

Don't forget about cricket



By Curtis Wichmer
Staff Reporter

It's the beginning of spring, and the baseball season is starting up. Whether you follow baseball for the live games, the fantasy league, the team that represents your city or just having your friends over to watch the game as a group, it's easy to get lost in baseball fever. But before we show how much we love our teams by sitting in cold chairs and buying overpriced food and drinks, let's remember what else has been lost in all the baseball hype — the game of cricket.

Take pity on cricket for being lost to the sands of time and the American way.

The English game of cricket has been around since the 1500s and is very similar to baseball, according to BBC. The arenas for baseball and cricket are similar. Both sports involve one team hitting a ball to try to score runs while the other team throws the ball and defends the field to prevent the other team from getting the upper hand. Cricket is even more similar because it was once a very popular sport in America — during the 1700s. If cricket

used to be so popular in America, why is it practically unheard of in the U.S. now?

Baseball actually became popular in the United States as a result of our country's national pride, according to a BBC story. Much like how the U.S. lists the date month/day/year instead of day/month/year, the American way slightly changes the formula to differentiate our western powerhouse from European nations. So when baseball was invented, it quickly grew to popularity as an American substitute to cricket.

American nationalism, however, wasn't the only factor that prompted the change. Although the U.S. does have a few avid fans of the sport, by today's standards, cricket is said to be very ... boring. While the average baseball game takes about three hours to finish, a typical cricket match can take far longer. A normal cricket game can be drawn out over the course of three to five days, with about six hours of game time each day. Baseball's brevity helped its rise in popularity, because its early fans thought any person with common sense would rather watch 10 baseball games than a single cricket match. As baseball's popularity continued to rise, cricket's fans diminished until it dissolved from American memory almost entirely, according to BBC.

So when you buy your jerseys and hats to support your team, remember how fortunate you are to enjoy a sport like baseball, and take pity on baseball's neglected cousin, cricket. Take pity on cricket for its lack of presence in American sports. Take pity on cricket for being lost to the sands of time and the American way. But most importantly, take pity on cricket's fans, who even now are waiting for their 30-hour game to finish.



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Give MLS a fair chance



By Austin Hornbostel
Managing Editor

For casual soccer fans, there has been no greater story during the past few months than Leicester City of the English Premier League.

In a league dominated by giant clubs with deep pockets, Leicester never should have stood a chance. They sat in last place in the league at Christmas during 2014. However, Leicester was perched at the top of the EPL during Christmas 2015 and continue to hold that position to this day, with three more wins than any of the league's powerhouse teams. At this point, Leicester is in a great position to

win the league against impossible odds. That's an incredible Cinderella story, right?

In my opinion, parity — or in other words, an equivalence of athletic talent — is a wonderful thing. The problem with the EPL is this Leicester scenario hardly ever happens, because Leicester's player budget is so miniscule compared to the EPL's giants. Clubs with more money dominate because they can afford better players to blow low-spending teams out of the water. Instead of the English league, I'm a more avid fan of Major League Soccer, because it's a league where parity reigns supreme.

Give MLS a chance and you'll see a young but growing league that is improving steadily by the year. Just look at teams like Toronto FC, which is attracting stars in their prime like Italian forward Sebastian Giovinco and helping increase the talent level of MLS.

You'll also see a league where money doesn't guarantee a league championship trophy. Last year's champions, the Portland Timbers, weren't

great during the regular season, but pulled off a great run in the playoffs — beating my team of choice, Sporting Kansas City, in a heartbreaking penalty shootout — and knocked off one of the league's more expensive teams, the Seattle Sounders, en route to its first championship trophy. The Los Angeles Galaxy, a team that spent generously to bring aging superstars state-side for this season, is struggling to find its footing while teams with less money like Sporting KC and Orlando City SC are off to great starts.

Compared to the EPL, MLS is an absolute shot in the dark to predict at the beginning of a season. The chaos of a full season can be unwritten as the underdogs round into form when playoffs begin, whereas the EPL has a set group of favorites from the very start who usually end up the winners year in and year out. I challenge sports fans to embrace the chaos and take a chance on MLS. You never know what Cinderella story you might find.

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