Debating the merits of soccer with diehard fans is the same as with hockey fans about fighting: their attitude is, if you don’t get it that’s your problem. I wonder if the heavy TV coverage of the World Cup (see p. 14) this summer made or lost more soccer fans.

The USA-England match June 10 was the fifth most-viewed soccer telecast in ABC history. The 2-hour match averaged 12.9 million viewers; by contrast, the average number of viewers for regular season NFL games is 16.6 million viewers.

So with all these eyeballs watching, does a 1-1 final score help or hurt soccer’s popularity? I love a 0-0 baseball game; you never know exactly what one play might turn the game in one team’s favor. How is a scoreless soccer match any different? One misplay, one lack of hustle, or one terrific individual (or team) effort can decide a match.

I see the other side’s argument. There’s a lot of time spent NOT attacking. There doesn’t seem to be enough rules, or at least enforcement of what rules there are seems inconsistent to say the least. Really, what the hell constitutes offsides?

The World Cup is truly global (North Korea!!) so I enjoyed watching some matches in the name of research since they played during work hours (honest, Boss). The stamina and athleticism displayed by the players is impressive though I worry about brain damage with all those headers. And I love the drama—the diving after a phantom foul, the indignant arguments with the referee, the penalty kicks. I am a soccer fan, World Cup division except for one thing: those vuvuzelas need to be banned or at least “stuck” somewhere.

Dog day thoughts

Yes, I’m old school but that doesn’t make me wrong:

• When did synchronized cheering become accepted in baseball? My son’s team has played several teams around the area who sound like softball players. If there’s no crying in baseball neither should there be coordinated chants in the dugout.

• Is it just me or is pounding home plate with your $200 composite bat as you await a pitch not only meaningless as far as hitting the ball but also brainless?

• I maintain still that any man over the age of 25 looks half-witted wearing a baseball cap on backward. What, you’re a catcher? You don’t think we can see your chins well enough? It’s like wearing a cowboy hat sideways, you clowns.

While I’m at it:

• Note to world: If it’s raining, turn on your headlights while driving.

• Who litters? Is there any chance at all that a person who tosses his fast-food bag out the car window is a contributing member of society? No? That’s what I thought.

• If you want your children to be wealthy adults, tell them to layoff the keypads and become hand surgeons. As much “digitizing” as goes on with video games, texting, etc., a lot of their peers won’t be able use their thumbs at all by the time they consider themselves old school.

Soccer in USA
—did World Cup help or hurt?