

June 12 USA vs. England
by Profe Desmond Armstrong

The England/U.S. match-up is the classic David versus Goliath confrontation in that the U.S. is David and England is Goliath. England boasts the most popular professional soccer league in the world known as the English Premier League (EPL). All of their national team players compete in the EPL compared to three to four of the U.S. players. This is not that relevant except to highlight the number of their players competing at a high level compared to the U.S.

The Breakdown: The U.S. defense: We have a weak backline in Bocanegra, Goodson (if he starts over Onyewu), Demerit and Cherundolo. Although each has decent international experience, none can handle the power and finesse of Wayne Rooney, England's bon-a-fide world-class striker. There has been talk about his temper, but he won't get too worked up about the Americans. U.S. shot stopper Tim Howard is a quality keeper with many years of EPL experience as Everton's # 1. He knows Rooney is a special player who carries the hopes of his nation on his back and will find away to answer their desires.

The midfield match-up inspires no more confidence than the defensive one. Where we have Donovan, Dempsey, Bradley and possibly Torres, England counters with Gerrard, Lampard, Joe Cole and Gareth Barry. Gerrard and Lampard are just below Rooney on the superstar status poll. I believe we can give it that "good old American try" and show flashes of hope, but consistency is key.

Frontline Breakdown: England's defense is not that solid despite their Italian coach. Terry is a bit off the pace, King compensates for Terry's lack but is short on international games and England's outside backs are in question. If the U.S. can deliver decent balls to Altidore or Buddle with Gomes flashing through the seams on a dribble, they may find a way past England's Green in the goal.

Profe Desmond Armstrong is a former US World Cup player and Olympian, he now serves as Technical Director for Rocket City United of the NPSL.