

## Why I like soccer and you should too

I am a Cubs fan. I am a Bears fan. I love Chicago and love Chicago sports. But for my true sporting passion, I look to soccer. Having lived across the pond for most of my life and isolated from the U.S. sporting world, soccer was what I cared about. I have played soccer since I was five. I have played it on grass, asphalt, dirt and sand. I played barefoot, with sandals and in \$185 Adidas aluminum-tipped cleats. I played in mini-foot tournaments, neighborhood pickup games in Casablanca and on the high school team. Whenever I had a chance to play the beautiful game, I obliged with gusto. Soccer has followed me everywhere I have been.

Soccer has provided me with unforgettable moments, but not all of them were good. I played in a league in Egypt for four years and no matter how well my team did, we were always eliminated in the first game of the tournament. I remember the agony of missing a penalty kick that would have made us tournament champions. Not to mention the countless kicks to the groin, whacks to the face and elbows to the jaw (one of which knocked me out for a good 10 seconds).

But there were moments of glory. I remember scoring a winning goal in a game in which underdog status would have been too generous a description. I kicked a ball off of a volley from the top-right corner of the penalty box. On it went past the hands of the keeper and into the net. All I wanted to do was run and run I did. People were screaming and cheering, but I couldn't hear any of it. It was an absolutely incredible feeling.

Then there are the memories from watching it on TV. Who can forget Roberto Baggio's missed penalty kick in 1994? Or Oliver



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Bierhoff's leap on the international stage with two headers that gave the Germans the European Cup in 1996? Or Zidane's infamous headbutt to Materazzi's chest?

You can all guess then that I have been watching the Euro 2008 tournament. This has been the most dramatic and thrilling two weeks of televised soccer in my

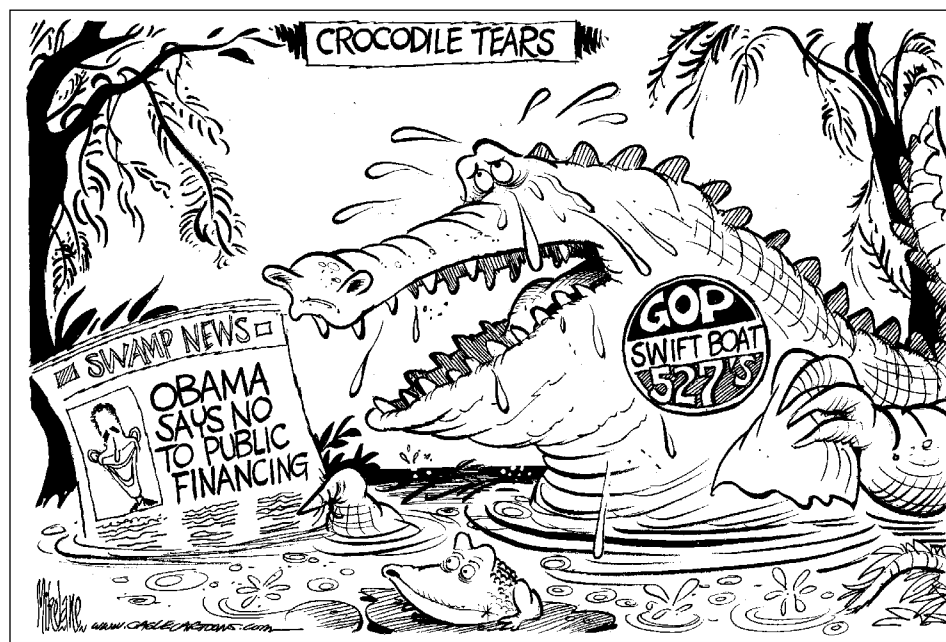
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life. These games have been amazing to watch. There was the heartbreaking defeat of the Croats against the never-say-die Turkish squad. There was Gianluigi Buffon's miraculous penalty block, keeping the Italians in the tournament. Then the ... What's that?! The Russians are coming?! Put your pen down, Tolstoy! Step aside, Trotsky! Put your shoe back on, Nikita! Make way for the new heroes of the motherland: Andrei Arshavin, Roman Pavlyuchenko and Denis Kolodin's right foot. If you missed it, the Russian squad defeated the Dutch colossus 3-1 in a stunning game. Many of the

favored teams have been sent home and a new set of teams are making themselves heard. If you have not been watching this tournament, don't miss another second. The revolution is being televised.

