



Burma had refused visas to all Americans until the arrival of the boys from Dallas. They got VIP treatment.

DEEP IN THE  
HEART OF  
*Rangoon*

By STEVE PERKINS

Spat on in Iran, stoned in Singapore, kidnapped in Pakistan, the Dallas Tornado soccer team went on one of the wildest, wackiest world tours in sports history

**N**OBODY HAD ever done anything quite like it in the history of soccer—a venerable sport which served as the foundation for the game America knows as football. Manchester United and other English teams had traveled to Canada and Australia for exhibition games. Russia regularly sends its national team to play in South America. But to create a new team and send it on a 45-game, six-month tour covering 25,000 miles and 19 countries! The *London Times* was right when it said, only a crazy Texan would ever try such a thing.

Actually, it was *two* crazy Texans, Bill McNutt and Lamar Hunt, the millionaire owner of the Kansas City Chiefs. McNutt and Hunt are co-owners of the Dallas Tornado (Hunt prefers the singular use of the name), which was a member of the United Soccer Association last year. But when the season ended in August, the entire Dallas team, which had been imported *en masse* from Dundee, Scotland, packed up and returned home. Thus Hunt and McNutt were left with the problem of creating a new team for the 1968 Dallas franchise in the newly reorganized North American Soccer League.

It came down to two alternatives: either buy up high-salaried European veterans and hope that homesickness, family ties and conflicting styles wouldn't send them scurrying back home after a single season; or build a team from the ground up, taking young and adventuresome players and molding them into a unit.

The wealthy Texans chose the latter, and decided the best way to introduce the boy wonders to each other—on and off the field—was on a round-the-world schedule of exhibition games.

It may have been the wildest, wackiest sports team tour ever. Some of the highlights for the Tornado players:

They bunked with lizards in India.

They acquired Princess Grace as a mascot in Monaco.

They got stoned in Singapore. "I really didn't appreciate the point of that phrase until we came to Texas," says Dave Moorcroft. "We also got stoned, in a more pleasant fashion, in Tokyo, if you take my meaning."

They missed death by an hour's breadth in Athens.

Hunt and McNutt started the team by hiring a strong and knowledgeable manager, Bob Kap, who had emigrated from Hungary to Canada. In his first Dallas appearance, Kap showed he would brook no front-office meddling. "On the football field," he said, "there is only one bull on the grass, and you are looking at him." (Less than a month after his return from the tour, the club's general manager resigned and Kap indeed had the grass all to himself.)

**One American made the 16-man Dallas squad, which was captained by Bobby Roach, No. 5, of Liverpool.**



# Rangoon

continued

Kap posed rather restrictive demands in collecting his troupe. All players had to be young—the average age is 20½ and none is older than 23. All had to be single. All had to speak English. All had to be not only

pro-American politically, but had to declare intent to become U.S. citizens.

"I ask you," says Dave Moorcroft from Liverpool, one of the first recruits, "doesn't it look that we all had to be daft to come away with this man?"

Moorcroft had been captain of a Liverpool team that reached the finals of the Amateur Cup at Wembley, which is how Kap heard about him. "It was early in the morning after the Saturday night finals," Moorcroft says, "and I'm called to the phone. 'Are you Dave Moorcroft the footballer?' this voice says. 'The same,' I say. 'How'd you like to come to America and play football?' he says. 'Fine.' 'Right,' he says, 'I'll be in touch.' Then he rings off. When I woke up later in the day, I thought I had dreamed the lot."

Most of the boys thought they were dreaming when training camp opened in Alcalá, Spain, last July. Between Kap's training program and his firm rules, it wasn't easy for the players. "We had a slogan on the tour," says Moorcroft. "'Eenie, meenie, mynee, mo . . . back to Oslo, you go.' Not that many were from Oslo, but it rhymed. There were, to give you an example, these two fellas from Denmark who didn't care for our hats. You had to like the hats or you didn't stay on the tour."

The "hats" were LBJ-model Stetsons, a symbol of Dallas which Kap insisted upon because it so obviously declared one and all as Americans. Nevertheless, one evening in Spain, the Danes filled their LBJs with ice cubes and water and tossed them out of their third-floor room into a courtyard—and almost into Kap's lap. The Danes were on a flight home that evening.

When they began the tour in late August, the team included seven Englishmen, four Norwegians, two Swedes, two Dutchmen and one American, ex-Olympic soccer player Jay Moore of St. Louis. But soon, all became Americans in spirit. In one of the first games, a fullback in Shahi, Iran, kept spitting in right winger Per Larsen's face and cursing America. Larsen, a native of Tromsø, Norway, hadn't even seen Dallas yet, but he defended "his" country with an elbow to the Iranian's teeth.

