



The
Shuttlecoque
Sporting
Club

The PURPOSE of the S.S.C. shall be:

1. To call attention to, and ably champion, those aspects of sport that are either most ennobling or transcendent. We believe vigorously in sport as Provocation—that is, that it facilitates those instances when something inside of us resonates vibrantly with something outside. We aim to shout to the roof tops the names of Enthusiasm's greatest practitioners, who, by virtue of their acts of physical genius, serve both to celebrate human potential and produce within us curious moments of inner freedom.

We shall call this the principle of SPORT AS PROVOCATION.

2. To promote and legitimize the idea of man at play (*homo ludens*), as opposed to the traditional American-Protestant disposition towards joyless toil and labor (*homo faber*). We consider most important and satisfying those acts in which we partake wholly without obligation, by virtue of their own worth, and which allow for experimentation and mastery—a.k.a. *autotelic* activities. Spectatorship, in particular, we esteem not as mere diversion, but as a participatory activity with its own demands that, when understood sufficiently, might provide equal meaning to that which we typically call “work.”

We shall call this the principle of PLAY.

3. To act as a retreat, meeting ground, and occasional symposium for those interested in The Good Life, by which term (i.e. The Good Life) we mean freedom from anxiety, emotional disturbance, and unnecessary exertions (a state known as *ataraxia*, in the Greek). And, while we do not endorse any one means of achieving this state, we founders do believe that a constant study of, and curiosity for, ethical philosophy—that is, The Art of Living Well—is imperative to its pursuit. Nor by this do we mean only a theoretical understanding of that philosophy, but a willingness to put into practice its most elegant precepts.

We shall call this the principle of ETHICAL LIVING.

4. To create, by virtue of a selective membership process, the ideal environment for adult camaraderie—especially that sort which produces animated conversation, a lively exchange of ideas, a generosity of spirit, and honest criticism. In particular, we honor the bond of fandom, which brings together those of us having been seduced by sport's penchant for Revelation, who wish to share amongst the equally devoted such stirring Provocations.

We shall call this the principle FRIENDSHIP.

5. Finally, to document and share amongst members such instances as illuminate the merit or further intensify the mystery of the first four principles. *Fides quaerens intellectum*, theologians call it: “Faith in search of understanding.” For we who have borne witness to great Enthusiasm, who have been seized by such pleasure as sport provides, there exists also the desire to recognize such experiences, whether by analysis, narrative, or praise.

We shall call this the principle of FAITH IN SEARCH OF UNDERSTANDING

To learn more, tune into the Shuttlecoque Sporting Hour on 1450AM, Sundays at 9:00PM, or point your internet browser to sportinghour.blogspot.com.

20 DECEMBER 2007

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE SHUTTLECOQUE SPORTING CLUB
WHEN IN REVIEW

THE NEW ENTHUSIAST

GAME REVIEW

IN WHICH THE AUTHORS PROVIDE
LESS MATTER, MORE ART

Club World Cup Re-cap
AC Milan 4-2 Boca Juniors
16 December 2007

YOKOHAMA.- Last Sunday, the world at large—and especially several dozen thousand Japanese people—were given the rare and memorable gift of a worthwhile finish to a short tournament that remains an enigma wrapped in obscurity.

Against all odds, the final of the Club World Cup was a rousing and unexpected display of high-quality Sport that enticed the spectator like twenty geishas lined up in a row and was replete with "happy ending"—that is, some spectacular goals and the final box-top cut-away for Milan's Kaka, who redeemed his prize Monday when he became only the twenty-second Brazilian to receive FIFA's World Player of the Year Award. And, after Sunday's pan-continental thriller, there is no question that he deserves the prize. The cherubic attacking mid-fielder played easily and splendidly throughout the game, set-up two goals for Filippo "The Candle-Man" Inzaghi, and scored a tremendous goal himself to ensure his inclusion in all sorts of Pantheons.

The contest itself was close and well-won, if handily, by Milan, who seem only capable of real brilliance when playing in the presence of awaiting silverware (they have yet to win a game at home this season in Serie A). The Argentinian squad—headed by Martin Palermo and Rodrigo Palacio—demonstrated the inventiveness and creativity that lacks in the Italian game, and the young Ever Banega handed out his dazzling business card to thousands of agents and scouts worldwide. But in the end all but two of the *bufonadas encantadoras* were snuffed out by Paolo Maldini and Milan's senescent yet predictably competent back line and the Italian side were handed another trophy they might or might not truly deserve.

—Eamon ffitich

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OR

HARROWING FABRICATION

The entire sports media universe is crushing real hard right now on Tom Brady's enormous Talent. Watch as The New Enthusiast jumps on that giant bandwagon with what has mistakenly been referred to as "comedy."

