



AHOY, MATIES!
 Johnny Depp Is back in "Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest." Stephen Whitty has the review.
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ROCKWELL CALLING
 An interactive exhibit of Norman Rockwell's paintings puts the artist in a post-modern perspective.
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The Star-Ledger

WORLD BEER CUP



ARGENTINA *Quilmes*
Type: Lager. Brewed by Cervecería y Maltería Quilmes, Buenos Aires, Argentina. "Argentina's Favorite Beer." Founded in 1890.
Alcohol by volume: 4.9 percent



AUSTRALIA *Foster's Special Bitter*
Type: Pale lager. Brewed under the supervision of Carlton & United Breweries, Melbourne, Australia, by FBG Breweries, Toronto. Founded 1907; Carlton Brewery founded 1864.
Alcohol by volume: 4.5 percent
 www.fosters.com.au



BRAZIL *Xingu*
Type: Black lager beer. Brewed by Cervejarias Kaiser Brasil, Ponta Grossa, Brazil. Xingu is a tributary of the Amazon River. Label shows a crocodile and a loin-cloth-clad Txucahamei warrior shooting bow and arrow.
Alcohol by volume: 4.4 percent
 www.amazonbeer.com



ECUADOR *Pilsener*
Type: Lager. Brewed by Cervezas Nacionales C.A., Guayaquil, Ecuador. Best-selling beer in Ecuador. Founded 1921.
Alcohol by volume: 4.2 percent
 www.pilsener.com.ec



ENGLAND *Samuel Smith's Nut Brown Ale*
Type: Ale. Brewed at Samuel Smith Old Brewery, Tadcaster, North Yorkshire, England. Founded 1758. Brown ale is one of the oldest English brewing styles.
Alcohol by volume: 5.0 percent
 www.merchantduvin.com/pages/5_breweries/samsmith.html



FRANCE *Fischer Amber Ale*
Type: Ale. Brewed by Brasserie Fischer, Schiltigheim, France. Founded 1821.
Alcohol by volume: 6.0 percent
 www.fischerbeverages.com



GERMANY *Schneider Weisse Hefe-Weizen*
Type: Wheat beer. Brewed by Georg Schneider & Sohn, Munich. Founded 1872.
Alcohol by volume: 5.4 percent
 www.schneider-weisse.de



GHANA *Star*
Type: Lager. Brewed by Guinness Ghana Breweries Group, Accra, Ghana.
Alcohol by volume: 5.0 percent



ITALY *Moretti*
Type: Lager. Brewed by Heineken Italia s.p.a. in Comun Nuovo, Italy. Founded in 1859.
Alcohol: 4.6 percent
 www.birramoretti.it



MEXICO *Negra Modelo*
Type: Vienna lager. Brewed by Cervecería Modelo, Mexico City. Founded 1926.
Alcohol by volume: 5.3 percent
 www.negramodelo.com



NETHERLANDS *Grolsch*
Type: Lager. Brewed by Grolsche Bierbrouwerij, Enschede, Netherlands. Founded 1615.
Alcohol by volume: 5.0 percent
 www.grolsch.co.uk



PORTUGAL *Sagres*
Type: Lager. Brewed by Sociedade Central de Cervejas e Bebidas, Vialonga, Portugal. Founded 1940. Portugal's best-selling beer. Parent company: Scottish & Newcastle.
Alcohol by volume: 5.1 percent
 www.scottish-newcastle.com



SPAIN *Estrella Galicia*
Type: Lager. Brewed by Hijos de Rivera, La Coruña, Spain. Founded 1906.
Alcohol by volume: 4.7 percent
 www.estrellagalicia.es



SWEDEN *D. Carnegie & Co. Stark-Porter*
Type: Porter. Brewed by AB Pripps Bryggerier, Sundsvall, Sweden. Founded 1836.
Alcohol by volume: 5.5 percent
 Web site for everything you ever wanted to know about Swedish beers:
 www.xs4all.nl/~pattro1ro/swedbrew.htm



SWITZERLAND *Cuvée du 7ème*
Type: Ale. Brewed by Brasserie des Franches-Montagnes, Jura, Switzerland. Founded 1997.
Alcohol by volume: 7.5 percent
 www.brasseriebfm.ch (French only)



UKRAINE *Obolon Premium*
Type: Lager. Obolon Brewery, Kiev. Obolon is Ukraine's largest exporter of beer. Brewery built 1980; acquired "Obolon" name in 1986.
Alcohol by volume: 5.2 percent
 www.obolon.com

BY PETER GENOVESE
 STAR-LEDGER STAFF

Somewhere around the 57th minute of the most exciting, thrilling and messy World Cup matchup in years, with the playing field littered with cups, bottlecaps and puddles — and we're not talking water — one player paused mid-stride. Or maybe it was mid-hoist.