Othman is going to be a Russian for the next two weeks. Go Russia!

### EDITORIAL CARTOON MIKE LANE, CAGLE CARTOONS



### OTHER CAMPUSES CALEB ENERSON, THE EAGLE (AMERICAN UNIVERSITY)-UWIRE

## McCain: The logical choice

It seems every four years, we hear that this particular election is the most "crucial" one of our time. While one must always take this claim with a grain of salt - especially because one generally hears it from pretentious blowhards that threaten to leave the States if the election doesn't go their way (I'm talking about you, Susan Sarandon) - it is valid in the sense that the two major candidates for president offer extremely different views for our country and for its future. Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., may not be a perfect candidate, but he is a vastly superior choice to Sen. Barack Obama, D-Ill.

Despite Sen. Obama's Messiah-like status amongst many, especially my peers, I cannot in good conscience support him. His entire message, which seems to consist mostly of throwing together the words "change" and "hope" as often as possible, relies on his ostensible bipartisanship. Unfortunately, upon closer examination, Sen. Obama is just another very liberal Democrat. The National Journal ranked him as the most liberal senator in 2007, beating out such liberal stalwarts as Ted Kennedy and Robert Byrd - no small feat! In fact, some conservative Democrats, including Rep. Dan Boren, D-Okla., are refusing to endorse Sen. Obama, claiming that he is too liberal for their constituents.

By contrast, Sen. McCain has the actions to back up his claims of bipartisanship - it's not "just words." While this may cause some Republicans to grumble about Sen. McCain's commitment to conservatism, the simple fact is that he will have to work with substantial Democratic majorities in Congress if he wins in November. However, he has a proven record of working across the aisle on issues ranging from taxes to the environment. I may not always agree with Sen. McCain policy-wise, but I will admit that his record shows a long history of true bipartisanship. The fact that

Sen. McCain's victory in the GOP primary sent some conservatives into a temporary panic is proof he is not another ultra-conservative. Conversely, Sen. Obama has consistently found the most support amongst the more liberal elements of his party, such as college students.

During peace or war, national security should always be a crucial issue. This is especially true in today's uncertain times. As a result, a candidate's national security experience should serve as one of voters' primary litmus tests. Sen. McCain's extensive experience in foreign policy and military matters makes him a much better candidate than Sen. Obama. While Sen. McCain's stance on immigration, for example, may not totally please conservatives or liberals, Sen. Obama's position should not please anyone. Sen. Obama favors granting driver's licenses to illegal immigrants, a patently absurd proposal. Not only is it about as popular as bringing back the draft, but it is horrible from a policy standpoint - we will never discourage illegal immigration if illegal aliens continue to receive any sort of privileges or benefits from our government. This is, however, far from Sen. Obama's only foolhardy foreign policy position. Part of the reason that his (lack of) experience is important is that it seems to have given him an overly idealistic view of the world. His ultimate goal is to have a nuclear-free world. I hope al-Qaida has not read that part of his platform.

Part of me wants to support Sen. Obama. It can be difficult for us to realize that less than 50 years ago, blacks in many areas had enough trouble simply voting, and it would have seemed impossible for a black man to make a serious run for president. While I think Sen. Obama's candidacy is groundbreaking in many ways, his policies are not. Senator McCain is the only logical choice for president.

## Readers' opinions

The Daily Illini reserves the right to edit or reject any contributions. Summer letters must be limited to 200 words. Contributions must be typed and include the author's name, address and phone number. University students must include their year in school and college.

Inquiries about possible guest columns should be submitted to opinions editor Andrew Mason via e-mail or by calling 217.337.8366.

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