

## **Global Journalist: The 2006 World Cup Viewed Through an International Lens**

**Abstract:** On this June 8, 2006 program, journalists and sports enthusiasts discussed issues of nationalism, corruption, and American attitudes related to that year's World Cup.

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**Guests:**

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- [Débora Gares](#)
- [Vladimir McMillin](#)

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**Runtime:** 27:32

Stuart Loory 0:00

Welcome to Global Journalist. I'm Stuart Loory of the Missouri School of Journalism. Starting tomorrow, billions of television viewers in hundreds of countries around the world will be tuned to the 2006 Soccer World Cup in Germany. This is by far the biggest sporting event in the world, a spectacle that

dwarfs American football's Super Bowl, baseball's World Series or horse racing's Kentucky Derby. This is globalization at its height with 32 teams from all the continents except Antarctica taking part. One team represents a country that doesn't even exist anymore, that's Serbia and Montenegro which split apart last month, but the former's country team qualified for the tournament and will play although all of its starters are Serbians. Trinidad and Tobago, an island country in the Caribbean of only 1.3 million people; it's the smallest country with a team to qualify. The United States will be there as well, playing for openers in a group that includes the Czech Republic, Italy and Ghana. Although ranked number five in the world, it will not be easy for this country's team to advance. Soccer — it is called football elsewhere in the world — is the epitome of international understanding through peaceful competition, but it is also a fierce vehicle of nationalism. It is well known for its sportsmanship, but in the past few years it has been rocked by bidding scandals. Salaries have skyrocketed, particularly in Europe, commercialism has gained a strong foothold on football. We will discuss all this today with Bertram Eisenhauer, editor of the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung in Frankfurt, Germany. Chris Fickett, assistant sports editor of the Kansas City Star, Débora Gares, sports reporter for O Globo in Rio de Janeiro, and here in Columbia, Missouri, my good friend Vladimir McMillin, who was a sports reporter for the Soviet Union news agency T.A.S.S. many a year ago, and he now lives here, where he's a mainstay in the local Soccer League. Let's start with Bertram. Bertram, give our listeners a picture of what Germany is like a day before the World Cup starts.

Bertram Eisenhauer 2:31

Well, I would say you know that the excitement here basically is reaching a fever pitch. There's you basically, you know, when you go on television, when you walk through the streets, at the airport at the train station, there's no way you can escape the World Cup. For instance, over the weekend, we had about 200,000 people on three consecutive nights who watched an event at the — It was a projection of football images on the skyscrapers in downtown Frankfurt. And it was music and celebration and stuff like that it was it's just amazing. It's actually it's gotten so far that people are really getting anxious, you know, for the actual sports events to begin because, you know, we've heard everything about the teams we've heard you know, about you know, the respective strengths of the of the lineups and how

people are actually getting antsy, you know, for the, you know, for the show to start, you know, for the players to get on the, on the lawn and compete.

Stuart Loory 3:40

Débora Gares. Brazil, I think is the favorite in the World Cup. What about in Rio de Janeiro? How is it preparing to take in the World Cup

Débora Gares 3:55

Before people are very happy and excited. They do believe in our favoritism. The streets are decorated. People have already bought their shirt — skirt with the flags. All places are preparing to receive lots of people to watch the game and to cheer for Brazil from the next Tuesday. My newspaper has already included on each edition and special special part, let's say talking only about football and about the competitors and all the preparation for it. And this is selling like water here. It's very great. People are very excited.

Stuart Loory 4:53

Chris Fickett Kansas City. I understand that your newspaper has actually sent a correspondent to Germany to cover this tournament? Is there that much interest among your readers?

Chris Fickett 5:07

I think there is. I think there is a there's a core component of soccer fans in the Kansas City area that that that loves soccer and follow it very closely and are very involved in the local Major League Soccer team, the Wizards. There's probably a group of anywhere from 50 to 100 really fervent supporters of that team and then of course, you know, the, the actual games draw a bit more. But in terms of comparing, trying to compare this to what's going on in Germany and Brazil would be would be ludicrous. Obviously. It sounds you know, from listening to the descriptions in Germany and Brazil — it, that sounds like Super Bowl week here you know, with, with parties going on and you know, fan festivals and you know,

producing special sections of the newspaper. You know, obviously that's not going to happen here. But I do think that that people are, are are going to be interested in the World Cup. I think it's going to provide a, a kind of change of pace. And in the, you know, in the US sports culture, obviously the NBA finals are about to start. There's really not a big NBA interest in Kansas City. I think some people are interested. The Royals, the major league baseball team have been have been awful and it's been awful for a few years now. I think the World Cup when it when it finally arrives Friday, I think we're going to see a little uptick in interest in soccer just because it's going to be something different. And you know, there are expectations for the US team to perform well. And so that's part of our reason behind sending somebody in Germany so

Stuart Loory 6:57

Well, you know, I have to tell you, you say you don't think they're gonna be parties in Kansas City. My guess is there may be a few, I know.

