

Soccer Unit

Early kicking games

All throughout history, many ball games have emerged as well as perished independently to one another, often leaving us with nothing but speculations. Considering that many of these games were impulsive and had few or no regulations, it is likely that they also were quite violent. The roughness of these early games surely must have demanded involvement of the legs, for kicking. We have to emphasize the difference between such scuffles and today's skillful game. Even although modern football evolved from rugby, a major distinction stands between the two - the feet are not only used for kicking but also for controlling and moving the ball (dribbling). Using body parts other than the feet, like the head or chest, is another factor suggesting the development advanced technical skills.

While most ancient ball games had no proven relation to rugby or simply diminished ignominiously long ago, they certainly must have produced skillful players or artisans, much like the superstars of today. Therefore, we must acknowledge these as predecessors of the world's most popular sport.

The roots of soccer can be traced back to the Han Dynasty in second century China. The game tsu chu, or "kicking a ball," was included in military physical training. An elaborate game of tsu chu was played on the emperor's birthday. Teams would attempt to kick a feather-filled ball through a small goal that consisted of a net attached to bamboo poles. The stakes were high. Legends say the winners were treated to a feast while the losers were sometimes beheaded.

Kemari was played in Japan dating back to the seventh century. In this circular game, players had to pass the ball to each other without letting it touch the ground, similar in some ways to what we call hacky sack or footbag.

In 16th century Italy, a game called calcio was played on holidays. Teams would gather in the city squares of Florence and Venice and compete in this game that involved kicking as well as handling the ball. Each team had 27 players who wore ornate costumes.

Piazza della Novere in Florence is considered to be the cradle of this fascinating sport. Eventually, the game became known as "giuoco del Calcio fiorentino" or simply, Calcio.

The first official rules of Calcio were published in 1580 AD by Giovanni Bardi. Similarly to Roman Harpastum, it was played in teams of 27 with the feet and hands. Goals were scored by throwing the ball over a designated spot on the perimeter of the field.

Originally, Calcio was only reserved for the rich aristocrats, who played every night between Epiphany and Lent. In the Vatican, Popes Clement VII, Leo IX and Urban VIII were even known to play! Because Calcio originally attracted a sophisticated class of people, it had an impact of international proportions. British schoolmaster Richard Mulcaster mentions an English version of mob football, influenced by Calcio, in his 1561 treatise on the education of the young.

England—The Birthplace of Soccer

Even though games that involved kicking a ball were played in other parts of the world, England is without doubt the birthplace of the game now known as soccer, or Association Football. (Trivia note: the word "soccer" is actually a shortened form of the word "association.") You can even visit the actual birthplace of modern soccer—the Freemasons Tavern in London. It was here in 1863 that the Football Association was founded, but we're getting ahead of ourselves.

[Ancient England had its own form of a soccer-type game. The earliest English games may have been played to](#)

celebrate military victories. Some historians say that after a victory against the Danes, the English played a soccer-type game with the head of defeated prince. The real roots of soccer came not from the battlefields but from the streets of England and Scotland. Games of mob football were played in village streets and squares. Unlimited numbers of men from opposing villages would attempt to kick an inflated pig's bladder. According to an early handbook, any means short of murder and manslaughter could be used to get the ball across the goal.

In spite of such "rules" these violent street games often did involve the injury and even death of both players and spectators. This led to the game being banned by the King. Even when it was illegal to play, people couldn't help themselves; they just had to kick the ball. Despite laws and edicts, soccer-type games continued to be played for the next 500 years, particularly by working class men who played on Sundays, the one day each week they took off from the fields and factories

During the second part of the 19th century in England, rugby as well as most sports experienced a massive surge in popularity. This was mostly an effect of the Industrial Revolution, which drew people in cities and factories, depriving them from the typical outdoor activities of rural life. Recreation became common and people turned to sport on Sundays, in addition to their religious activities. British traders, sailors and workers spread sport and football all over the globe through their web of colonies

Modern Era

In the 1820s, modern soccer began to take shape in the public schools of England. Schoolmasters recognized that the game promoted health and strength and could be

“civilized.” So schools including Eton, Harrow, Rugby and Westminster began playing recreational games with a “ball” that was flat on both top and bottom. Each school developed their own rules and defined their own field of play. Before these schools began to organize the sport, matches were played in open spaces without boundaries

Graduates of English schools wanted to continue to play ball-and-goal games so they began to form clubs. In 1862 some of the grads drew up the Cambridge Code—10 rules that allowed the ball to be handled only to stop it in the air and place it back on the ground.

