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**The World's Most Beloved Sport – The History of Soccer**

**By Rebecca Blain**

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While it is undisputed that the origins of modern soccer, or football, originated in Britain, there is a great deal of evidence that points to this beloved game as having an older history.

Where did the game of soccer really begin, and how old is it? To understand how many different varieties of "soccer" there are, you need to understand a bit about the older versions of the game and how they have evolved.

Below, you will find a list of the predominant cultures that had a variety of soccer, and learn how each one differs from what we play today. And no, they never used anything like Lotto shinguards back then either! Chinese Soccer History Japanese Soccer History Egyptian Soccer History Greek/Roman Soccer History British Soccer History

Chinese Soccer History

To many, this is the oldest version of soccer to exist. However, there is quite a lot of controversy of whether or not this is the oldest, or Japan's version is the elder. The Chinese version of the game, originally named "Tsu Chu", involved players on a field that had to hit a leather ball stuffed with fur into a small hole. Like Soccer, no hands were permitted during the play of the game, and it was considered an honor to be a member of a team.

The Emperor of the Han Dynasty, when the game was developed, was an avid player and fan, and spread the popularity of this game all over China during his reign. This roughly dates back to 300 B.C., although there is controversy on the subject of dating, which could result in the origins of the game being as far back as 5000 B.C. Regardless, this version of Soccer is extremely old. Despite that, there is still a version of Tsu Chu played today. While the two games are similar, Tsu Chu has had no effect on the modern version of the game, as it was originally developed and created for play in Great Britain.

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### Japanese Soccer History

Kemari, the Japanese version of "Soccer", is perhaps one of the most different forms of the sport, in comparison to modern soccer. Kemari was a game of "Keep it up", much like modern hacky sacks, although used with a larger ball that was stuffed with saw dust. This version involves a "pitch", or the field, designated by the selection of four trees, the cherry, maple, pine and willow. Many great houses in Japan would grow trees to have a permanent pitch, or field, established.

Kemari was normally played with two to twelve players. Established in roughly 1004 B.C., it vies for position of the oldest game with China's Tsu Chu. In fact, China's Tsu Chu players and Japan's Kemari players were the first to have an "International" game of their versions of Soccer, which is dated to have occurred in roughly 50 B.C., although a definite date of 611 A.D. is known. Regardless, this game stands with China as a sister sport to Soccer, while it never affected the modern version of the game.

### Egyptian Soccer History

While not much is known about Egyptian Soccer, or other ball games, it is thought there was a version of a type of ball game played by young women during the age of Baqet III. On his tomb, images of this sport were depicted, although no one is certain how the game was played or whether or not it truly affected the outcome of modern soccer. Recordings of this game date as far back as 2500 B.C., although not much more is known besides the fact that it was played with a ball. The lack of information on the sport and how it was played has eliminated it from runnings as the first evidence of a game similar to soccer.

### Greek/Roman Soccer History

Perhaps the closest relative to modern soccer are the games that were formed by the Greeks during the prime of their culture. They had numerous varieties of football style games, some of which required hands, some of which forbade hands. In the end, after the Roman conquering of Greece, the game Harpastum is what modern soccer would be based from. This game, probably a modified version of the Greek's "Harpaston", which translates roughly to handball. While grossly misnamed, this game is what is considered to be one of the precursors to modern soccer.

### British Soccer History

In Britain during the 8th century, soccer was created, not as a recreational sport, but as a war game. One of the stories of the original roots of the sport comes from when a Danish Prince was beheaded, and his head was used as a ball and was kicked around. Ever since this 'legendary' tale, villages and other communities would play a game where they would have to kick a ball to a specific goal. It was a violent game, where injury and death were not uncommon, but it was popular nevertheless. In fact, it was so violent, that in 1331, King Edward the III passed laws to try to stop the playing of the game. It did not work, however, and the sport continued on.

There are even stories of soccer games that involved hundreds upon hundreds of players. In these games, there were many deaths, some resulting in the hundreds. It wasn't until 1815 when Eton

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College set up a series of rules for the game that it became less violent and more of a true sport. At this time, other colleges and universities took up the banner and began to play under similar rules. Later, the rules were evaluated and judged, and the Cambridge rules were created as a result in 1848. In the Cambridge rules, shin-kicking, carrying the ball and tripping were all forbidden. Rugby rules allowed these aspects, and the two varieties of soccer, or football, split to form their own followings.

On October 26, 1863, London schools and sports club sent representatives to the Freemason's Tavern, where the Football Association was formed. Rugby supporters left this association to form the Rugby Association. This is where the birth of modern soccer began. In 1969, the Football Association finalized the modern game of soccer by forbidding the use of hands in the game.

The term "Soccer" was coined when someone was asked if he was a Rugger, which is a Rugby player. The -er signified that the person participated in a particular sport. The individual, Charles Wreford Brown, replied with "Soccer!", taking the phrase from Association, SOC, and adding the -er. The term stuck. While British individuals still call the game Football, Americans and other countries call it Soccer, especially if they have heavy support in American Football present. Ever since the foundation of the Association, "Football" has risen in popularity, becoming one of the best love games in the history of Earth. Now, hundreds of thousands play the sport, although it lacks the initial violence present at its

creation.

Rebecca Blain is a professional and hobbyist writer who enjoys taking care of her fish and educating people about soccer equipment such as goals which you can read about here:

### **The Origins Of Basketball**

**By Catherine Kenyeres**

Do you know the origin of basketball?

The origins of the game of basketball can be traced back to a gentleman by the name of Dr. James Naismith. In 1861, Naismith was born in Almonte, Ontario, Canada. During his early school days, Naismith would play a game called duck on a rock whereby the child would endeavor to knock the duck off the top of the rock with a toss of another rock.

Later on, Naismith would go on to McGill University in Montreal and would later become McGill University's Athletic Director. He would subsequently move on to YMCA Training School in Springfield, Massachusetts and in 1891, the game of basketball began.

Given the cold Massachusetts winters, Naismith needed to find a recreational activity that could be played indoors and he preferred a sport that would develop skill and one that was not exclusively relying on strength. The first game was played with two peach baskets for goals and a soccer ball.

Further to his credit, Naismith became a medical doctor specializing in sports physiology and a

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Presbyterian minister. Naismith was able to see his beloved sport of basketball, gain acceptance in numerous countries through the YMCA since 1893. As well, the sport of basketball was brought forth at the Berlin Olympics in 1936. As we speak, the game of basketball has become a very popular professional sport.

Catherine Kenyeres is a freelance writer and publisher for

. Catherine

has written numerous articles for the sports enthusiast.

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