

Football history

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The history of football (soccer)

Football (or soccer, as the game is called in some parts of the world) has a long history. Football in its current form arose in England in the middle of the 19th century. But alternative versions of the game existed much earlier and are a part of the football history.

Early history and the precursors of football

The first known examples of a team game involving a ball, which was made out of a rock, occurred in old Mesoamerican cultures for over 3,000 years ago. It was by the Aztecs called *Tchatali*, although various versions of the game were spread over large regions. In some ritual occasions, the ball would symbolize the sun and the captain of the losing team would be sacrificed to the gods. A unique feature of the Mesoamerican ball game versions was a bouncing ball made of rubber – no other early culture had access to rubber.

The first known ball game which also involved kicking took place in China in the 3rd and 2nd century BC under the name *cuju*. *Cuju* was played with a round ball (stitched leather with fur or feathers inside) on an area of a square. A modified form of this game later spread to Japan and was by the name of *kemari* practiced under ceremonial forms.

Perhaps even older *cuju* was *Marn Gook*, played by Aboriginal Australians and according to white emigrants in the 1800s a ball game primarily involving kicking. The ball was made by encased leaves or roots. The rules are mostly unknown, but as with