The roughest evening came at Singapore before a crowd of 40,000, including a battalion or so of Red Guards constantly chanting "Vietnam!" Again it was Larsen, shorter tempered than most soccer players, who retaliated. He charged one of the Singapore defenders with doubled fists. The guy retreated to pull the corner flag out of the ground and braced himself with the pointed end toward Larsen. Then the rocks started raining. "Damn Yankees" is what the Reds seemed to be screaming.

As Larsen took refuge in the tunnel to the dressing rooms, he said to Moore, the American, "They're calling for you, Jay."

"Yes," said Moore, "they're playing my song."

Chris Bachofner, the club's center forward, didn't laugh. The stones had cut and battered his arms, held high to protect his head.

The Red Guard already had been incensed by the Tornado's diplomatic coup at their previous stop, Rangoon. Burma had for 18 months denied visas to almost all Americans, but the authorities personally welcomed the Dallas team at the airport.

A crowd of 60,000 jammed the Rangoon stadium the next night, and Tornado players won them all by parading the Burmese flag around the field before the game. At the end, the Burma players seized the Stars and Stripes from the ambassador's box and joined in a parade of the teams together. The ambassador later sent, through the State Department, a letter of appreciation to Lamar Hunt and Bill McNutt: "I could not have believed," the letter said in part, "that so much good could be accomplished in so short a time. Soccer has opened doors here that have been closed for years."

Then came Singapore. But the Red menace there was not the Tornado's closest call. When fullback Billie Crosbie is asked what he enjoyed the most on his world tour, he replies, "Missing the plane at Athens."

The team had arrived in Greece from Istanbul an hour late and missed connections to Cyprus, a fortunate mistake. The plane exploded in midair, killing everyone aboard. The players were taking snapshots of the Parthenon when the plane went down.

"I think the worst time of all came at the Pakistan border," says halfback Andy Fagri of Norway, "caught in the middle like we were." Actually, this had nothing to do with anti-Americanism. India and Pakistan were having another border dispute over a few inches of territory, and half the Tornado team "disappeared" for 36 hours.

The Associated Press alerted the world. Pakistani border officials finally released all players with U.S. and British passports and shipped (—→ TO PAGE 83)

touch; is a good fielder. Hall can hit only righty pitching, is a fringe ball-player.

**8—CAP PETERSON and SAM BOWENS, Washington.** Peterson hits lefty pitching but is a poor fielder with only a fair arm. Bowens has trouble with righthander's curve but could regain 1964 form playing every day.

**9—STEVE WHITAKER and BILL ROBINSON, New York.** "Whitaker might make it if he stops fighting himself up there at the plate," said a manager. Robinson has a powerful arm, but he's a scary fielder and has to prove he can hit.

**10—JOE LAHOUD and KEN HARRELSON, Boston.** When Tony Conigliaro had vision problems, rookie LaHoud got a shot at the job at age 19. Showed great speed in Florida and a good arm. Harrelson is a poor fielder, a power hitter . . . when he encounters the ball.

#### STARTING PITCHERS

**1—DEAN CHANCE, Minnesota.** "He has what every manager asks for," said a manager, "the hard fastball, great breaking stuff, control, and he goes out there to beat you." "Sure he's hot-headed," conceded another, "but I'll take a hot-head over a guy who doesn't care."

**2—GARY PETERS, Chicago.** Now 31, could be entering his peak years. A master at throwing off-speed pitches, is a thinker as well as a thrower.

**3—JOEL HORLEN, Chicago.** Only 30, also may be in his prime. This spring has been throwing fewer sliders, figuring they take some zip off his fastball.

**4—MEL STOTTLEMYRE, New York.** Owns a great low-breaking curve and a coolness he'll need in a lot of low-scoring games this season with the punchless Yankees.

**5—STEVE HARGAN, Cleveland.** "He had arm trouble the last month of '67," said a manager. "but he seemed all right early this year and he has it all."

**6—JIM LONBORG, Boston.** Would rate No. 1 or No. 2 with Chance except for a skiing mishap that resulted in a broken leg and made his value doubtful for the 1968 season.

**7—JIM KAAT, Minnesota.** Also would rate higher except for managers' doubts about his arm, which ached all spring. Respected for his competitiveness.

**8—EARL WILSON, Detroit.** Winningest pitcher in the league last year, yet was not ranked high by most managers. One reason: Even as a winner, he usually had a high ERA.

**9—JIM (CATFISH) HUNTER, Oak-**

land. "He's only 22 and has had three big-league seasons under his belt," said a manager. "He pitches like an old head."

**10—SAM McDOWELL, Cleveland.** "He could be the American League's Koufax," said a manager, "if he'd throw that fastball more often. He has a good curve but throws it too often."

#### RELIEF PITCHERS

**1—MINNIE ROJAS, California.** Has superb control and thrives on work. "He's strong," said a manager. "If he weren't, his arm would fall off by August."

