BACK OF THE NET!



50 Fantastic Football Poems

Chosen by Paul Cookson





50 fantastic football poems from a dream team of soccer-mad poets!

Featuring poems by Bash Amuneni, Liz Carney-Marsh, Paul Cookson, Dr John Cooper Clarke, Sarah McCreadie, Roger McGough, Julie McNeill, Michael Rosen, Coral Rumble, Josh Seigal and Glen Wilson, it's the perfect celebration of the beautiful game!

Straight as an arrow
Fast as jet
Scoring with ease
Back of the net!



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Paul Cookson

With contributions from

Bash Amuneni, Liz Carney-Marsh, Paul Cookson, Dr John Cooper Clarke, Sarah McCreadie, Roger McGough, Julie McNeill, Michael Rosen, Coral Rumble, Josh Seigal and Glen Wilson

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Contents

Team Talk 7
I Have a Dream 8
Kicking Off 9
A Seasonal High 10
Football for Everyone 12
Dog on the Pitch 14
Farmyard Football 16
Jumpers for Goalposts 17
Pressure 18
The Goalie with Expanding Hands 20
The Game We Love 22
Mastering the Cruyff Turn 24
Ten Things I Think About During Maths ... 25
Play Like a Girl 26
Free Kick 28
Magic Feet 30



Local 31
Going to Football with My Son 32
A Game of Pure Poetry 34
Sonnet to the Team I Love 35
We Are Football 36
Ooh – Ah – Mrs Carr 39
Maradona Was a Poet 40
Away Days 41
Goal Difference 42
Stadium 43
Dad's Hat-Trick Celebrations 44
You'll Always Get a Guy with a Half-Time Pie 45
Own Goal Haiku 46
Night Football 47
Footbaaaaall at the Sheep Arena 48
The Cup 50
Back of the Net 52
Her First Women's Game 54
Awaiting a Decision from VAR 55
I Wanna Be a Footballer 56
The A Team 57
My Sister Is a Superstar 58
A Dog Called Pickles 60
Commentators 61
Inches 62
Don't Put Mum in Goal 64
Relegation 66
The Football 67
Women Before Her 68
A Different Time 69
Where We Love to Play 70
Stoppage Time 72
Cool Scorin' Match Winnin' Striker 73
Promotion 74





Team Talk

Paul Cookson

Gather round everyone
Here we are again
Ready to read between the lines
Ready for another game

No rules with poems
Everything's okay
Long, short, funny, serious
Every one, a part to play

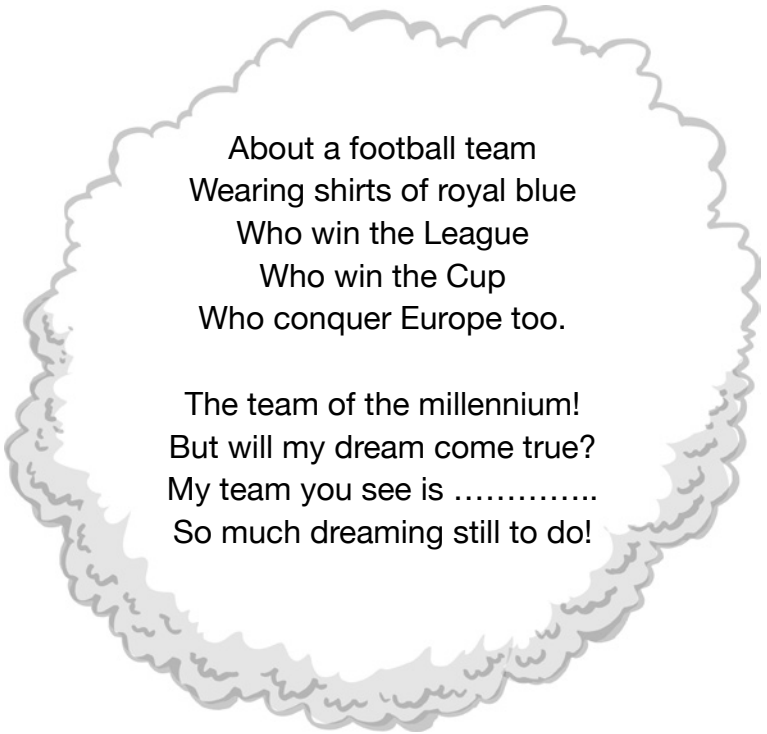
Let's all work together
Cogs in the machine
On the same page
On the same team

Shout them, chant them
Sing them with your friends
Whisper them, pray them
Till the match ends

Let's get stuck in
Give it your all
Poetry in motion
With words and with the ball

I Have a Dream

Roger McGough



About a football team
Wearing shirts of royal blue
Who win the League
Who win the Cup
Who conquer Europe too.

The team of the millennium!
But will my dream come true?
My team you see is ……..
So much dreaming still to do!

Kicking Off

Liz Carney-Marsh

The search for hats and scarves,
a hunt for lucky pants –
they'd pretty much do anything,
to give their team a chance.
Turnstiles clack as fans squeeze through,
seats are filling fast.
Songs begin to fill the air,
the time has come at last.

Two lines down the tunnel,
players bobbing on the spot.
Some are doing stretches,
others picture the winning shot.
Final words are spoken,
confidence grows within.
The captains lead the teams out,
the cheers are deafening.

