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OPINION

# The Triumph of Soccer Moms

Why Americans have gone nuts for the World Cup.

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By LANDON JONES  
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It is a truth universally acknowledged that Americans have gone nuts for the World Cup.

Why? Or, to ask the real question, why now? What lies behind the nosebleed-altitude ratings on ESPN, or the can't-miss decision of Gov. [Andrew Cuomo](#) to give New York state workers an extra hour off to watch the U.S.-Germany game during their lunch break? Why have we joined the rest of the soccer-crazy world, seemingly overnight? Is it, as some suggest, the impact of the fast-growing Hispanic population in the U.S.? The time-zone-friendly match schedules in Brazil? ESPN's shrewd marketing?

The answer: none of the above. The real catalysts of the soccer revolution in America are sitting in plain sight behind the wheel of their SUVs. The soccer boom is the triumph—and vindication—of the Soccer Mom.

Often maligned and ridiculed, the suburban Soccer Moms have been the real foot-soldiers—and gas-pedal pushers—who have carried and car-pooled the youth movement in soccer that has finally come to fruition in 2014. Thanks to them, millions of Americans no longer need to be briefed on the nuances of the offside rule or about the meaning of stoppage time.

Today there are more youth soccer players in the U.S. than anywhere else in the world, except China. The Soccer Moms brought this about by supporting their kids through endless youth-league games and letting them grow into aficionados.

So, as the U.S. team hits the field against Belgium on Tuesday, take a bow, Soccer Moms. You did it, despite being stereotyped as social-economic robo-moms who should Get a Life. It turns out that you did something no one else could: You did more than anyone to put America on a level playing field with the rest of the soccer world.

*Mr. Jones, the former managing editor of People and Money magazines, is the author of "Great Expectations: America and the Baby Boom Generation" (Coward, McCann/Putnam, 1980).*

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