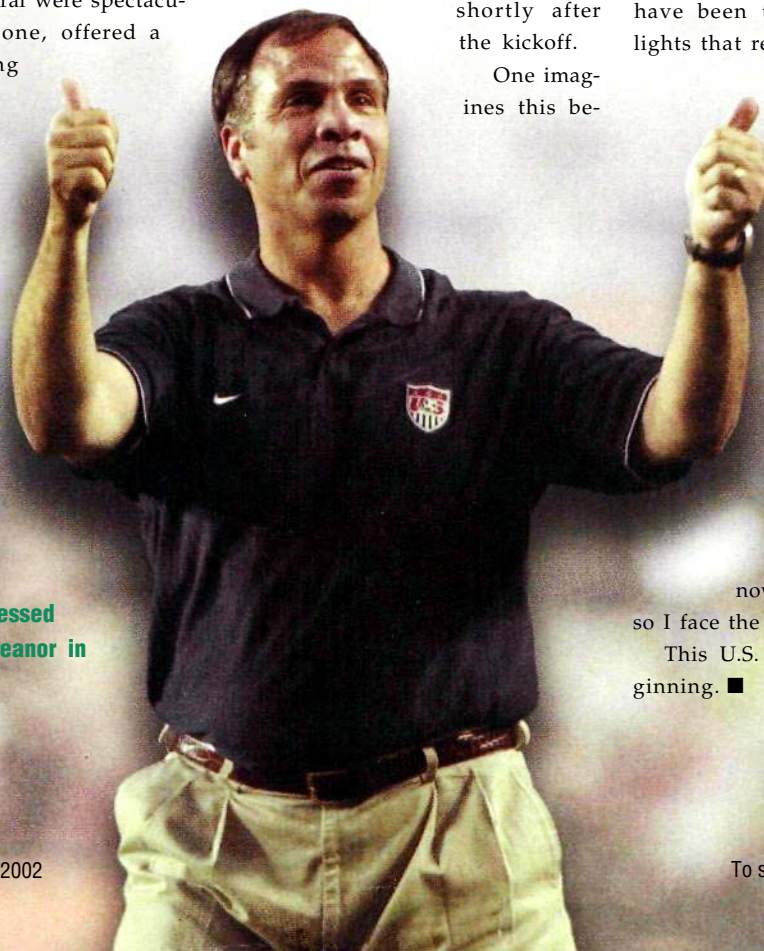
One doesn't come away with a great sense of *how* the U.S. played. The emphasis is obviously on the goals. A slight improvement would have been to include more highlights that revealed the team's over-

all approach and style.

Soccer fans won't be disappointed, although they'll face an excruciating 2.5 minutes of group karaoke. And what a poor choice for a theme song on which it closes.

The self-aggrandizing "My Way" starts with "And now, the end is near; And so I face the final curtain."

This U.S. performance was a beginning. ■



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