1. Much of John Cougar Mellencamp's early work prophesies Tom Brady's success.
2. Tom Brady originally trained to be a smitty—like his father, and his father before him.
3. Auguste Rodin used Tom Brady as a model for *The Thinker*.
4. Certain Catholic leaders have considered editing the New Testament just to have Tom Brady in the background during some key scenes.
5. Tom Brady is TOEFL certified. It's true.
6. Tom Brady was originally offered the role of Max Fischer in the film *Rushmore*, but eventually had to pass on it when it became clear that he was not short or a teenager or that good of an actor.
7. "That's Tom Brady in a nutshell": no one could ever say this.
8. Tom Brady's work is notable for being so complex and yet, at the same time, so accessible.
9. Nowadays, when someone says "TB," it's not tuberculosis you think of.
10. Tom Brady has needs, too—need which, more often than not, he's able to satisfy almost instantly.

GAME PREVIEW

IN WHICH THE AUTHORS PREDICT A MIRACLE

Barcelona v Real Madrid
23 December 2007

When I was young, on the odd occasion I was unable to sleep, my mother encouraged me just to picture myself playing baseball, a sport for which I had—and still have, thank you—great affection. And so it was that I would spend however long in my bed placing myself amongst major leaguers, alternately pitching and batting in a way that could only be described as *superlative*—turning, as it were, my proverbial lemons (pre-teen insomnia) into just as proverbial, but also incredibly tasty, lemonade (an active fantasy life). The result was that, even though I became little more than a scrappy, bespectacled high school bench player in what many would call "reality," in my own personal fantasy league, in a career that has lasted some 20 years, I've compiled 1,750 career wins and an ERA of 0.27 as a starting pitcher and, as a batter, have set the record for consecutive time reaching base at ∞ . That's infinity, for anyone who doesn't already know. Infinity times. That's definitely a record. The bottom line is, it's been a successful imaginary career, and I'll probably induct myself into an equally imaginary hall of fame someday, and give an imaginary speech that will, almost certainly, leave everyone in a pool of their own tears.

"Yes, Cistulli, but what could this possibly have to do with Spain's most deliriously thrilling football derby?"

Allow me to circumlocute on that.

Since having been seduced by football (i.e. soccer), I have, as they say, "given it up smooth" to a number of players and teams. Whatever the European equivalent of third base is, I have reached it—metaphorically, mind you—with players in most of that continent's top leagues, plus a few here in the various and sundry Americas. In short, I've become what the esteemed Galeano calls "a beggar for good football." Like him, I don't care where it happens, or who performs it, but it has become a real concern.

And so, not caring where it happens or who performs it, I have taken to performing it myself in my own head. In the last year or so, when I've found myself unable to go gently into that good night, I've revisited my old habit of nocturnal fantasy sports, with two alterations: 1) it is now football and not baseball to which I turn, and 2) I am not playing at all.

Before I say what I'm about to say, I want to preface it with this: praise is a difficult thing to make very interesting. (Or, as Gregory Corso would say, "it's a tough baby"). And even though making it interesting is, at some level the very *purpose* of this publication, it is only because we recognize there is no reliable vocabulary for praise that we've decided to publish it—"to invent," as patron saint Ray Hudson says, "a new language in English" capable of expressing a joy that has been, until now, largely ineffable. Hudson himself has contributed greatly to this field, but there is still a lot of work to be done here.

Back to the lecture at hand: my new fantasies, *sans* my own self. The reasons for my absence are many, I'm guessing, but two stick out immediately: 1) that I have never played soccer very well, and thus have no real sense of what excellence would even feel like, and 2) that I am past the age where pretending I, myself, am great provides any real satisfaction. Rather, I'm primarily concerned with greatness—that is, the flashes of brilliance which bring people to their feet—I'm primarily concerned with this sort of greatness existing at all, regardless of where at and who by.

So my fantasies now involve real live footballers playing fictional matches inside my head, doing all the step-overs and flip-flaps and back-heels that make me want to high-five strangers indiscriminately. It's great fun. The crowds, speaking a patchwork of Romantic languages, go home happy, and I fall asleep steeped in the hottest wonderment around.

But it's all a slightly bittersweet type of fun. You see, no matter what game situation or individual skill I am able to conceive of, there is basically a 100% chance that *El Gran Clasico* (as this is known) will surpass anything I have imagined. Or, put in another way: I am unable, given all the tools of my mind, to conceive of a more exhilarating event with more startling performances than this match has already, and almost surely will again, deliver.

—Carson Cistulli