Chris Fickett 7:05

I didn't, I didn't I didn't say that. There actually are and and in 2002 when the cup was in South Korea, the Wizards sponsored watch parties and of course the time difference there was such that these games were occurring, you know, between two and — in the middle of the night and and there was a great response to that. And, and obviously the US performance there, fueled that and they're there. They were playing above expectations and I think —

Stuart Loory 7:36

The only thing I wanted to say was that when I proposed doing this program the other day, about World Cup soccer, two of the producers said, well, they are going to parties on Friday. One of my producers is from Brazil and the other is from Korea, and there will be parties that each of them will be attending. Vladimir McMillin, You are a soccer aficionado. You play I think every week in a in a league here. What about in the United States? Do you look forward to the day when football soccer is as important a sport as American football or basketball?

Vladimir McMillin 8:26

Well, you know, I hope that this will happen after 1994 World Cup was held here in the United States, but really didn't happen. You know, as David Letterman said yesterday in his show that if you aren't an American you know, if you have Soccer World Cup fever, you're not American. I like it.

You know what, I think it's not in the culture of Americans. Americans. They like you know, the sport events that they invented, you know, like baseball, basketball and, of course American football. And they care of the sport. Here, they consider soccer as a very good workout. Or, you know, for kids, almost every family in the United States, you know, they have a soccer player aged from five to 10 to 14 years old. And they are very happy with it. But when they are like 16 they start to forget about soccer and they're thinking probably over another sport, but for them, it was a good time. A good recreational sport. It's not like in Europe, Africa and South America when they are thinking of going further to be professionals. And well, we have very good Soccer League here. I think it's comfortable here but thousands of fans are coming see soccer games here, professional soccer games, but it's not enough. We need like millions of people to watch this sport to be progressive in future.

Stuart Loory 10:12

Chris, what do you think of that? Do you think we can get millions of people?

Chris Fickett 10:16

I don't think millions but I mean soccer is is a mainstay here. I mean, MLS this is MLS '10th season. It's an established league. It's, it's very — even, you know, talking about expansion. There's been some progress made on getting the Wizards a permanent stadium in the Kansas City area, which would, would hopefully allow them to, to complete the, the ongoing sale transaction that they've been trying to trying to get. So, yeah, I think, you know, and obviously, you know, the youth soccer boom has been going on for decades now. And there are a lot of kids playing soccer and it's just, it — I have the same question, you know, Vladimir has with, you know, you know, you got all these kids playing soccer, and then what

happens to them? You know, after they're done with the Youth League? Why isn't, you know, you would, you would have thought by now that, that those kids would have been, you know, going on to college to play soccer and then dreaming to play professionally. And, you know, maybe, maybe it's still coming. I mean, so I think the possibilities there. Yeah, I hope so. I hope so.

Stuart Loory 11:23

Yeah. Let me change the subject if I may. I Bertram Eisenhauer. In Germany, there are some problems there is great concern now I with betting, uh, and illegal betting by players and the danger the games will be fixed what's being done to guard against that?

Bertram Eisenhauer 11:47

You know, of course, as the Italian League has just shown you can never be entirely you know, sure that there's not sort of another... you're gonna have conspiracies among players and referees. And, and, and management. I hope you know that that there will not be a scandal, you know, we've had a couple of scandals in, in the past years, you know, we had a referee who would turn, you know, who it turned out, got money from some rather shady figures, and who sort of got involved into with the criminal underworld. I would almost say I, you know, Germans hope very much that we will not have that sort of thing happening actually, you know, when you talk about, you know, problems. I would say that, at this point, people are more worried and more concerned. And there's more discussion about the tickets, you know, to the games because there's a you know, there's a lot of a lot of Germans applied to FIFA and the German soccer committee for tickets, but you know, very few people got some tickets, and now as the as the tournament is approaching, apparently, there are some some agencies, there's offers on the internet with, you know, where where, there's very attractive, you know, tickets for very attractive games, including Brazilian games for instance. And they're being offered on the Internet at outrageous prices, and there's a lot of speculation where does that come from, you know has, you know, has FIFA and has the sort of German organization, have they done a good job to make sure that, you know, truly devoted fans get tickets, or is it just people, you know, who have, who may not be devoted fans, but you know, they want to bring some of their

business partners to the games. There's even been talk because some politicians were offered tickets, you know, whether that was that bordered on corruption and stuff like that. So I think the concern about it, if you want to call it that, sort of shady activities, centers in my impression, you know centers much more on the tickets at this point.