Excitement reaches fever pitch,
anthems sung with fire.
Chants ring out in unison,
hearts fill with desire.
Formations drawn like battle lines,
they face their fearless foe.
Only one thing left to do –
let that whistle blow.

A Seasonal High

(First Game of the Season)

Coral Rumble

Football Focus
Match of the Day
That's what I call
A proper Saturday
Goal posts, nets,
Corner flags flapping
Beads of sweat
(A manager sacking)
New kits gleaming
In occasional sun
New star signings
Out to stun
Outstretched banners
Chanting voices
Lineup lists
(Some dodgy choices)
Commentators
Losing the plot
Referees pointing
To the spot
VAR
Indecision
Dad shouting at
The television

Driving rain
Against the stand
Random notes
From a makeshift band
Whistle shrills
And crossbar smacks,
My smile is wide
Now football's back.



Football for Everyone

Paul Cookson

So, put the all in football
We're all having fun
We all know the score
Football 4 – Every 1

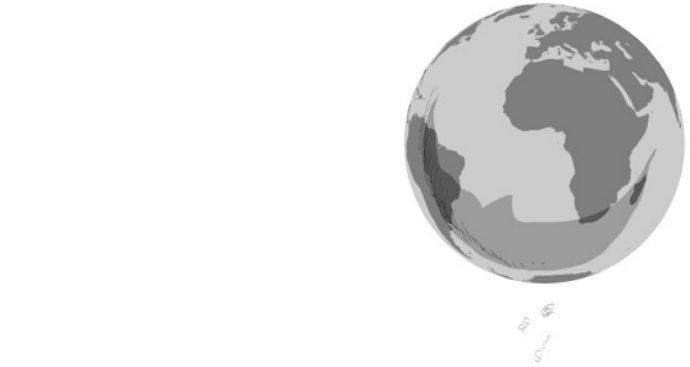
Football 4 – Every 1
Down with h8 – racism 2
Football is for every 1
Him and her and me and you

Back garden or school playground
Down the local park
Five-a-side under the lights
It doesn't matter where you start

A kick about with mates
Penalties with dad and mum
Keep-uppies by yourself
Football 4 – Every 1

Everyone can play
Everyone can kick a ball
Jumpers for your goalposts
That's why football has it all

So, put the all in football
We're all having fun
We all know the score
Football 4 – Every 1





Dog on the Pitch

After Allan Ahlberg

Joshua Seigal

Dog on the pitch!
Just look at him bolt!
The game was 1–1
now it's come to a halt.

Goalkeeper chases
and managers too.
What a palaver!
What a to-do!

Dog on the pitch!
Darting with glee!
Stops by the goalpost
to go for a wee.

Look at his movement!
Just look at his pace!
Look at his footwork!
He's awesome! He's ace!

Dog on the pitch!
No one can catch him!
Look at his tekkers –
yes no one can match him.

Sign him up quickly!
Let's get him – game on!
Dog on the pitch…
Gone.



Farmyard Football

Joshua Seigal

The horse kept hoofing it upfield.
The cow milked every tackle.
The chicken flapped at crosses.
The pig hogged the ball.
All the sheep followed United,
and no one
no one
could beat
the GOAT.



Jumpers for Goalposts

Glen Wilson

We came from all corners,
knowing there would be someone there
with a fresh new ball or a scuffed grey spare,
crumpled jumpers for goalposts.

There was maybe six or seven,
not enough for five a side,
Headers and volleys someone cried,
The first in goal always seemed to be Kevin!

So we dribbled, tackled, headed and shot,
until a goal was scored or the ball was caught,
Goalkeepers changed as dusk arrived
and I was only behind by five.

There is nothing sweeter in any field or park
than a volley that is caught clean,
it swerves and screams
between the posts, disappearing into the dark.

Pressure

Julie McNeill

When he asks if we're feeling the pressure,
the answer is we've felt it all our lives.

Just the right amount to squeeze a pal's hand
when she is breaking,
to cup a daughter's face and tell her she's
more than good enough.

The extra hours burning the midnight oil
to prove you're just as smart as them
and to then get up and burn the oil again.

The pressure in your legs when you drive
hard towards the goal
determined you will earn your place
as the team's one and only girl.

The pressure to look, or feel, or be
as they'd expect.
Nothing more and nothing less.



So when he asks if we're feeling the pressure
of a nation on our backs,
our answer is "Aye"
but we girls know a thing or two about that.

The Goalie with Expanding Hands

Paul Cookson

Any crosses, any shots
I will simply stop the lot
I am always in demand
The goalie with expanding hands

Volleys, blasters, scissor kicks
I am safe between the sticks
All attacks I will withstand
The goalie with expanding hands

Free kicks or a penalty
No-one ever scores past me
Strong and bold and safe I'll stand
The goalie with expanding hands

Let their strikers be immense
I'm the last line of defence
Alert, on duty, all posts manned
The goalie with expanding hands

Palms as long as arms expand
Thumbs and fingers ready-fanned
You may as well shoot in the stand
Not a chance! Understand!

Number one in all the land
Super-human, super-spanned
In control and in command
In control and in command



I'm the man,

I'm the man

The one and only goalie…

With **expanding hands!**