

# USA's chances 'far-fetched'; beating Austria is its goal

**TIRRENIA, Italy** — With one match remaining — Tuesday against Austria — we're bloodied but unbowed.

We still hope to reach our goal: making the second round. We know our chances are dismal. We have to beat Austria, wait for the other groups to finish play and see if someone loses by a 5-1 margin.

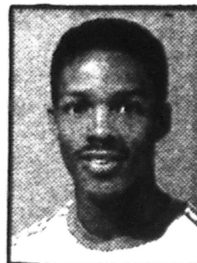
We still have a chance of getting through on goal differential. It's far-fetched, but you never know. We're trying to stay as optimistic as possible. Our objective is to win, and then hope that in winning we score a lot of goals.

Costa Rica's 1-0 loss to Brazil doesn't help. We hoped they'd be blown out the way United Arab Emirates (5-1 by West Germany) was. We need more results like that. It'll be hard to win our last game.

Austria came in with high expectations and it hasn't won, either. It needs to salvage some respect.

We have nothing to lose. We're just going to go out and try to win it. We saw the Austria-Czechoslovakia match (Friday). We think we can do very well against them, or at least make a strong showing.

Desmond Armstrong, defender for the U.S. soccer team, will write periodically for USA TODAY while the team competes in the World Cup.



We want to say we at least won one game. We don't want to say it's useless and let them blow us into oblivion.

People are still talking about our 1-0 loss to Italy. The consensus is we played them well and frustrated them. Most of the comments have been about our defense. Now the public is waiting to see which American team will come out.

Defender John Doyle had a major impact, I held my own and goalkeeper Tony Meola played well. It was particularly nice to see Doyle play well. He had said earlier just playing in one World Cup match was all he wanted to do. He said he didn't have to play every game.

The biggest difference in that game and the Czechoslovakia game was we waited for our chances. The Italian team gave us room.

Maybe they didn't respect our ability. Maybe they felt they could score at will — especially after scoring in the 11th minute — and didn't feel the necessity to pound us.

This is a growing experience. We grew very fast after the first game. The biggest thing now is to be consistent. The last game will be a true test. No one wishes we could start over. We want another chance. We'll have another chance in '94.

We haven't gone out much. We spent an hour in the streets of Rome. Surprisingly, people know who we are. That's because our game with Italy was on TV. They call our names: "Where is (Tab) Ramos. Where is (Paul) Caligiuri."

Having our families here means a lot. They've watched us grow up playing this sport; now we're at the pinnacle. They're who we're playing for. If we could see them more, it would be better.

The most time we've had together was two hours at the Leaning Tower of Pisa. We haven't had a chance to go a lot of places. That's no fun, but we're here to do a job.

## Fate of Romanians seeking