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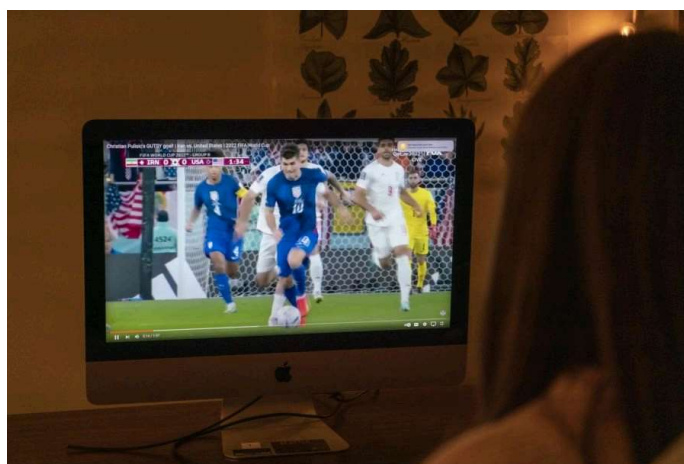


The United States at The World Cup

Sean Campbell, Staff Reporter

This World Cup is not without its fair share of controversy, shocking twists and games that did not go the way spectators thought they would. The United States Men's National Team (USMNT) returned to the tournament this year after falling short of qualification in 2018 and looks to make an impact.

Going into the World Cup, the U.S. fans expected to make it past the group stage. There are 32 teams in the World Cup, which are split into groups of four. The groups play in round-robin style before the top two teams in each group move to the top 16, where eliminations begin. The USMNT were drawn into Group B, putting them against the national teams of England, Iran and Wales.



Jake Nelson

Natalie Schorr watching the World Cup.

With their first game ending in a draw against Wales and their second game against England ending in a draw, as well, the future is uncertain but not bleak. Many people across the U.S. are watching the World Cup, anxiously waiting to see if they will go through to the knockout stages prior to the game against Iran. This includes Seattle University Sophomore and member of the Redhawks Men's Soccer Team, Christian Koontz.

"So far they've only allowed one goal and kept a clean sheet against one of the best teams in the world [England] and defense wins you championships so you never know what might happen," Koontz said. "They don't have a true striker which can be the difference maker for them. So I think they'll have a tough time scoring in games when they play against a tougher opponent."

The U.S. men's team played Iran Nov. 29. This game, like most in the World Cup, is not without some drama. The Iran team is calling for the USMNT to be removed from the world cup after the U.S. briefly changed the Iranian flag on social media. The change showed the flag without the Islamic Republic emblem on the flag. This gesture was to show support for the female-led protest movement currently unfolding in Iran.

A tweet was made by Iran's state run media agency, Tasnim News Agency, read:

"By posting a distorted image of the flag of the Islamic Republic of Iran on its official account the U.S. football team breached the FIFA charter, for which a 10-game suspension is the appropriate penalty. Team USA should be kicked out of the World Cup 2022."

The post in question was only up for 24 hours but stirred controversy all the same. The U.S. won the Tuesday game against Iran, resulting in the U.S. making it out of the group round and eliminating Iran from the tournament. This will be the third time in a row the USMNT has made it to the top 16 in World Cup's that they have attended. With the way the U.S. has been handling this run in

the World Cup, coaches from all over the U.S. are wading in on the team's strategy. One such coach is Emma Flemming, a coach for the Montana Youth Soccer Association, FC Missoula.

"I've been surprised that they've been more patient than they usually are, which is good because they aren't exposing themselves to counters very frequently," Fleming said. "We're sacrificing some possession, but really forcing other teams to build up for their chances."

The roster for the USMNT is diverse with many of the players not being from the U.S., rather being from European countries. Players can come from other countries as long as they were born in the U.S. or are descendants from U.S. citizens. Seattle Sounders Winger and Forward Jordan Morris made the 26-man roster for the USMNT.

The USMNT was present at the first World Cup in 1930 where they made it to the semifinals. However, since then the team has only been to 11 of the 22 World Cup tournaments. Prior to this year's tournament, the last time the team qualified for the World Cup was 2014; and in between 1950 and 1990 the team failed to make any of the tournaments. Despite having been to half of the World Cup's, the USMNT has never made it to the final. The best the USMNT has done was the inaugural 1930 championship where they placed third overall. The Men look to push closer to a dream finish when they take on the Netherlands Dec. 3 at 7 a.m. PST.