THE GAME

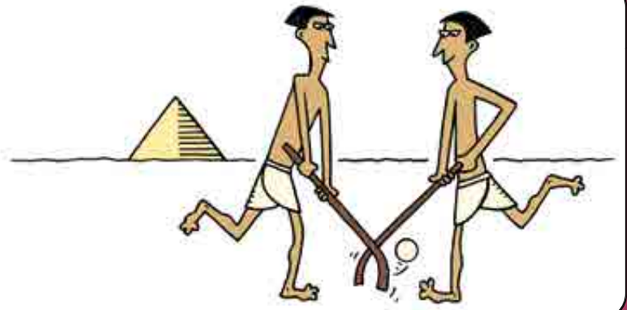
SECTION OPENER TEXT HERE

-ANCIENT ORIGINS-
OF FOOTBALL

Humans around the world have played ball games for thousands of years. These ancient sports were the forerunners of football today

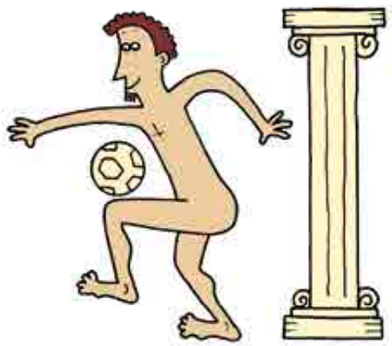
AFRICA
EGYPT AROUND 1000 BC

The ancient Egyptians played a team game like hockey using palm branches as sticks and a ball made from papyrus wrapped in animal skin. They also liked to play handball and to juggle.
Pharaoh–nuff!



EUROPE
GREECE AROUND 400 BC

The ancient Greeks liked ball games – and often liked to play with no clothes on. A famous engraving from around 400BC shows a naked man balancing a football on his thigh. Cheeky!



EUROPE
ROME AROUND 200 AD

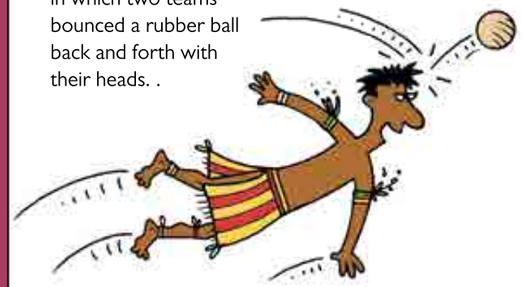


The ancient Romans played many ball games. Some games used a small, hard ball filled with feathers, and others used a bladder filled with air. The Romans also built impressive stadiums like the Colosseum to watch fights and chariot races.



SOUTH AMERICA
BRAZIL AROUND 200 AD

Tribes in the Amazon rainforest have long made balls from the latex of rubber trees. In 1900, the first European explorer to discover the Pareci people of Brazil found them playing a game in which two teams bounced a rubber ball back and forth with their heads. .



NORTH AMERICA
MEXICO 1500 BC TO 1500 AD

The civilisations that lived here – including the Olmec, Aztec and Maya – all played team ball games. The matches were important religious rituals and some historians believe the losers heads were chopped off, and the skulls used as balls!



ASIA
CHINA 200 BC TO 1400 AD

The Chinese game Cuju involved two teams of up to 16 players. The aim was to kick the ball through the opponent's goal, which was sometimes a hole in a sheet suspended between two posts.



ASIA
JAPAN 600 AD TO 1900

Players of the Japanese game Kemari would dress in formal robes and aimed to kick the ball in the air as many times as possible without it touching the ground. One team is said to have kept the ball up for 1,000 kicks!



AUSTRALASIA
AUSTRALIA BEFORE 1900

Marn grook is a team game that uses a ball made from possum skin that was played by Aboriginal Australians before the arrival of Europeans. Players would hold the ball in their hands, let it fall and then kick it high.





-A SHORT-

HISTORY OF FOOTBALL

Over the best part of a thousand years, football has gone from an informal pastime played in British towns and villages to the world's most popular sport. Here we chart some important dates in the football story.



1314

London mayor bans football

The mayor's decree is the earliest written reference to a game called football, which at that time was a disorganised, violent sport played in towns and villages in which a mob of players chased a ball with almost no rules. No wonder it annoyed the authorities!



1477

Edward IV bans football

In the fifteenth century, many more attempts were made to stop people playing mob football. King Edward IV passes a law saying that instead of playing football, people should be practising archery. Target man!



1481

Scribe writes match report

A Latin manuscript from around this time describes kicking and dribbling for the first time. It says that young men "propel a huge ball not by throwing it into the air but by striking it and rolling it along the ground….with their feet."



1526

King orders boots

King Henry VII asks his personal shoemaker Cornelius Johnson to make him a pair of boots for playing football. They haven't survived but historians think they were made from leather and ankle-high.



1747

Posh boys play ball

Football is popular at schools like Eton, Harrow and Westminster. The poet Thomas Gray writes a poem about football at Eton. He writes that the "rolling circle" gives "fearful joy". Poetry in motion!

