



The
World Cup



A Very
Peculiar
History

With NO
added time

David Arscott





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‘Some people believe football is a matter of life and death. I can assure you it’s much, much more important than that.’

Bill Shankly, former Liverpool FC manager.

For my son, Jack – a fellow
Spurs and Lewes FC supporter

DA

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The World Cup A Very Peculiar History

With NO added time



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‘I promise to buy all FIFA executives
first-class tickets to heaven.’

Archbishop Desmond Tutu when South Africa
were awarded the 2010 tournament

‘Life is rhythm, football is rhythm,
and I feel the rhythm when I am
in South Africa.’

FIFA president Sepp Blatter

‘If there is one thing on this planet that
has the power to bind people it is soccer.’

Nelson Mandela

‘The true legacy of this spectacle will
be in our ability to showcase
South African and African
hospitality and humanity.’

Kgalema Motlanthe,
deputy president of South Africa

‘If hosting it keeps some of our
politicians on the straight and
narrow for a few years it will
have been worth the effort.’

South African journalist David Bullard



STATS CARD

Countries making most appearances in World Cup finals* before 2010:

Brazil	18
Germany (FRG/Germany)	16
Italy	16
Argentina	14
Mexico	13

Most consecutive wins in finals matches before 2010:

11	Brazil	2002-2006
7	Italy	1934-1938
6	England	1966-1970
6	Brazil	1970
6	Brazil	1978-1982
5	Uruguay	1930-1950
5	Uruguay	1950-1954
5	Germany FR	1954-1958
5	Brazil	1958-1962
5	Brazil	1962-1966
5	Poland	1974
5	Argentina	1986
5	Italy	1990
5	France	1986-1998

* Throughout this book 'finals' refers to the tournament itself (and 'finalists' to the teams who have come through the qualifying rounds to take part in it), while 'Final' refers to the deciding match at the end of the tournament - between the two 'Finalists'.

HOW IT ALL KICKED Off



As this book is being written by an Englishman it naturally begins with the fact that it was our fellow countrymen who gave this best of all possible sports to the world, with the Football Association being founded as early as 1863.

Unfortunately it must then promptly admit what readers of other nationalities won't be slow to point out – that it wasn't very long before the rest of the world not only caught up with us, but was controlling, dribbling and passing the ball rather better than we were.

It's particularly galling to acknowledge that the story of the World Cup itself begins not with the English but with their traditional enemy across the water.

Yes, it was the French who in 1904 were chiefly responsible for founding FIFA, or the Fédération Internationale de Association Football. (The name's a bit of a give-away, isn't it?)

By now the game was catching on all over the globe, and the French idea was to get the British to share their expertise with other countries so that they could form a world governing body for the sport. Sad to say, the Brits weren't interested!

The awkward squad

First of all, in May 1902, the secretary of the Dutch football association wrote to the FA in London, and it took two months for him to get a non-committal reply. Then the FA suggested the idea be put on hold until their next meeting – in June 1903. What was the hurry? It was the dogged young French journalist



Young Johnny
Bull refused to
play with the
other boys.

THE WORLD CUP A VERY PECULIAR HISTORY

Robert Guérin who got things going. His first idea was for a football federation of European nations, and he twice visited London in the hope of persuading the FA to play ball.

He bent the ear of the FA secretary Frederick Wall and its president Lord Kinnaird, but he received the snooty response that they 'couldn't see the advantage' of his proposal. A writer for *Le Matin*, he had an apt phrase to sum up his dealings with the arrogant English.

fifa presidents

1. **Robert Guérin** (France) 1904–1906
2. **Daniel Burley Woolfall** (England) 1906–1918
3. **Jules Rimet** (France) 1921–1954
4. **Rodolphe Seeldrayers** (Belgium) 1954–1955
5. **Arthur Drewry** (England) 1955–1961
6. **Stanley Rous** (England) 1961–1974
7. **João Havelange** (Brazil) 1974–1998
8. **Sepp Blatter** (Switzerland) 1998–present



His talks, he said, had been 'like slicing water with a knife'.

In the end Guérin decided to go it alone. He called a meeting in Paris, and FIFA was established by representatives from France, Belgium, Denmark, Holland, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland. Germany were on stand-by.

With the 28-year-old Guérin installed as its first president, FIFA immediately drew up a list of rules, one of which firmly put the English in their place: 'The International Federation is the only organisation with the right to organise an international competition.'

