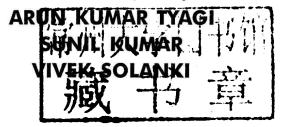


Encyclopaedia of Sports and Games

(IN 5 VOLS.)

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Vol. I

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PART-I

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INTRODUCTION AND HISTORY OF FOOTBALL

Football is the word given to a number of similar team sports, all of which involve (to varying degrees) kicking a ball with the foot in an attempt to score a goal. The most popular of these sports worldwide is association football, more commonly known as just "football" or "soccer".

The English language word "football" is also applied to "gridiron football" (a name associated with the North American sports, especially American football and Canadian football), Australian football, Gaelic football, rugby league, rugby union, and related games. Each of these codes (specific sets of rules, or the games defined by them) is referred to as "football".

These games involve:

- Two teams of usually between 11 and 18 players; some variations that have fewer players (five or more per team) are also popular
- a clearly defined area in which to play the game;
- scoring goals and/or points, by moving the ball to an opposing team's end of the field and either into a goal area, or over a line;
- goals and/or points resulting from players putting



the ball between two goalposts

- the goal and/or line being defended by the opposing team;
- players being required to move the ball depending on the code—by kicking, carrying and/ or hand passing the ball; and
- players using only their body to move the ball.

In most codes, there are rules restricting the movement of players offside, and players scoring a goal must put the ball either under or over a crossbar between the goalposts. Other features common to several football codes include: points being mostly scored by players

carrying the ball across the goal line and; players receiving a free kick after they take a mark/make a fair catch.

Peoples from around the world have played games which involved kicking and/or carrying a ball, since ancient times. However, most of the modern codes of football have their origins in England.

The Origins of football can be found in every corner of the Globe. Civilizations throughout history all played ball games and many of these can be considered forerunners to the modern game, which was established in England in the late nineteenth century.

Ball games were first played in Egypt as early as 1800 BCE. However there are claims that suggest ball games were played even earlier in Ancient China, maybe as early as 2500 BCE. There is evidence to show that ball games in Egypt were linked to fertility rites and religious ceremonies. These ball games involved large numbers of people and records indicate that these games were sometimes used as an exercise to till the soil.

In addition to the Egyptians; the Greeks, Romans and Chinese (as well as others) all played football games, which are considered to be the forerunners of modern football.

It is impossible to say exactly when football began, because its origins are lost, literally, in the mists of time. Some say men first began kicking an object around as far back as the twelfth century. Perhaps they did, but it took a long time for the game to become organized. The first real strings were in the middle of last century, when boys at established English public schools, and at universities such as Cambridge, began to play a form of



soccer which at least bore some resemblance to our modern game.

It is surprising that a game thought of mainly as a working man's pastime should have originated in the very bastions of the so-called privileged classes. However, such was the popularity of football that it was not long before it appealed to a wider audience. The oldest Football League club was founded in 1862—26 years before the formation of the League itself—Notts County, who came into existence three years before their archrivals Nottingham Forest. The following year, 1863, saw the formation of the Football Association—in a public house in central London. This was the world's first organized attempt at controlling the game at national level, and it was from the new body's title that Association football, or soccer, got its name.

However, many people north of the Border believe that Scotland, not England, gave football to the world. With due respect to the Scots, who have contributed so much to the game, this is not so. The first Scottish club, the famous and once powerful Queen's Park, did not appear

on the field until 1867, and the Scottish Football Association waited until 1873 for its inception.

England-Scotland Rivalry

Brazil, West Germany, Hungary may come and go. England and Scotland go on for ever in the international soccer sense, despite misguided attempts in the past to belittle the annual clash between these two.

The first match was played in November 1872, in Glasgow, and resulted in a goalless draw. As for Wales, they reached their centenary in 1976 with prospects brighter than at any time in their history. By beating Austria 1-0 at Wrexham, they qualified for the first time for the European Championship quarter-finals, as Britain's lone hopes. They dominated a qualifying group that also included Hungary, and won five of the six games.

Finest achievement by Wales since their participation in the 1958 World Cup quarter-finals came at a time when England were still searching for the right formula. The violent political climate of the seventies deepened Ireland's soccer problems, which have long included a need to supply players for two International sides—Northern Ireland and the Republic—and the recurring loss of promising players to Football League clubs.

Season 1974-75 game Irish soccer a welcome uplift—the visit of Yugoslavia in April was the first international staged in Belfast since October 1971, and a few weeks later Home Championship football returned to the province after a four-year boycott. The Home Championship was first played for in season 1883-84 and Scotland had a clean sweep, winning all three matches.