On October 26, 1863, representatives from 11 schools and clubs met at the Freemasons Tavern to hash out official rules of the game. One club, Blackheath, eventually withdrew from the debates after the group voted not to allow running with the ball or hacking an opponent. When that decision was made, the break between the games that would become soccer and rugby became official. The remaining 10 representatives formed the Football Association and published the original 14 Laws of the Game in December 1863.

Remarkably, these first laws contained no mention of fouls, penalties or referees. Despite its violent heritage, soccer at this time was considered a gentlemen’s sport. No gentlemen, it was thought, would attempt to foul to gain an advantage. Early matches were officiated by two umpires, one provided by each team. In the 1880s, a referee was added to keep time and settle disputes. When a disagreement arose, umpires would refer to this official—hence the name “referee.” By 1891, the referee had been moved on to the field of play and the umpires had become linesmen. Today, linesmen are called assistant referees.

Today, there are 17 Laws of the Game that determine everything from the size of the pitch or playing field, to proper attire for soccer players (see sidebar), to number of players per side and the length of the game. The Laws of the Game are now preserved and modified when necessary by the International Football Association Board (IFAB).

Within eight years, the Football Association had 50 member clubs and inter-school inter-club matches were being played before enthusiastic spectators. The first Football Association League Cup was awarded in 1872

In that same year, the first international match was played between Scotland and England. Some 2000 spectators watched the match that ended in a 0-0 tie. The Scots used a passing attack that was new to the English players who were used to muscling the ball up the field in what resembled a scrum. By the 1880s, teams of professional soccer players were forming in parts of Europe.

English colonists took soccer to the corners of the globe. Soon teams throughout Europe, in Africa, South America and New Zealand were playing the game.

In 1904, football associations from seven countries met in Paris and founded the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA). The original members of FIFA were Belgium, Denmark, France, The Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland. Germany joined the federation immediately. Surprisingly, England originally snubbed FIFA, feeling that soccer was an English game and should be governed by the English Football Association. England joined FIFA in 1906 and an Englishman, Daniel Burley Woolfall became FIFA President. Today, FIFA has 205 member associations.

Determining the Best in the World

Nearly as soon as it was formed, FIFA began discussing holding a world championship tournament. The first World Cup competition came about in 1930 in Uruguay. Uruguay had won the Olympic soccer gold medals in both 1924 and 1928. There were no qualifying tournaments for the first World Cup, but only 13 countries decided to send teams on the long trip to South America. Uruguay won the first World Cup with a 4-2 defeat of Argentina in the final round.

To date, 17 World Cup trophies have been awarded in men's competition and four in women's. See the chart listing the World Cup Champions.

Soccer, as we know it today, was molded during the 1960s. Increased media coverage and TV broadcasts made the game far more popular than it ever was. Commercial air flight replaced traveling by ship, which made it more efficient to conduct international matches.

BASIC RULES OF SOCCER :

Soccer is a game in which two teams of 11 players (one of whom is the goal keeper) try to kick or head a ball into the opponents' goal. Players score a goal when they succeed in moving the whole ball over the opposing team's goal line, between the goalposts and under the crossbar. Players may use any part of their body except their arms and hands. Up to a maximum of three substitutes may be used in any match played in an official competition organized under the auspices of FIFA, the confederations or the national associations. The ball is out of play when it has wholly crossed the goal line or touch line - whether on the ground or in the air - and when play has been stopped by the referee. The game is controlled by one Referee on the playing field and two assistant referees placed on opposite touchlines. The winning team is the one which has scored the most goals at the end of the game. The duration of an official match is 90 minutes played in two halves - each half lasting 45 minutes.



Soccer Field Dimensions Diagram

[Click on Image for Enlarge View](#)

ADULT SOCCER FIELD DIMENSIONS:

Overall Dimensions

The overall dimensions of a regulation soccer field is 100 yards long and 60 yards wide.

