

# World Cup Failure Prompts Calls For U.S. Soccer 'Revolution'

BY RONALD BLUM  
AP SPORTS WRITER

COUVA, Trinidad (AP) — When soccer holds its world's fair in Russia next June, the American pavilion will be glaringly absent.

A bumbling, stumbling, tumbling World Cup qualifying campaign ended Tuesday night with a calamitous 2-1 loss to already eliminated Trinidad and Tobago, the 99th-ranked nation in the world, when merely a tie was necessary to eke out the final automatic World Cup berth from one of soccer's weakest regions.

"Unacceptable," tweeted former Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala, a U.S. Soccer Federation board member. "For us in USSoccer more than a wake-up call. Time for revolution. Need long term plan that is smart."

After American soccer's Waterloo, the fallout almost surely will lead to a new coach and possibly a new USSF head. There also figure to be calls for a reexamination of the player development structure, from youth teams through academies designed with the hope of producing elite prospects.

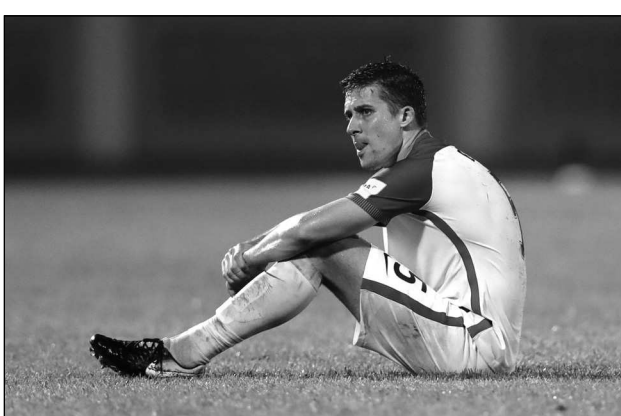
"There is no denying that this is a setback for all of us involved with the game in

our country," Major League Soccer said in a statement.

New York Cosmos owner Rocco Commisso, chairman of the lower-level North American Soccer League that has sued the USSF, called for federation President Sunil Gulati to resign along with board members and senior administrators he put in place.

"In the almost 12 years during which Sunil Gulati has been the USSF's president, little or nothing has been done to enhance our prospects," Commisso said in a statement. "The leadership of U.S. Soccer has failed all of its stakeholders: players, fans, sponsors and those of us who have invested in professional soccer. Getting back on track requires fundamental change in the structure and management of the sport in our country, starting with a change in the federation's leadership."

While fans fulminated over the front office, the next national team coach must instigate a ruthless roster purge. The Tim Howard/Clint Dempsey/Michael Bradley era is over, and pretty much any player older than 26 will be past his past his prime when the World Cup in Qatar kicks off in November 2022. The Americans won't even play a



AP PHOTO/REBECCA BLACKWELL

United States' Matt Besler, sits on the pitch after losing 2-1 against Trinidad and Tobago during a 2018 World Cup qualifying soccer match in Couva, Trinidad, Tuesday.

competitive match for nearly two years, until the 2019 CONCACAF Gold Cup.

By then, Christian Pulisic, at 19 already the top American, should be surrounded with other players on the rise, such as 19-year-old midfielder Weston McKennie, who has started Schalke's last three games in the German Bundesliga. Haji Wright, a 19-year-old winger loaned from Schalke to second-division Sandhausen, is another top prospect along with forward Josh Sargent, who agreed last month to sign with Werder Bremen on his 18th birthday in February.

Matt Miazga and Cameron Carter-Vickers should be tested in defense as the team

reorients to 2022.

A shocked Gulati was measured in his reaction.

"You don't have wholesale changes based on the ball being 2 inches wide or 2 inches in," he said. "We will look at everything, obviously, and all of our programs, both the national team and all the development stuff. But we've got a lot of pieces in place that we think are very good and have been coming along."