Stuart Loory 14:11

We call that in the United States scalping and it's certainly not unknown for the the World Series, or the Super Bowl, or the Kentucky Derby, or the opera. We, we certainly get problems like that. Débora Gares. Will there be many Brazilians traveling to Germany?

Débora Gares 14:34

Yeah, there are many people there already. If we are talking about press, only from my newspaper, they traveled like, I don't know, like 15 people, and from all the press, many, many reporters and columnists traveled, and for normal regular people- Lots of people traveled too, people who didn't even have a hotel to stay in, and just rent those cars, like trailers just to follow it by by very closely. Not all of them have tickets. But they just want to be next to cheer for, for Brazil, to watch the trainings. There are lots of people there, and even kids, women, all kinds of families. They all for example planned that, with a lot of anticipation, because they know, or they believe that the possibility of Brazil gets in first place, wins the World Cup is big, so people really invest in it. People really plan this kind of travel, and, but there are lots of promotions that, where people just buy something and try to get a free ticket to the World Cup before doing anything to go there.

Stuart Loory 16:08

Okay, I want to continue this discussion. But first I have to say that this is Global Journalist, and I'm Stuart Loory. Our guests today are Bertram Eisenhauer of the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Chris Fickett of the Kansas City Star, Débora Gares of O Globo, and Vladimir McMillin, a soccer soccer aficionado here in Columbia, Missouri. You may listen to this program, ask questions, or make comments by going to [www.GlobalJournalist.org](http://www.GlobalJournalist.org). I'd like to ask Bertram

Eisenhauer in the United States, these days the use of performance enhancing drugs is a very big problem in professional sports, particularly these days in in baseball, what about in football, are steroids being used, and how is that being viewed?

Bertram Eisenhauer 17:08

Frankly, you know, you'd have to ask, you know, some of my colleagues from our sport department, you know about that. As far as I know, you know, there have not been any major scandals where worse players were accused of using illegal substances like that. That's, you know, as far as I know, there's a lot of you know, talk about that, you know, in cycling as I'm sure you know, it's in German cycling as well, you know, with Lance Armstrong but also with, you know, Ullrich, our cyclist, most famous cyclist, but, you know, in in soccer, you know, to my knowledge, you know, there's not much of that activity going on.

Stuart Loory 17:48

Débora Gares has that been an issue in Brazil?

Débora Gares 17:53

Not for now. People are not considering that. So long for now. I'm think during The World Cup, maybe that point will come up, but right now people are not very concerned about it.

Stuart Loory 18:09

Chris Fickett, what do you think? Is there any reason why football players, soccer players should be exempt from from using these drugs?

Chris Fickett 18:20

I don't think so. I, you know, it should be the same standards that everybody else is held to. In fact, you know, especially when you look at how the you know, the the



world anti-doping agency, which has been very, you know, militant about getting all sorts to conform to their roles and with what's gone on with the Congress and Major League Baseball to try to get them in line. I I know I don't see any reason why soccer should be exempt and, and the fact that there hasn't been a big doping scandal in soccer, I think that I mean, that's a great thing for the sport, especially here where people have been kind of disillusioned by by, you know, baseball, and and the players that have tested positive for steroids or under suspicion of using steroids. I think Americans like to see people compete clean and win clean, and and, you know, soccer not having a big scandal, I think that's a good thing for soccer in the US.

Stuart Loory 19:24

The other big problem with soccer, And of course, drugs is not a problem, as as you all pointed out, but one of the big problems is nationalism. There is some amount of violence among crowds at at big soccer games around the world and a lot of this is, is unfortunately nationalistic or uh I or racist. How has that been handled in previous years as any progress being made on tamping that down, Débora?

Débora Gares 20:02

Well, actually, I think here, our biggest problem with that kind of subject is against Argentina. It's our best rival, and it's It's been like that for years and years. And players only to get in the same field. They start looking each other in a bad way. But it's mainly in the field and considering the cheering stadiums will be very diversity, we will have a great diversity. I don't think it will be a great problem of a violence problem, but I'm certain that in the field, if Brazil and Argentina get across, there will be the same reality of it has been for years and years. Also, with Italy I believe, for the past world cup but mainly with Argentina they just can stand each other, but it's all in the field.

Stuart Loory 21:06

Bertram Eisenhauer, what do you think?