"I'm just as disappointed with it as I was in the first round," Jack McDougall of Cranford said. "It's just lacking." A smile spread across his face. "But I'll try a little more."

This competition had all the drama and intrigue of a World Cup match, with two exceptions — the playing field was a conference table, and participants weren't flagged. McDougall was one of five panelists in a competition featuring one beer from each of the World Cup 2006 round-of-16 teams. As Italy and France get ready to square off in Sunday's championship game, we had important business of our own — determining the winner of the first-ever World Beer Cup.

Sixteen beers matched up to mirror the actual second round of World Cup play. We chose quality beers that would represent their countries well, and readily-available beers.

Beer from Ghana? We managed to sweet-talk a bottle of Star from the owner of a Ghanaian market in Newark. We found French, Swiss and Swedish beers at Ramsey Liquors in Ramsey; and Argentinian, Ecuadorean and Portuguese beer at Elmora Liquors in Elizabeth.

First round

On a recent evening, in a heavily-guarded Star-Ledger conference room (we were worried about, say, in-house Netherlands sympathizers trying to deep-six Portugal's chances by hiding the bottle of Sagres), our blue-ribbon panel convened. The competition was fierce, fast and filling; the average 12-ounce beer packs about 150 calories. Which means the 25.4-ounce can of Foster's Special Bitter has... oh, never mind.



Jack McDougall admires a glass of Samuel Smith's Nut Brown Ale.

How did the World Beer Cup play out? Pull up a stool and read on.

There were few shockers in the round of 16 in Germany's World Cup. But the World Beer Cup was another matter. How about Australia (Foster's Special Bitter) knocking out three-time World Cup winner Italy (Moretti)? Mexico (Negra Modelo) vs. two-time World Cup winner Argentina (Quilmes) was no contest. "Argentina's favorite beer" was not on the same playing field as the dark beer; Mexico won 5-0, and advanced to the quarterfinals.

Or the biggest upset of all, Germany, that bastion of beer and soccer, eliminated in the first round by Sweden? Yes, Sweden. In a narrow 3-2 decision (no penalty kicks needed), our panel judged D. Carnegie Stark-Porter superior to Schneider Weisse Hefe-Weizen (one of the most admired wheat beers). "Malty, chocolatey," Pat Fox said of the former.

On the right side of the bracket, England (Samuel Smith's Nut Brown Ale) pummeled Ecuador (Pilsener) 5-0. Portugal (Sagres) scored a surprising 5-0 whitewash over Netherlands (the mighty, and mightily popular, Grolsch). Brazil (Xingu) sent Ghana (Star) packing 4-1. France (Fischer) didn't need Zinedine Zidane to dominate Spain (Estrella Galicia) 5-0. Pat Fox described the French beer as "very mellow, a nice malty yellow."

Last call

The panelists took a break, then the competition moved into the quarterfinals. Switzerland should stick to candy, and banks. Cuvée du 7ème — described as both "flavorful" and "odd" — was quickly dispatched by Australia's Foster Special Bitter, 4-1. In a matchup of two dark beers, Negra Modelo edged D. Carnegie Stark-Porter 3-2.

As with its soccer team, France continued its surprising run by finishing off Brazil (4-1). "It's a good drinking beer," McDougall said of Fischer, echoing Jimmy Breslin's pitch for Piels. "Brazil might have to bring Fred off the bench," McDougall said of Xingu, Fischer's competition. We're not sure who Fred was, but it sounded like a good quote.



PHOTOS BY ANDREW MILLS/THE STAR-LEDGER

BEER FACTS, FIGURES AND TRIVIA

■ The earliest record of the cultivation of hops in Europe dates to 768 and was made by Christian monks.

■ The world's most famous and popular beer style is pilsner, originally brewed in the Bohemian city of Pilsen in 1842. Ninety percent of the beer brewed today is pilsner, the standard golden lager.

■ Highest per capita beer consumption: Czech Republic, with about 160 liters per person. The Irish are second, with 125 liters per person. The U.S. is a distant 12th, with about 85 liters per person.

■ Belgium, barely the size of Maryland, is the most beer-crazy country — with 100 brewers, producing 650 varieties of beer.

■ Yuengling — established in 1829 — is America's oldest continuously-operated brewery.

■ There are more breweries in Portland, Ore. — 20 — than any other city in the world.

