

## FOOTBALL IS MEDICINE: IT IS TIME FOR PATIENTS TO PLAY

*Student: Urinov Dilshod*

*Scientific advisor: Khalilova Shakhlo*

*Faculty of Roman-german philology*

*Karshi state university*

**Abstract** Football, also called association football or soccer, game in which two teams of 11 players, using any part of their bodies except their hands and arms, try to maneuver the ball into the opposing team's goal. Only the goalkeeper is permitted to handle the ball and may do so only within the penalty area surrounding the goal. The team that scores more goals wins.

**Key Words:** Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) medieval times, premier tournament World Cup folk football

**Introduction** Football is the world's most popular ball game in numbers of participants and spectators. Simple in its principal rules and essential equipment, the sport can be played almost anywhere, from official football playing fields (pitches) to gymnasiums, streets, school playgrounds, parks, or beaches. Football's governing body, the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), estimated that at the turn of the 21st century there were approximately 250 million football players and over 1.3 billion people "interested" in football; in 2010 a combined television audience of more than 26 billion watched football's premier tournament, the quadrennial month-long World Cup finals. For a history of the origins of football sport, see football.

**The early years: Procedure** modern football originated in Britain in the 19th century. Since before medieval times, "folk football" games had been played in towns and villages according to local customs and with a minimum of rules. Industrialization and urbanization, which reduced the amount of leisure time and space available to the working class, combined with a history of legal prohibitions against particularly violent and destructive forms of folk football to undermine the game's status from the early 19th century onward. However, football was taken up as a winter game between residence houses at public (independent) schools such as Winchester, Charterhouse, and Eton. Each school had its own rules; some allowed limited handling of the ball and others did not. The variance in rules made it difficult for public schoolboys entering university to continue playing except with former schoolmates. As early as 1843 an attempt to standardize and codify the rules of play was made at the University of Cambridge, whose students joined most public schools in 1848 in adopting these "Cambridge rules," which were further spread by Cambridge graduates who formed football clubs. In 1863 a series of meetings involving clubs from

metropolitan London and surrounding counties produced the printed rules of football, which prohibited the carrying of the ball. Thus, the “handling” game of rugby remained outside the newly formed Football Association (FA). Indeed, by 1870 all handling of the ball except by the goalkeeper was prohibited by the FA.

The new rules were not universally accepted in Britain, however; many clubs retained their own rules, especially in and around Sheffield. Although this northern English city was the home of the first provincial club to join the FA, in 1867 it also gave birth to the Sheffield Football Association, the forerunner of later county associations. Sheffield and London clubs played two matches against each other in 1866, and a year later a match pitting a club from Middlesex against one from Kent and Surrey was played under the revised rules. In 1871 15 FA clubs accepted an invitation to enter a cup competition and to contribute to the purchase of a trophy. By 1877 the associations of Great Britain had agreed upon a uniform code, 43 clubs were in competition, and the London clubs’ initial dominance had diminished.

**Professionalism** The development of modern football was closely tied to processes of industrialization and urbanization in Victorian Britain. Most of the new working-class inhabitants of Britain’s industrial towns and cities gradually lost their old bucolic pastimes, such as badger-baiting, and sought fresh forms of collective leisure. From the 1850s onward, industrial workers were increasingly likely to have Saturday afternoons off work, and so many turned to the new game of football to watch or to play. Key urban institutions such as churches, trade unions, and schools organized working-class boys and men into recreational football teams. Rising adult literacy spurred press coverage of organized sports, while transport systems such as the railways or urban trams enabled players and spectators to travel to football games. Average attendance in England rose from 4,600 in 1888 to 7,900 in 1895, rising to 13,200 in 1905 and reaching 23,100 at the outbreak of World War I. Football’s popularity eroded public interest in other sports, notably cricket. Leading clubs, notably those in Lancashire, started charging admission to spectators as early as the 1870s and so, despite the FA’s amateurism rule, were in a position to pay illicit wages to attract highly skilled working-class players, many of them hailing from Scotland. Working-class players and northern English clubs sought a professional system that would provide, in part, some financial reward to cover their “broken time” (time lost from their other work) and the risk of injury. The FA remained staunchly elitist in sustaining a policy of amateurism that protected upper and upper-middle class influence over the game.

**Conclusion;** By the early 20th century, football had spread across Europe, but it was in need of international organization. A solution was found in 1904, when representatives from the football associations of Belgium, Denmark, France, the

Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland founded the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA). Although Englishman Daniel Woolfall was elected FIFA president in 1906 and all of the home nations (England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales) were admitted as members by 1911, British football associations were disdainful of the new body. FIFA members accepted British control over the rules of football via the International Board, which had been established by the home nations in 1882. Nevertheless, in 1920 the British associations resigned their FIFA memberships after failing to persuade other members that Germany, Austria, and Hungary should be expelled following World War I. The British associations rejoined FIFA in 1924 but soon after insisted upon a very rigid definition of amateurism, notably for Olympic football. Other nations again failed to follow their lead, and the British resigned once more in 1928, remaining outside FIFA until 1946. When FIFA established the World Cup championship, British insouciance toward the international game continued. Without membership in FIFA, the British national teams were not invited to the first three competitions (1930, 1934, and 1938). For the next competition, held in 1950, FIFA ruled that the two best finishers in the British home nations tournament would qualify for World Cup play; England won, but Scotland (which finished second) chose not to compete for the World Cup.

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