1660

Game gets gate

In his compendium of games, the scientist Francis Willughby writes the earliest account of football involving a pitch and a goal. The pitch is "a close that has a gate at either end. The gates are called goals."



1594

"Football" quoth the Bard

Shakespeare mentions the game in his play A Comedy of Errors. Not goalkeeping errors, of course!

Am I so round with you as you with me?
That like a football you do spurn me thus?

1581

Football enters schools

The first sign the game is losing its reputation for violence is a report by a London headmaster that describes football as a game for students between two small sides that is good for health and strength.





1762

Mob football thrills North

The first report of a game at Alnwick, Northumberland, on Shrove Tuesday, in which two teams of many players aim to get a ball from one side of the town to another. The game still takes place today!

1848

Students write rules

A group of Cambridge University students write the first ever set of "official" rules for football, to draw a line between it and other ball sports like rugby.



1857

First football club is born

Two members of a cricket club in the factory city of Sheffield decide to start a club just for football. Sheffield FC becomes the world's first football club.



1863

FA introduces Laws of the Game

A group of clubs and schools found the Football Association to decide on common rules, set out in the Laws of the Game. With a national body, the stage is set for football to grow and grow.

1871

The FA Cup begins
The world's first national football tournament kicks off.

Rule change: The gloves are on!
The position of the goalkeeper is introduced.

1872

First international match
Scotland draw 0-0 with England in Glasgow, in front of a 4,000 crowd.



1881

Rule change: Ref!
The FA introduces referees and players can be sent off for violent conduct.

1888

First ever national league
The first season of the English football league involves 12 clubs.



1891

Rule change: Drawing the line
Pitch markings and penalty kicks are introduced.

1894

Go girls!
Nettie Honeyball founds the British Ladies' Football Club.

1904

Foundation of FIFA
The game spreads around the world and matches between countries become popular. Seven countries found FIFA to oversee international football.





1908

Football at the Olympics
Six countries enter and the Great Britain team wins gold.

1921

FA bans women's football
[Line of copy to go here]

1970

FA ends the ban on women's football
[Line of copy to go here]

1971

First Women's World Cup
USA are triumphant!

1991

Rules Change: Stay Forward
Keepers forbidden from handling back passes.

1992

All change at the top
The European Cup becomes the Champions League. The English top tier becomes Premier League.

1960

Rule Change: You're Booked!
copy to come

1955

First Euros
The Soviet Union win in [TK].

First European Cup
The forerunner to the Champion's League is won by Real Madrid.







2000

Rule Change: Stay forward!
Keepers must release ball within six seconds

2001

Rule Change: Stand here!
Vanishing spray introduced [for TK?]

1954

Foundation of UEFA
[Line explaining what UEFA is]

1930

First World Cup
Uruguay triumph in tournament hosted by [TK].



2012

Rule Change: GOOALLL?
Goal-line technology introduced.

2019

Rule Change: VAR!
Video Assistant Referee introduced.

2022

In front of billions
More than half the world's population watch Qatar World Cup

2023

Women's World Cup
[Something about it here]

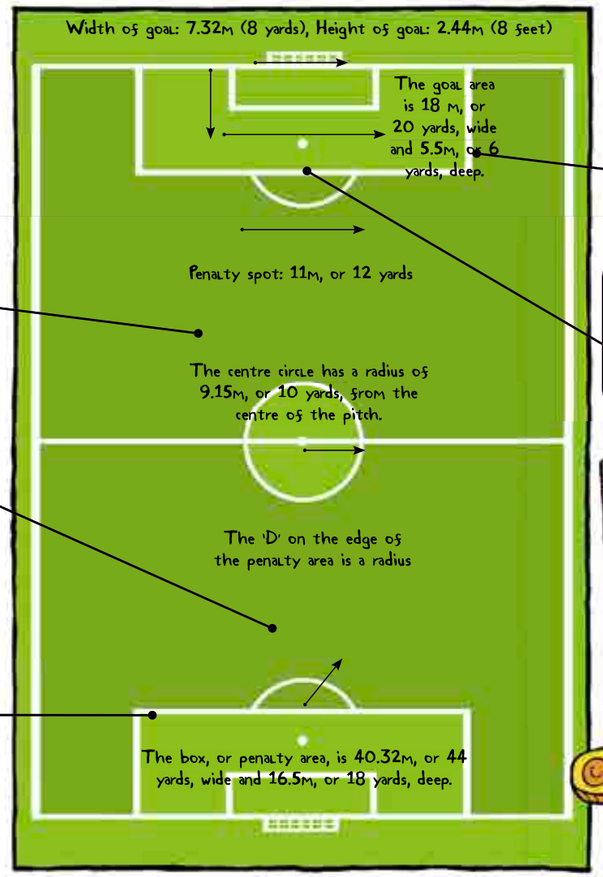
-THE LAWS OF-
THE GAME

Football's rules are consolidated in the Laws of the Game. This contains 17 major laws and runs over 228 pages. The main rules are that every professional football match starts with eleven

THE PITCH

over running text

The first law is called The Field of Play. This states that the pitch must be rectangular and each part of the pitch must measure a certain distance. For international matches, the dimensions of the pitch can be different to league matches:



Goal kicks are taken from the GOAL AREA

During PENALTY SHOUT-OUTS, all players apart from the goalkeepers and the penalty taker must be in the centre circle.

