

# Everything about David Beckham

Pop icon's autobiography seeks to satisfy his fans' insatiable appetite.

**THAT DAVID BECKHAM** is the foreign soccer player who comes nearest to being a household name in the United States of course has something to do with his famous wife, his good looks and the movie, "Bend It Like Beckham," which has grossed more than \$30 million in six months since its March release.

So what does Beckham

think about the United States?

**"Beckham, Both Feet on the Ground: An Autobiography"** by David Beckham with Tom Watt (HarperCollins Publishers) provides an account of his first trip to the United States.

At age 13, Beckham's Essex Schools team was taken to the Dallas Cup by Coach Martin Heather — "All the boys loved him. ... He was a very different kind of coach. He hardly ever shouted."

Beckham had gone abroad for soccer tournaments before, but:

"That trip was different because instead of staying together, we lodged on our own with local families. The first people I stayed with were Mexican. Their house was just a couple of steps up from a shack, to be honest, but they turned out to be really nice people. ...

"They were mad about soccer and couldn't do enough for me. All my Essex teammates were staying in these huge houses and being driven around in huge cars. We'd just get in the pickup and drive down to McDonald's for breakfast every morning. I had such a great week with that family: I sometimes find myself thinking about them even now."

More trips to the United States had him daydreaming about living there, and concluding that American athletes "have been pushed to greater achievement, I'd say, because they know they've got the unqualified support of the whole country behind them when they go into action."

Certainly one can't think of an American athlete who has endured the abuse like Beckham received after his ejection against Argentina in the 1998 World Cup. "Ten Heroic Lions, One Stupid Boy" blared a British newspaper headline.

He spent the next two years following his ejection for weakly kicking Diego Simeone under tight security because of threats to his life. He was booed mercilessly during Manchester United's away games.

Beckham, of course, persevered and is now practically a subject of worship. The book, which runs almost 400 pages, certainly includes all that is significant to Beckham the player — his youth days, World Cups, Man U galore, the Ferguson shoe incident.

Perhaps the book is so amazingly detailed — wedding arrangements, house-buying and lots and lots about Victoria and the kids — because he wants to leave nothing for tabloid speculation.

Or maybe this pop icon's fans really can't get enough of Beckham.

— Mike Voitalla