Midfield Line

The middle of the field is divided lengthwise by the midfield line.

Center Circle

In the center of the field a 10 yard circle marks the area where defenders must stay outside of at the start of a kickoff

Penalty Area

A rectangular box (sometimes called the "penalty box") centered on the goal marks the penalty area. This box is 44 yards wide by 18 yards deep. It includes an arc 10 yards from the "penalty mark". Fouls committed in this area may result in a penalty kick.

Penalty Mark

The penalty mark inside the "penalty area" 12 yards from the end line. The penalty mark is where "penalty kicks" are placed.

Goal Area

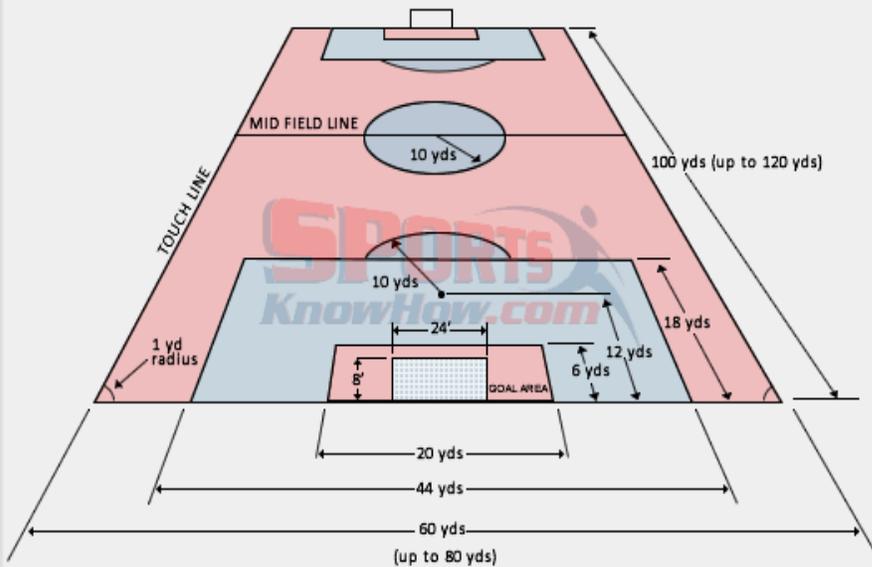
The goal area is a smaller rectangle inside the "penalty area", centered on the goal. The measurements of this box are 20 yards wide by 6 yards deep. This box marks the area from which a goal kick must be placed.

Corner Kick

A one yard quarter circle is marked on each corner of the field to mark where a player must place the ball prior to a corner kick.

The Goal

The adult soccer goal is 24 feet wide by 8 feet high.



It may seem simple when you know it, but the rules governing where the ball can go on and off the soccer pitch are certainly not obvious.

As long as it is within the sidelines and goal lines — which form the rectangle of the field — players can control the ball with any part of their bodies except their arms. Within their respective penalty areas, the goalkeepers can also use their hands. For more on the areas of the field, [click here](#).

When the ball leaves the field of play any one of three things can happen:

The Throw In

If the ball leaves the field along one of the touch lines — the two longest lines that run parallel to the goal lines — it is put back into play with a throw in. The throw in is awarded to whichever team did not touch the ball last before it went out.

To perform a legal throw in, a player must keep both feet on the ground behind the touchline near the spot where the ball went out and begin the throw with the ball behind his head. The player must also have two hands on the ball. If the referee deems that a “foul throw” has been committed, he may award a throw in to the other team from the same spot.

The Corner Kick

If a player puts the ball out along his own goal line, the opposing team is awarded a corner kick. On those plays, the ball is placed at the angle formed by the touch line and the goal line and kicked into play.

These are frequently good scoring opportunities and teams usually choose to swing the ball toward the goalmouth to create the most danger.

The Goal Kick

If a player puts the ball beyond the opposing team's goal line (and not in the goal), the opposing team is awarded a goal kick.

These are usually taken by the goalkeeper, though there is no rule against an outfield player taking it. The ball is placed anywhere within the six-yard box and kicked into play.