**2—BOB LOCKER, Chicago.** "Most managers like a low-ball man in relief," said one, "and Locker has a marvelous sinker."

**3—HOYT WILHELM, Chicago.** "I got to put the old man up there," said a manager. "At 44 he throws that knuckler as well as he ever did."

**4—JOHN WYATT, Boston.** "I know he was in Dick Williams' doghouse late last year," said a manager. "But he did the job for them early."

**5—EDDIE WATT, Baltimore.** Three managers said the same thing: "This guy is always tough against us."

That's it. Disagree with the ratings? Don't tell us, tell the managers.

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## DEEP IN THE HEART OF RANGOON

(Continued from page 30)

them to India, but for some reason held the Scandinavians. "You must get the picture," says Fagri. "There were about 100,000 people lining the road to the border. They beat against our bus with sticks. The six of us were shunted to a room with one bed, no food and no water you could drink. But there was a chicken. A single chicken in the street by our door. We finally paid \$12 for him."

When officials realized they were creating an incident receiving worldwide attention, Fagri and the others were allowed to cross the swampy no-man's land at the border on foot.

Fagri's hangover from Pakistan continued in India. "I think that may have been a bad chicken," he says. "I went to the hospital just over the border. There was one doctor. He gave me pills for morning, afternoon and evening. I learned later they were sleeping pills, worth about 12 hours' sleep apiece."

If there is one unanimous agreement about their travels, it is the dismal impression of India. "I'll never feel sorry for myself again," says winger Mike Renshaw.

Even the fanciest place was often none too good. The team was put up at the Governor's guest house in Hyderabad. When Crosbie complained to a servant about the dozen or so six-inch lizards scurrying across his bedroom floor, the man smiled with pleasure. "You like?" he said, and went out and brought in another lizard.

The team found the world-champion bus driver in Teheran, Iran. It wasn't so much that he conquered Teheran traffic, or his exuberant way with the air-raid siren he used for a horn. It was his complete victory over local police through the use of a magical incantation. When Irani came roaring up to the hotel one day,

he decided to save his brakes when he saw two taxicabs parked bumper to bumper. They stopped the bus nicely, producing a neat accordion effect, squashed together there, as Irani grinned and announced to the players: "Out for hotel."

This was just two seconds before a police van pulled up and attempted to haul Irani off to jail for reckless driving and destruction of property. His entire explanation was just three words: "Dallas Tornado Football."

"It wasn't so much that Irani got away with it that impressed us," says Bobby Roach of Liverpool. "The wonderful thing was that the police ended up giving tickets to the two cab drivers!"

"Football (as soccer is called in every country in the world but America) is king everywhere," says Roach, "and it kept us part of everyone's family. The customs whizzed us through when they saw our bags, and hardly looked at our passports."

One of the key projects on the tour, as far as the players were concerned, was checking out the local girls. "Oviedo, Spain, was the stunner," says Moore. "The girls are beautiful and they outnumber the men, 7-1. Nobody knows why they stay there."

"I thought the Riviera was a shock," says Crosbie. "Remember how the girls on the beach at Nice changed from their clothes into a bikini—or back again—inside a towel. Not too big a towel, I might say."

Manager Kap cannot forget Istanbul. "I take the team from the hotel for a walk around town a little and, my God! There is nothing but men. Not a woman to be seen anywhere. And the men are holding hands. 'Back, boys,' I say. 'Back into the hotel!'"

"Don't you think," says Eddie Hall, "that we ought to do something to get

the girls of Oviedo and the men of Istanbul together?"

Hall, another fellow from Liverpool, vied with Larsen for the title of top romancer. He looks like a fellow who shipped out on the Bounty and sided with Mr. Christian. "Undoubtedly," he says, "the most beautiful girls are in Thailand and South Vietnam. So feminine, they are, delicate and gentle. But for mine, I'll take the Australian girls. They are happy types. Not used to the amenities. The Aussie men are not much for the amenities."

It was a female incident involving Larsen and Hall that put to a test one of Kap's first and basic rules—No Poaching on a Teammate's Girl.

To celebrate the Tornado's six-month anniversary since start of camp, the club threw a party in Fiji. For decoration, Kap invited two young female relatives of the governor to the festivities. One, a rather plump one, was put in Fagri's charge. The other, a beauty, was assigned to Hall. By and by, Kap noticed that the chair next to Hall was vacant. Larsen had made off with the prize to a cozy corner of the ballroom. Kap escorted the young lady back to Hall and told Larsen to see him at his room after the party.

When Larsen reported, Kap presented him with his final paycheck and a plane ticket home—even though this meant reducing his team to 15 players just six weeks before the season opened. Only the intervention of Lamar Hunt, whom Kap consulted by trans-oceanic phone, kept Larsen on the club, and he is now one of the stars of the team.

Time alone will tell whether this noble and zany experiment in molding a team on the move will pay off for Hunt and McNutt.

But if all else fails, the boys can always become travel agents.

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