The U.S. returned to the World Cup in 1990 after a 40-year absence, and soccer grew at an exponential rate, helped by the U.S. hosting the tournament in 1994. Major League Soccer launched two years later; cable

television and the Internet brought top European clubs to American televisions and later laptops and cell phones.

European clubs discovered there was huge money to be made by playing preseason exhibitions across the pond, growing the sport's audience.

American sponsors started treating soccer like a major sport, if not at the level of the NFL, baseball and the NBA, at least as prominent as the NHL, golf and tennis.

Still, the national team peaked with its quarterfinal appearance at the 2002 World Cup. The U.S. failed to qualify for the 2012 and 2016 men's Olympic soccer tournaments, a generational talent gap evident when a creaky defense repeatedly broke down during qualifying. There were no young goalkeepers considered challengers to Howard and Brad Guzan.

"This has been coming for a while. I think it's just kind of been building up," former U.S. defender Marcelo Balboa said Wednesday.

Elected head of the USSF in 2006 after a quarter-century helping build the national team and federation, Gulati has not said whether he will seek a fourth and final four-year term in February.

More immediately, a decision must be made on

whether the national team plays exhibitions during the November fixture dates and who will coach. Bruce Arena, brought back when Jurgen Klinsmann was fired last November after a 0-2 start in the hexagonal, figures to depart later this year or next.

Among the possible American candidates are Tab Ramos, coach of the U.S. under-20 team since 2011; Peter Vermees, coach of Sporting Kansas City since 2009; and Huddersfield manager David Wagner. Atlanta United's Tata Martino, a former coach of Argentina and Barcelona, is among the foreigners who could be considered. An interim coach is a possibility.

Surprisingly, Arena said no major shifts need to be made in the federation's operations.

"There's nothing wrong with what we're doing," he maintained. "Certainly I think as our league continues to grow, it benefits the national team program. We have some good young players coming up. Nothing has to change. To make any kind of crazy changes I think would be foolish. We're building a good system in our professional league. We have players playing abroad of some quality. There's enough there."

## SPEEDWAY

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Zach Sise of Knoxville captured the Sportsman Late Model win, with Kurt Owens of Newport getting the Modified Street victory, while Josh Chesney of Knoxville recorded the Classic win.

Pierce McCarter set fast-time in Steel Head Late Model qualifying at 13.021 seconds to earn the pole position, with Jason Trammell close behind in second at 13.036 to set the front row for the \$1,500-to-win, 40 lap feature.

Trammell rocketed out into the lead at the start over McCarter, Ryan King, Chase King and Trevor Sise. Behind them Eddie King Jr., John Tweed, Jason Cardwell, Bobby Mays, Layne Clifton, John Llewellyn and Greg Estes were battling for position.

Tweed's night ended prematurely on lap 12 when he spun between turns one and two to bring out the caution and was towed into the pits, with Llewellyn also slowly entering the pits ending his race.

Back under green and Trammell wasted no time in putting some distance between himself and closest challengers. But the action was fast and furious from those in pursuit, with two- and three-wide racing back through the field.

Cardwell and Chase King entered the Fall Classic separated by only three points in battle for Steel Head Late Model track championship. While Trammell was in command out front with the cruise control engaged, the racing was good involving McCarter, Ryan King, Chase King, Eddie King Jr., and others.

Tough break for Mays on lap 24 when he suddenly slowed racing up off the fourth turn when his engine went up in smoke and dumped oil along the front straightaway to bring out the caution.

Off the double-file restart, Trammell once again set sail out front and quickly began to stretch his advantage. With the race running clean-and-green, Trammell easily picked up his second straight Steel Head Late Model win over Eddie King Jr., Chase King, McCarter and Cardwell. Ryan King's apparent second-place finish was

taken away post-race with a disqualification, when it was determined a race procedure violation regarding use of two-way communication during the event had occurred.

Tim Byrd was quickest in Crate Late Model qualifying at 13.555 seconds, with Ross White right behind in second at 13.572 to make up the front row for the \$1,500-to-win, 40-lap feature.

