

<p>The first half saw more yellow cards than shots on goal. And the game went into extra time, tied 0 ♦ 0. It certainly wasn't a particularly memorable game. Spain had many great offensive opportunities, most of which were nullified by the inability to pass to the open man (or hit the broad side of a barn with a free kick). Further drama ensued as the Dutch team played the better part of 15 minutes with 10 players after a red card ejection.</p><p>But at 116 minutes into the game, Andres Iniesta secured his place in Spanish sporting history to give La Furia Roja the win. This was their first World Cup championship, putting them in an elite group of just eight countries that have won a World Cup. </p><p>The World Cup is always a spectacle. And it certainly has a way of keeping the world's attention for a full month.</p><p>For all of the beautiful, elegant play, we were also witness to some ridiculous (though elegant) dives and flops from the players. And it was intriguing to see that soccer, on the international level, has it's share of over-rated players and teams. In that way, it is very similar to professional football on this side of the Atlantic. Case in point: none other than Wayne Rooney and England's soccer team. At one point in time, they were amongst the favorites to win the World Cup. Rooney was considered one of the primary scorers for England. After 4 matches, what were his statistics? Zero goals and zero assists. And once again, England was over-hyped. Of course, we've never witnessed any NFL team being over-hyped, have we? </p><p>But wait, there's more. </p><p>Second case in point ♦ Cristiano Ronaldo. In Portugal's loss against Spain, he was playing as though it just didn't matter. No zest. No drive. Here was yet another athlete that makes millions of dollars to look average on the world's biggest stage. Sounds a lot like any one of a number of NFL players, no?</p><p>How about this for a statistic ♦ Spain, the newly-crowned world champion, scored just 8 goals in 7 games. They had four consecutive one goal games. Boring. Effective, and perhaps the best team, but boring nonetheless. And again, it's yet another similarity with the NFL. Defense (and the best teamwork) wins championships.</p><p>Over the course of the month, I watched a number of games, in whole or in part. In the vast majority of them, there was a disputed goal or an acting performance (i.e. a dive or a flop) that would be eligible to be named by the Academy Awards nominating committee. Fortunately, that does not exist in the NFL.</p><p>As far as disputed

goals, how about the US goal against Slovenia that was disallowed by referee [title="US-Slovenia ref gets poor rating"](http://g.sports.yahoo.com/soccer/world-cup/news/source-u-s-slovenia-ref-gets-poor-rating--fbintl_ro-referee061910.html) [href="http://g.sports.yahoo.com/soccer/world-cup/news/source-u-s-slovenia-ref-gets-poor-rating--fbintl_ro-referee061910.html"](http://g.sports.yahoo.com/soccer/world-cup/news/source-u-s-slovenia-ref-gets-poor-rating--fbintl_ro-referee061910.html)>Koman Coulibaly ♦ for no apparent reason, with no reason given. Even the US coach, when interviewed after the game, was unable to explain it. That wouldn't fly in the NFL either.</p> <p>Or how about the obvious goal by England against Germany in the second round. It was clearly over the goal line on video, but the referee made the call from a different viewpoint. FIFA is still debating the need for instant replay. If there was ever a reason, that was the perfect one. In hindsight, the goal would not have made a difference: Germany still schooled England in the game of football.</p> <p>Nonetheless, even with all of its blemishes, the World Cup was entertaining as it always is. Well, entertaining to the vast majority of the world, and probably a large number of people in the United States. With the exception of one Glenn Beck. Imagine that.♦♦ </p> <p>What does Glenn Beck know about soccer, and why does anyone care to listen? As Abraham Lincoln, a proud American, once astutely noted,</p> <blockquote> <p>It is better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to open one's mouth and remove all doubt.</p> </blockquote> <p>By the way Glenn, you might want to check the Olympic curling stats you ♦reported♦ in your diatribe, I mean, interview. Canada - goal and silver. United States - zilch. If he ♦s that far off with sports issues, imagine what he does with issues that are truly important to the future of the country.</p> <p>But I digress.</p> <p>Onwards to Brazil 2014!</p> <p>Photo credit: Wikipedia</p> <div class="zemanta-related"> <h6 class="zemanta-related-title">Related articles by Zemanta</h6> <ul class="zemanta-article-ul"> <li class="zemanta-article-ul-li">FIFA World Cup 2010 :: Five Realizations We Made in South Africa (bleacherreport.com) <li class="zemanta-article-ul-li">Officials correct 96 per cent of time: FIFA (cbc.ca) <li class="zemanta-article-ul-li">FIFA: World Cup Match Officials a Big Success (nytimes.com) <li class="zemanta-article-ul-li">World Cup 2010: a triumph for collectivism but players must get a moral compass (telegraph.co.uk) </div> <div class="zemanta-pixie"></div>