



FOOTBALL'S GREATEST RIVALRIES

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When it comes to football rivalries, there are usually two kinds. One is born from competitiveness and the second one happens if two teams are repeatedly competing for the top honours in a country. An example would be Manchester United and Arsenal in the late 90s. But there are some rivalries that eclipse mere sporting rivalry and stem from much deeper hatred for the other side. This series will take a look at the most heated rivalries in world football.

The Northwest Derby: Manchester United FC and Liverpool FC

There have been very few occasions in recent years where United and Liverpool have directly competed for trophies. Usually, United have been at the top while Liverpool have been in and around the middle. But even the best United sides always seemed to have a difficult game against Liverpool.

This rivalry stems from the days of the

industrial revolution, when most of Northern England, Manchester included, depended on Liverpool's docks for trade. To counter this, the Manchester Ship Canal was built, which diverted trade away from Liverpool. "Who was stealing whose jobs?" was a famous argument between Mancunians and Liverpoolians at the time.

This industrial rivalry between the two cities gained a new dimension when their local teams started to become successful in football. The two teams have the greatest dynasties in English football but they've rarely been at the top together. Even then, they absolutely despise each

other. So much so that United fans celebrated when their cross-town rivals Manchester City snatched the title away from Liverpool's grasp in 2013-14.

A section of Liverpool fans became notorious when they made songs mocking the Munich Air Disaster in which several Manchester United players died in 1958.

El Clasico: Real Madrid and FC Barcelona

In recent years, El Clasico is all about the two biggest teams and the two best players in world football going at it. But prior to that, in the days of Spain's ruthless dictator Franco, this rivalry had a lot more to it.

The region of Catalonia, the home of

Barcelona, was continuously suppressed under Franco's ultra-nationalist regime. Catalonia is distinctly different from the rest of Spain, with its own language and culture. Catalan nationalism, along with its culture and language, was banned and many times, the only place Catalans could fully express themselves was at the Camp Nou, during a Barcelona game. This is where the famous slogan "Mes Que Un Club" (More than a club) originated.

In comparison, Real Madrid hailed from the capital and was supported by Spanish Nationalists, Franco himself included. So the match was practically the only way the Catalans could get one over Franco. These days, some of that bitterness has faded. But people in Catalonia haven't forgotten.

Rayaan Ibtesham Chowdhury is a 19 year-old with pent-up years of teenage angst who loves to complain about most things while listening to blues guitar tracks. Ask him to stop writing at rayaansmail@gmail.com



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4. A high percentage is undergraduate students.
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