White jumped out to the lead on the start over Byrd, Tim Maupin, Jensen Ford and Mack McCarter. Just outside of the top five it was a good battle for position involving Vic Hill, Logan Roberson, Gary Crittenden and Josh Henry.

Lap 10 proved to be troublesome getting in the scoring books as first a three-car incident involving Anthony Arnwine, Jason Melton and Eli Beets in the fourth turn initially brought out the caution flag followed by the red flag. Arnwine's car almost flipped, getting up on its side and laying on top of both Beets and Melton.

After cleanup by the track safety crew and the field back under green, before one lap could be completed another multi-car incident in the fourth turn brought out the caution flag and then the red flag. Cameron Skinner, Keith Helton, Chris Long, Jordan Graves and Tristan Clawson tangled, with Clawson getting upside down.

With the field back up to speed, racing action was intense between White, Ford and Byrd battling for the lead. While trying to get around White, Ford spun on lap 16 to bring the caution out.

Off the ensuing double-file restart, White was riding out front followed by Byrd and McCarter. McCarter quickly got past Byrd and set his sights ahead on White. Racing between turns three and four on lap 18, McCarter took the lead.

But coming and coming furiously was Roberson, after starting from the seventh spot, with Henry also on the move behind Roberson toward the front. With McCarter in the lead over White, Byrd and Hill, both Roberson and Henry worked their way around

them to settle into second and third, respectively, in the running order.

With Roberson leading the door, Henry followed him as they passed Hill and Byrd. A late race caution on lap 35 for a spin in the fourth turn set the stage for an exciting finish.

Back under green McCarter and Roberson were racing side-by-side battling for the lead, while behind them Henry got around White to take over the third spot. The 19-year-old Roberson, who had captured a win the night before at 311 Speedway in Madison, North Carolina, powered his way past McCarter racing off the fourth turn on lap 38 and went on to capture the Crate Late Model victory over McCarter, Henry, White and Hill.

Zach Sise grabbed the lead at drop of the green flag in the \$1,000-to-win, 25-lap Sportsman Late Model feature. The action proved to be worth the price of admission itself in the early laps as Sise, Heath Alvey (pole winner at 13.601), Jed Emert, Brad Seagle, Warren McMahan, Matt Sharp, Chris Coffey, Brandon Miller, Tyler Smith and Preston Whitehead jockeyed for real estate.

Sise looked strong out front, while on consecutive laps behind him Alvey and Emert were exchanging

slide-jobs in the corners with precise execution. But out front there would be no catching the 17-year-old Sise as he captured his third victory on the season over Emert, Alvey, Sharp and Coffey.

Brad Davis set fast-time at 14.334 seconds to earn the pole position for the \$1,000-to-win, 25-lap Modified Street feature. Davis and Kurt Owens started alongside each other on the front row, with Owens taking the lead on the opening lap over Davis and Austin Atkins. Just behind the lead trio Shannon Emery, Michael Woods and Chris Rickett were battling for position.

Davis looked underneath Owens lap-after-lap in the corners trying to overtake him, but Owens continually slammed the door shut and maintained his advantage out front. Rickett first worked his way around Woods and then picked off Emery, and with under five laps to go he passed Atkins for the third spot.

With Davis pressuring Owens for the lead and the laps winding down, Owens never missed a beat and held on to take his first win of the season. Chasing Owens to the checkers were Davis, Rickett, Emery and Woods.

Josh Chesney and Tim Stevens battled up front for the lead in the Classic feature in the early going

before Stevens eventually had issues and headed into the pits. Enter Eli Keck into the picture as he began to pressure Chesney for the lead.

On occasion it appeared Keck might be able to overtake Chesney through the corners, but Chesney would not be denied his first Classic victory of the season over Keck, Richie Overholser, Chris Worsham and Tony Trent.

