I FIRST MET TED AT A RESTAURANT in Salt Lake City a few years ago. He was representing a Greek player who had been on trial with us. After watching him for a week, we knew this player was a good person, but not a great player. Over dinner, Ted nearly convinced me that was enough to sign the player. While we eventually passed on that opportunity, Ted did get the player signed with another team and I left with a profound respect for his thought process and acumen. We kept in touch, and Ted pursued a kind of career I would want to follow if I didn’t have my current job. In addition to his work as an international player agent, he became a professor teaching sports management, which just sounds cool and is the type of class that I would have clamored to attend as an undergrad. Even a brief conversation with my academic advisor would lend some perspective as to how high a compliment that is. I didn’t believe in attempting to think before noon and soccer practice started at 3:30pm, so that didn’t leave a wide window for classes, but I would have gone to a Philipakos lecture at the crack of dawn.

In some respects it is strange to think of Ted now as an accomplished author. This is not a result of any doubt regarding his writing credentials, but rather my obsession with the movie Ted. I have a tendency to chuckle to myself as I picture Mr. Philipakos as a literary incarnation of that irascible teddy bear waxing poetic upon legal issues of the day. It is with a certain relief that I read entire chapters without stumbling upon any vulgarities. Of course, anyone named after the former king of Macedonia, the man who
fathered and laid the groundwork for the greatest empire of its age, deserves more serious consideration.

To that end, I enjoyed perusing Ted’s book. Having personally lived through the first chapter on Fraser v. MLS as the union spokesperson for the case, it was both grueling and gripping to recall those events. Ted gives a lucid and balanced account that makes both the events of the case and the caselaw understandable and accessible. That pattern repeats itself as he ranges across the U.S. and Europe examining how modern soccer became what it is today. When you work in the trenches of player contracts and transfers as Ted and I do, it is easy to forget how some of the madness involved in those deals comes into being. The legal foundation for one of a handful of the world’s few functioning truly global systems is both intricate and interesting, and I enjoyed Ted’s account and the detail he provides.

Whether taken from a king’s perspective or that of Seth MacFarlane, I think Ted has done a service to a broad audience in providing a new avenue for all readers who obsess over every kick of the ball on the weekend to better understand the foundations of this beautiful game. And for that, I thank him.