■ Fabled McSorley's Old Ale House in New York City opened in 1854 with the motto, "Good ale, raw onions, and no ladies." But the bar was finally forced to admit women in 1970.

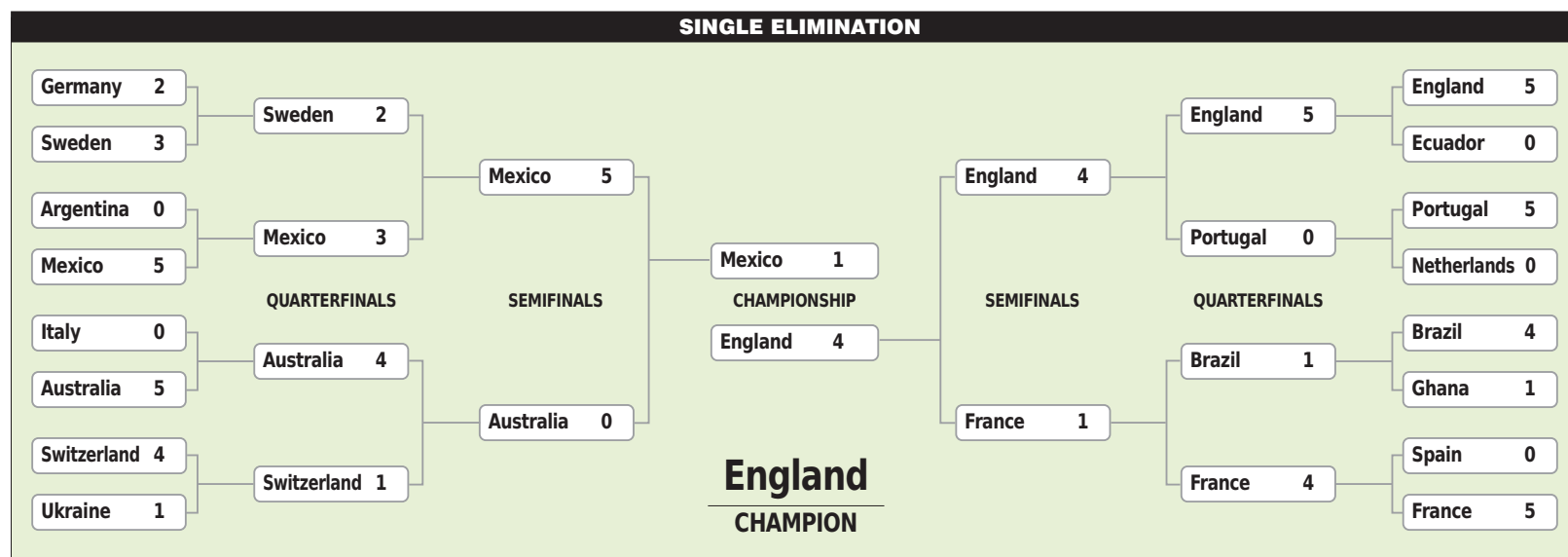
■ The Dominican Republic is the sixth largest importer of beer to the U.S., thanks to its Presidente beer.

■ When Captain Cook first sailed to Australia on the Endeavor in 1768, he had four tons of beer on board. His crew finished it all just one month into the voyage.

■ Highest per capita beer consumption, U.S.: Nevada. Lowest per capita beer consumption, U.S.: Utah.

■ Biggest bar in the world: Red's, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

SOURCE: Big Book of Beer



THE JUDGES

Jack McDougall, Cranford
 Winner of the first Beerdrinker of the Year competition in 1997. The annual event is based not only on how much you enjoy and appreciate beer, but how much you know about beer history and production. Jack's a retired pipefitter at Bayway, Linden.

Pat Fox, Union
 Wore "Beer Goddess" T-shirt to our tasting panel. Home brewer and beer aficionado. Middle school lunchroom supervisor. Favorite brews: Spaten Franziskaner Weissbier and Harpoon Winter Warmer.

Steve Pawlowski, Roselle Park
 Jerseyans must know their suds: Steve was the winner of the 2005 Beerdrinker of the Year competition. Know his beer? Well, he knows every beer he has consumed since 1977; he's kept a list. Steve's a mailman in Clark.

Peggy McGlone
 Star-Ledger reporter; writes about arts news. Calls herself the "lite-weight" of the beer panel, but don't be fooled. Her favorites include Sierra Nevada Pale Ale and Bass Ale.

Peter Genovese
 Star-Ledger reporter; heads up the Munchmobile. Favorite beers include Anchor Steam, Samuel Smith, Cooper's Sparkling Ale and Genesee Cream (in the summer).