The next event at Volunteer Speedway will be on Saturday, Oct. 21, and it will be the final points-awarding race of the season to decide divisional track champions.

### VOLUNTEER SPEEDWAY — SATURDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2017 — FALL CLASSIC

#### STEEL HEAD LATE MODEL (40 LAPS)

1. Jason Trammell #90
2. Eddie King Jr. #39
3. Chase King #44
4. Pierce McCarter #71
5. Jason Cardwell #07
6. Trevor Sise #73
7. Layne Clifton #23
8. Greg Estes #31
9. Ruben Mayfield #00
10. Chris Chandler #8
11. Gary Crittenden #18
12. Austin Atkins #4
13. Dale Reed #52
14. Bobby Mays #25
15. John Tweed #5
16. John Llewellyn #2
17. Josh Henry #70
18. Brandon Tipton #4
19. Don Scalf #07

#### CRATE LATE MODEL (40 LAPS)

1. Logan Roberson #17
2. Mack McCarter #51
3. Josh Henry #800
4. Ross White #0
5. Vic Hill #1
6. Tim Byrd #24

7. Gary Crittenden #18
8. Kenny Ford #61
9. Eli Beets #109
10. Tim Maupin #3
11. Michael Jenkins #31
12. Chase Walls #25
13. Jensen Ford #83
14. Cameron Skinner #33
15. Keith Helton #52
16. Jason Melton #95
17. Anthony Arnwine #6
18. Chris Long #75
19. Jordan Graves #10
20. Tristan Clawson #32
21. Dennis Stiles #00
22. Vic Chandler #88
23. John Llewellyn #2

#### SPORTSMAN LATE MODEL (25 LAPS)

1. Zach Sise #9
2. Jed Emert #98
3. Heath Alvey #7
4. Matt Sharp #43
5. Chris Coffey #97
6. Warren McMahan #33
7. Preston Whitehead #81
8. Brandon Miller #89
9. Tyler Smith #32
10. James Parrott #10
11. Floyd Self #3
12. Joshua Sneed #79
13. Ray Jarnagin #773
14. David Bullington #20
15. Chris Johnston #9
16. Richard Adkins #73
17. Jake Whitehead #116
18. Brad Seagle #11
19. Tony Jones #25

#### MODIFIED STREET (25 LAPS)

1. Kurt Owens #14
2. Brad Davis #88
3. Chris Rickett #36
4. Shannon Emery #M2
5. Michael Woods #66
6. Jon Cook #02
7. Lance Creamsman #C8
8. Austin Atkins #14
9. Mike Williams #19
10. Landon Steele #18
11. Sam Ferguson #1
12. Chuck Kilian #96
13. Dave Smith #10

#### CLASSIC (25 LAPS)

1. Josh Chesney #1
2. Eli Keck #8
3. Richie Overholser #18
4. Chris Worsham #78
5. Tony Trent #501
6. Charles Bates #77
7. Chris Turner #58
8. Chase Lawson #7
9. Tim Stevens #19
10. Lee Merritt #14
11. Tom Juhl #17
12. Will Carey #16

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### FRIDAY

WGRV - Greeneville @ Elizabethton

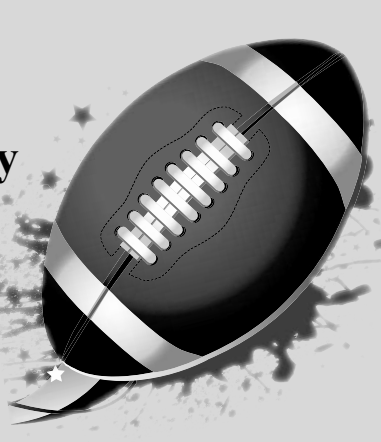
WIKQ - West Greene @ Unicoi County

WSMG - Johnson County @ N. Greene

### SATURDAY

WIKQ/WGRV- S. Carolina @ Tennessee

WSMG - Tusculum @ Newberry



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