

World Cup: The Heat Will Be On, And The US Is Happy

SAO PAULO (AP) — While some World Cup teams whine about withering weather and troublesome travel, American players say: Bring it on!

European teams worry they will wilt. The United States considers cauldron-like climates a regular finishing touch, as if the Americans were a Baked Alaska flambe.

And if FIFA added a Road Warrior prize to the Golden Ball, Golden Boot and Golden Glove, the U.S. would be assured of taking home an award.

"When you talk about playing in the heat, the travel, it doesn't bother us," midfielder Michael Bradley said Tuesday. "And not only does it not bother us, it excites us to see that now the other teams are so worried about it."

The Americans have the lengthiest first-round trek among the 32 teams at 8,800 air miles, chartering roundtrip flights from Sao Paulo to Natal (1,420 each way), Manaus (1,680) and Recife (1,300).

That's quite a contrast to four years ago, where the U.S. had the shortest group-stage travel in South Africa. To reach their games, the Americans took bus rides from Irene to Rustenburg (62 miles each way), Johannesburg (24) and Pretoria (11) for a total of 194 miles. They needed to

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■ The United States Begins World Cup Action Next Monday In Brazil At 5 p.m. Central

pack a weekender only once during the first round, burrowing at their base hotel for the second and third matches.

This year they'll change cities and climates repeatedly. Tuesday's training session at Sao Paulo Futebol Club started in a 62-degree temperature with a cooling drizzle, but the Americans' games up north figure to be played in the mid-80s or higher. And extreme humidity could make each stadium feel like a sauna.

Accustomed to an August-through-May club schedule in Europe, where players use gloves and fans insulate in thermals, some soccer officials fret. No European nation has won a World Cup played in the Americas, where Brazil has taken three titles, and Ar-

gentina and Uruguay two apiece.

Before the World Cup draw in December, England coach Roy Hodgson called the Amazon rain forest city of Manaus "problematic" and said "you have a better chance if you get one of the venues where the climate is kinder."

"It's going to be incredibly humid and hot," Germany coach Joachim Loew said. "We must get used to it, in training and preparing."

The U.S. opens Monday with a 7 p.m. (6 p.m. EDT) match against Ghana in Natal. The AccuWeather forecast calls for a daytime high in the mid-80s, dropping into the 70s in the evening with a couple showers possible.

Ghana Ready For World Cup Rematch Against US

MIAMI (AP) — In its final exhibition before facing the United States in the World Cup, Ghana practiced celebrating.

Captain Asamoah Gyan scored a breakaway goal against South Korea and then launched into the azonto, a two-step dance popular in Ghana. Soon he was joined in the corner of the field by a cluster of teammates, their hands, hips and feet moving in impressive synchronicity.

Past World Cup matches against the United States have given Ghana plenty to celebrate. The rivalry will be renewed Monday in Brazil, and the Black Stars want to be ready.

"The United States are a very, very good team," coach James Appiah said. "It's not going to be easy. We have to make sure our players are playing their roles well. We hope to give them a very good game."

The Ghanaians have every reason to be optimistic, because they eliminated the United States from the past two World Cups. So they'll have the azonto cued up, and other dances ready as well.

"We've got different styles — three or four," Appiah said with a smile. "The players have to decide which one they want to use, but we hope to showcase one of them during the World Cup."

Ghana defeated the United States in group play in 2006, and in the round of 16 in 2010. A 4-0 victory against South Korea in Miami on Monday suggested Ghana will again be a handful.

"Bring them on, bring them on — the United States," a reporter from Ghana shouted with a grin in the press box at halftime of the exhibition. "America, we are coming."

The victory over the U.S. team four years ago sent Ghana into the World Cup quarterfinals for the first time. Ghana was embraced as "Africa's Team" in the first World Cup on the continent and came within inches of becoming the first African squad to reach the semifinals, but lost to Uruguay in a shootout after Gyan hit the crossbar on a late penalty kick that would have won the game.

FIFA rankings suggest Ghana is the underdog in talent-laden Group G, which also includes the No. 13-ranked United States, No. 2 Germany and No. 4 Portugal. But no one is likely to take the Black Stars lightly.

Youth Baseball

Post 12 Beats Mitchell 13-6

MITCHELL — Two players each had three hits to lead Yankton Post 12 past Mitchell 13-6 in an American Legion game Tuesday in Mitchell.

Sheldon Gant recorded three hits, three RBI and two runs scored for Yankton, while Colin Muth had three hits and a run.

Landon Withrow chipped in with two hits and three RBI, while Adam Walter and Austin Johnson both had two hits and two RBI. Lane Sawatzke and Brad Ulmer both added two hits and two runs.

Tanner Termansen pitched six innings for the win, while Sawatzke and Mitch Gullikson both went one inning in relief.

Yankton, now 9-3, plays in a Spearfish tournament this weekend.

VFW Teener

Reds 1-13, Mitchell 9-2

MITCHELL — The Yankton Reds picked up a doubleheader split at Mitchell on Tuesday in VFW Teener baseball action on Tuesday in Mitchell.

Mitchell won the first game 9-1, but the Reds rebounded for a 13-2 rout in the second game.

In the opener, Michael Drotzmann doubled and drove in a run for Yankton, while Rex Ryken tripled. Cole Sawatzke, Levi Wiersma, Cole Withrow, Owen Feser and Kyle Withrow all added a hit.