Bertram Eisenhauer 21:09

Well, of course, you know, security in general is a big, big concern for Germans here. And not only, you know, and that concerns, I think two things. One, of course, is terrorism. And, you know, authorities here say that they're quite confident about, you know, the stadiums about security in the stadiums. You know, we'll have to see whether that's true. What they're more concerned is what they call here public viewing. And that is people gathering, you know, in the 10s of thousands out on, you know, squares and in the streets, watching football events, you know, or watching games live on a big screen. And because they that's the type of crowd that's very, very hard to control, both when you were talking about terrorism, but also when you're talking about hooligans. I think the British for instance, you know, they're notoriously you know, they have sort of a very bad reputation as being violent when it comes to soccer games. I think the British they have barred 3200 known hooligans from even you know, leaving the country during the World Cup state can't even come to Germany. You know, German authorities, the police they have their special police forces special units that are, you know, taking a very close look keeping a very close eye on hooligans, on known hooligans, there's a sort of a command center in Southern Germany that is in constant contact with, you know, police forces all over the country, in all the cities where there's a game and they know whenever there's sort of a group, or at least that's what they say, you know, they know when sort of a group of hooligans is on the march and they're worried about people, yeah, from from Britain- apparently Polish hooligans are a big problem now as well. And you know, we'll you know we'll see what what happens if if these fans quote unquote see their see their team lose or even win because you know sometimes they they they turn violent even even though they're you know they don't have a you know a reason to be because they're when you know that their team has been victorious which is a kind of strange phenomenon to me but anyways.

Stuart Loory 23:33

Chris Fickett is there much concern about terrorism among American journalists covering this?

Chris Fickett 23:43

You know, I haven't heard anything against the American journalists specifically, but you know, there are the extra security steps that the US team has taken, you know, their, their bus. I'm sure everyone's heard of this, that all the 32 teams have their flag painted on their bus except for one country, and that would be the United States because they don't want them to be, you know, that would make them more of a target. Though I think the reception of the US team I, I'd like to hear Bertram's take on that they've been standing in Hamburg. And from what I've read, I think there, there haven't been any, any problems yet. With the team and I don't know if there are any specific threats that that or or had that have come across. So, no, I mean.

Bertram Eisenhauer 24:36

No, no, you know, as far as I can, you know, as far as I can tell the, you know, the teams and they sort of, they've been arriving in the past few days. They've been, you know, welcomed by pretty enthusiastic crowds. Not only Germans, but of course, also people, you know, either people from their countries who live in Germany, or you know, fan who are already here. You know, there's a, you know, there's a very keen interest in this. And, you know, for instance, if you're thinking if you're talking about the, the team from Iran, you know, they're being watched rather closely because there's also a discussion will, you know, Iranian President, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad? Will he come to Germany whenever his team plays? You know, and he's, you know, there was some discussion. You know, I think he's going to send one of his vice presidents apparently now, but of course, there was, you know, a speculation, you know, what's going to happen if they, if the Iranians play the Americans, for instance, but that's.

Stuart Loory 25:41

that would be huh.

Bertram Eisenhauer 25:43

Yes, I, you know, that would be obviously, politically highly charged. I mean, there's no as as you probably know, the that's, you know, that's something that that sports can probably not escape that's, you know that there's other, you know that there's feelings of nationalism coming into, into sort of a sports event. But you can never really stop people from from getting very agitated, very excited about this.

Stuart Loory 26:13

If I can just ask Vladimir McMillin, podruga, what is the problem with the Russian football team? It didn't qualify How come?

Vladimir McMillin 26:24

Well, they have problems for a long time now. Because, you know, what I think is that too many foreign players are playing in in the country, or sometimes there's 11 players on the field, and all of them are not representative of Russia, you know, in the national championship, I mean. So I think that's a very big problem there. But now, now, the young generation I think, I hope, will take care of the future of soccer because it's so popular there. It's unbelievable, it's sports number one, and everybody, I think everybody will watch the soccer tournament in Germany.

Stuart Loory 27:10

Yeah, (unintelligible), you when you say that too many foreign players? Are you talking about players from the former Soviet Union? Or are you talking about players from

Vladimir Mcmillin 27:20

From all over the world

Stuart Loory 27:22

all over the world?

Bertram Eisenhauer 27:23

There's a lot of Brazilians are playing in Russia. A lot of Argentinians are playing there, and there's bunch of Ukrainians too.

Stuart Loory 27:32

Okay, I'm sorry, I do have to cut it off. I let me finish by saying that although soccer has its problems these days, it does point the way toward international understanding through global competition on the playing field. We cannot only all enjoy it, but we can learn from it. Our guests today have been Vladimir McMillin here in Columbia, Débora Gares of O Globo in Rio de Janeiro, Chris Fickett of the Kansas City Star, and Bertram Eisenhauer of the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung. Our director is Pat Akers, and our producers John Amick, María Inés Miró-Quesada, and Hyunjin Seo. For all, I'm Stuart Loory, global journalist will be back next week.