The CENTRE CIRCLE is used to make sure that at kick off, when the ball is placed on the centre spot, the opposing team is the required distance away.

The 'D' on the edge of the penalty area is positioned make sure that every player is the required distance away when a penalty is taken.

Keepers can handle the ball in the PENALTY AREA. Fouls by the defending side here lead to a penalty kick.



GOAL

Intro copy to go here

GOAL OR NO GOAL?

A goal is scored when the whole of the ball passes over the goal line, between the goalposts and under the crossbar, and no foul has been committed. over running text



A player scores but her boot has fallen off before taking the shot.



A player shoots and the ball hits the referee and then goes into the goal.



A team brought on an extra player as a sub but forgot to take a player off. That team then concedes a goal. over running text



A dog runs onto the pitch and stops a goalbound shot from going in.



The goalkeeper throws the ball directly into the opponents' goal.



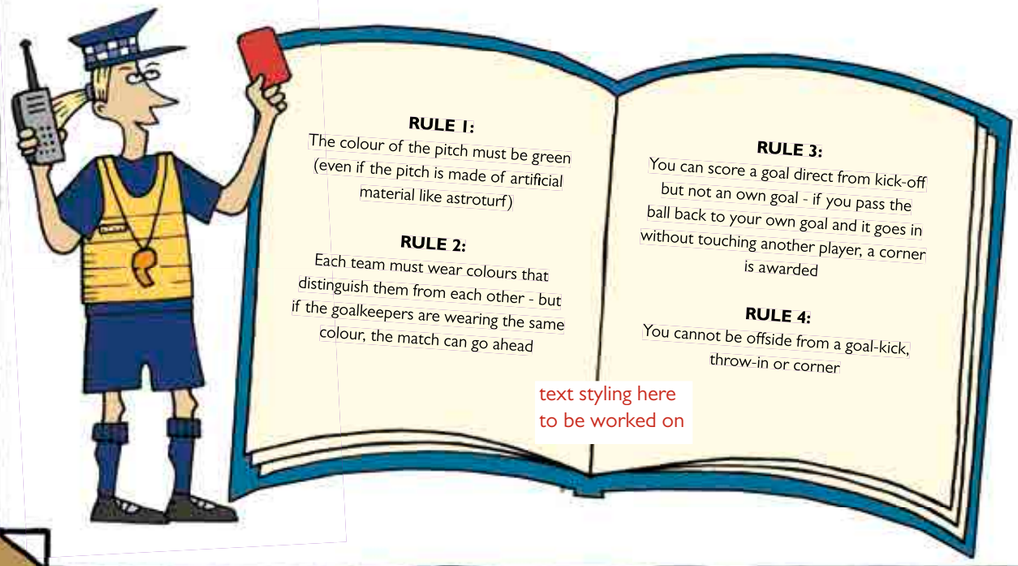
OFFSIDE

Some goals are disallowed because a player is offside. This is one of the most complicated - and controversial - rules in football and happens when a player who receives the ball is too close to the goal at the moment the ball is passed by a teammate. Specifically, the player is in an offside position if any part of the head, body or feet is nearer to the opponents' goal line than the ball and the second-last opponent (usually a goalkeeper and one defender). The rule is in place to stop players hanging around the goal - that would be off!



OBSCURE RULES

The laws need to cover every eventuality, and there are some very obscure rules - here our favourites.



RULE 1:
The colour of the pitch must be green (even if the pitch is made of artificial material like astroturf)

RULE 2:
Each team must wear colours that distinguish them from each other - but if the goalkeepers are wearing the same colour, the match can go ahead

RULE 3:
You can score a goal direct from kick-off but not an own goal - if you pass the ball back to your own goal and it goes in without touching another player, a corner is awarded

RULE 4:
You cannot be offside from a goal-kick, throw-in or corner

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CARDS

Referees show cards to players to ensure that fairness is upheld throughout the game

A **yellow card** is a caution, like a warning, and is shown for these offences:

- Time-wasting
- Dissent
- Entering or leaving the field without the referee's permission
- Failing to respect distance from set-pieces
- Persistent offences
- Entering the referee review area (RRA)
- Excessively using the 'review' (TV screen) signal
- Celebrating in an excessive or provocative way (includes taking off shirt or wearing a mask)
- Unsporting behaviour*

*This covers a lot of behaviour and includes the following:

- Simulation (trying to trick the referee by faking injury)
- Fouls in a reckless manner a direct free kick offence
- Handles the ball to stop an attack

over running text



A **red card** is a sending-off, when the player has to leave the pitch, and is shown for these offences:



- Denying an obvious goal-scoring opportunity with a foul or handball
- Serious foul play that endangers the safety of an opponent
- Biting or spitting at someone
- Violent conduct
- Using offensive, insulting or abusive language
- Receiving a second caution in the same match

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