In the second game, Ethan Wishon had three hits and two RBI, while Ryken had two hits and two RBI. Mike Frick added two hits and an RBI, while Drotzmann and Wiersma both had two hits.

Sawatzke had one hit and an RBI, Sam Mooney had a hit, and Feser got the win.

Yankton, 6-5, travels to Parkston today (Wednesday).

Amateurs

Irene 10, Avon 1

IRENE — George Sees had three hits and Andrew Hora



Off The Bat...In The Glove

ABOVE: Trey Bakke of the Yankton Lakers reaches to foul off a pitch during Tuesday's VFW Teener baseball doubleheader against Renner at Riverside Field.

RIGHT: Yankton Lakers second baseman Miles Carda, right, snags a line drive in front of first baseman Jackson Somsen during Tuesday's VFW Teener doubleheader against Renner at Riverside Field.

Results of the doubleheader were not reported by press time.

PHOTOS BY JEREMY HOECK/P&D



Softball: Fury White, Crush Record Doubleheader Splits

Bailey Peterka of the Yankton Xtreme connects for a double during Tuesday's softball doubleheader against Norfolk Kelly's at the YHS/Summit Fields.

JEREMY HOECK/P&D



Yankton Fury White and the Norfolk Golden Girls split a girls' softball doubleheader Tuesday at the YHS/Summit fields.

Norfolk won the first game 14-9 and Yankton won game two 15-9.

In the opener, Nora Welker had a hit, RBI and run scored for Yankton, while Emma Yost added an RBI and run.

In the second game, Welker had one hit and two runs scored, while Camryn Koletzky, Grace Behrns and Madelyn Eidsness all scored twice. Yost chipped in with an RBI and run, and struck out two as the winning pitcher. Thea Chance singled and scored.

Fury White will play in the Yankton Girls Softball Association Invitational this weekend.

Crush 1-8, Dakota Valley 7-1

NORTH SIOUX CITY — The Yankton Crush traveled to North Sioux City and came away with a doubleheader split with Dakota Valley on Tuesday.

Dakota Valley won the first game 7-1 and Yankton was victorious in game two 8-1.

In the opener for Yankton, Elsie Marquardt had an RBI, Bridget Nolz scored a run, and Payton Vellek struck out three batters.

In the second game, Kara Ulmer doubled and drove in a run, Marquardt doubled, and Nolz singled and drove in a run. Brooke Madson, Bailey Sejhona, Vellek and Brittny Davis all scored one run.

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CWS Teams Reflect Balance In Baseball

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — The array of teams set for the College World Series beginning this week could leave the impression that college baseball has become an equal-opportunity sport.

Whether it has evolved or devolved is a matter of opinion.

"I played in Omaha in 1960 and 1961 (for USC), and you could name on both hands all the schools in the country that were playing good baseball," UC Irvine coach Mike Gillespie said. "You couldn't name all the schools playing good baseball now if you had 10 sets of hands. I think that's good."

Skip Bertman, who retired as LSU's coach in 2001 after winning five national titles, isn't so sure.

"The product now is the poster sport for parity," he said. "That may make some people happy. In my opinion, it's watered down."

People in the game say scholarship reductions, roster limits and bats lacking punch account for the competitive balance. They also point to a growing number of schools, including some in cold-weather areas, spending more money on baseball.

Texas, which will be in Omaha a record 35th time, offers a nod to the days

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Smaller Schools Hope They Don't Get Left Behind

BY TIM DAHLBERG
AP Sports Writer

Boise State has proven that it can compete with the elite of college football. Schools like Butler and VCU have shown they can beat teams from the biggest conferences during March Madness. Officials at such schools are worried that we'll never see those underdog stories again.

They worry that changes being proposed by the five major conferences could prevent them from competing head-to-head against power schools and create even greater inequities between the largest athletic programs and

those trying to keep up.

"I think the NCAA in some areas doesn't need as much change as some people are thinking," said Bruce Rasmussen, athletic director at Creighton University in Nebraska. "We don't need to blow the system up."

Prodded by the huge television money flowing into college athletics to give athletes more than just tuition and room and board, the five major conferences — which include 65 schools — are racing to give athletes more money, more security and more control over their college careers.

The schools that may get

left behind in what could be a seismic shift in major college athletics aren't quite sure what to make of it all.

If they match all or some of the extra benefits the 65 big schools may soon offer, the costs could stretch already thin athletic department budgets. If they don't, they may risk becoming second-class athletic programs with teams that can't compete at the highest levels.

"Do we start picking and choosing some of the things? Well, let's go ahead and give the stipend but not give the travel for the parents. Let's do unlimited meals and snacks, but not do this," said Central

Arkansas athletic director Brad Teague, whose school is a member of the Southland Conference. "Several in our conference might pick some, several may pick others, but it really boils down to what does the recruit want? Well, this school's giving me this. What about you all?"

Among the proposals advanced by Pac-12 presidents that will likely be matched by smaller schools are liberalization of transfer rules, cutbacks in practice time and giving athletes a greater voice with conferences and the NCAA.

But others — such as guaranteed scholarships and stipends to more fully match

the cost of going to school — could be budget breakers for schools that don't share in the millions of dollars in television revenues the big conferences get.

"The difference with the 65 is that most of those reforms, they'll be able to pay for with new money coming in from television deals. And there's no new money coming in for the rest of us outside of the 65," said Northern Iowa athletic director Troy Danner. "So it's going to be a matter of reallocate, and it'll force us to probably prioritize some things a

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