

The History of Football (Soccer)

A sport similar to football was played 3000 years ago in Japan. Chinese text from 50 BC mentions football-type games between teams from China. A text dating from 611 AD confirms that football was played in Kyoto, the ancient capital of Japan.

Ancient Greeks and Romans also played a game that resembled football - although the Greeks permitted carrying of the ball. Olympic games in ancient Rome featured a 50-minute football game with twenty-seven men on a side.

The early days

How the sport spread from the East to Europe is not clear but England became the home of modern football. At first the game had a bad reputation among English royalty - possibly because of the noise the fans made - by whose insistence the government passed laws against it. King Edward (1307-1327) proclaimed, "For as much as there is a great noise in the city caused by hustling over large balls, from which many evils may arise, which God forbid, we forbid on behalf of the King, on pain of imprisonment, such game to be used in the city." In 1365 King Edward III banned football because of its excessive violence and for military reasons playing took time away from archery practice the game had become too popular to be curtailed. King Henry IV and Henry VIII passed laws against the sport, and Queen Elizabeth I "had football players jailed for a week, with follow-up church penance"

Laws failed to slow the popularity of football and by 1681 it received official sanction in England. The games were still ruff and noisy, with players hardly ever leaving the field without broken bones or even being spiked. There was no standard set for the size of teams or the field; the earliest organised games, usually bitter confrontations between teams from two or three parishes, had goals as far as 5 km (3 miles) apart. It was only by 1801 that it was (somewhat) agreed that teams should have an equal number of players and that the playing area should be about 91 metres (100 yards). Records show that Eton college drew up the first written rules of football in 1815. (The modern standardised rules are known as the Cambridge rules.)



Until the mid-1800s football rules still varied across regions. Team sizes ranged from 15 to 21. The 11-player team was standardised in 1870. The crossbar between two goalposts became mandatory in 1875. The goalkeeper was formally distinguished in the 1880s.

FOOTBALL TRIVIA

FIFA

The first football club was formed in Sheffield, England in 1857. The Football Association was founded on 26 October 1863 by 11 clubs meeting in London. (The word association was abbreviated to assoc., which became "soccer.")

The Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) was founded in the rear of the headquarters of the Union Française de Sports Athlétiques at the rue Saint Honoré 229 in Paris on 21 May 1904.

Where does the word "soccer" come from?

In the 1880s students of Oxford university abbreviated words by adding "er" to the end; for instance, breakfast became "brekkers" and "rugby rules" was referred to as "ruggger." When one student, Charles Wreford Brown, was asked if he'd like to play ruggger, he was the first to abbreviate "association rules" (Football Association rules) by answering, "No, soccer." Brown later became an England international and Football Association vice-president.

The Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), was created in 1904 to co-ordinate the national football associations in the world. The first World Cup was held in 1930 in Uruguay.

"The Beautiful Game"

Football is the biggest spectator sport in the world, with angling as the worlds biggest participant sport. The World Cup is, after the Olympics, the most watched sport on television.

Source: <http://www.didyounow.cd/>

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