From this moment on, FIFA would rule the world game.

Olympic muscle

Football was at last recognised as an Olympic sport in 1908. England won both that first tournament (in London) and the following one (in Stockholm) in 1912, but power was shifting: the FA had run the London event, but it was FIFA who took over in Stockholm.

An ill-fated cup

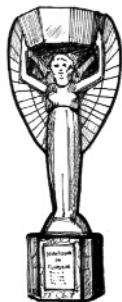
The first World Cup trophy was sculpted by Abel Lafleur in gold-plated sterling silver and lapis lazuli. Later named after FIFA president Jules Rimet, it was in the form of an octagonal cup held by Nike, the Greek goddess of victory. Unfortunately it suffered several indignities:

When the Second World War broke out in 1939 it was in the possession of Dr Ottorino Barassis, the Italian vice-president of FIFA, because Italy were then the holders. He hid it in a shoebox under his bed throughout the war.

In 1966 it was stolen while on display at an exhibition in London ahead of the World Cup final there. It was eventually discovered under a hedge in south-east London by a mongrel dog called Pickles.

Brazil won the trophy outright in 1970 by becoming champions for the third time. In 1983 it was stolen again - from the headquarters of the Brazilian Football Association - and it hasn't been seen since.

Its successor is a solid gold trophy simply called the World Cup. It's lent to the winners for four years, but remains the property of FIFA.



*The Jules
Rimet Trophy*



HOW IT ALL KICKED Off

The English did soon join FIFA, and were to provide three of its presidents, but they developed a habit of pulling out of it for one reason or another – for years on end.

Certainly the French influence on early world football was far more substantial:

- **Robert Guérin was FIFA's first president.**
- **Jules Rimet, the longest serving FIFA president, launched the World Cup .**
- **Abel Lafleur sculpted the first trophy.**
- **France played in the first World Cup match.**

Whistle in the windpipe

Another Frenchman who played a leading role in the development of international football was Henri Delaunay.

He sat on the first FIFA board, was a prime mover in instigating the World Cup and as early as the 1920s was promoting the idea of a European Champions Cup.

Delaunay had become a referee after his playing career was over, but he retired following a nasty accident. When the ball struck him full in the face two of his teeth were broken and he swallowed his whistle.



1914-1918

If, as legend has it, English and German soldiers played a scratch game of football together during the famous 1914 Christmas truce in no-man's land between the trenches, this was the only 'international match' for many years.

Once the carnage of the First World War was over, England and its allies resigned from FIFA because they felt obliged to draw up a long 'no-go area' of banned opponents – not only those with whom they'd been at war but any other nation which had agreed to share a pitch with their former enemies.

Shamateurism

The Olympic games eventually got going again in 1924, with FIFA running the football tournament. England had just rejoined the organisation, but along with the other British football associations and Denmark it declined to take part in the contest (in Paris) because it wasn't happy about what the organisers meant by the word 'amateur'.

This is when the lovely word 'shamateurism', ('sham amateurism') was born. Nobody was supposed to be paid for taking part in the Olympics, but wasn't it reasonable for the athletes to be paid out-of-pocket expenses?

The cash provided him with the protection he needed in this unstable economy.



Not as far as the British were concerned. They were horrified when, ahead of the 1928 Amsterdam Olympics, FIFA decided that amateurs should be allowed 'broken time' payments to compensate for their loss of earnings and to cover other costs.

And who would decide how much to pay them? Ah, that would be a matter for the individual football associations – so perhaps it wasn't surprising that the British should smell a rat. The system was wide open to abuse.

Goodbye - again!

What did they do about it? Well, of course they resigned from FIFA again, and this time they wouldn't return to the fold until after the Second World War was over, in 1946.

Mind you, FIFA and the FA continued to talk to one another. William Pickford, a committee member of both, put the FA's case very simply: 'We have nothing against FIFA, but our people here prefer to manage their own affairs in their own way, and not be entangled in too many regulations.' *Plus ça change!*

Pity the poor ref!

William Pickford was one of football's pioneers who helped devise its early rules. Chairman and president of the English FA from 1937 to 1938, he wrote thousands of newspaper articles about the game, and in 1906 he published a book called *How to Referee*.

It wasn't aimed only at the refs, though. He said he hoped it would 'instil a better grasp of essential points in the minds of a class singularly ill-informed upon them - the players.'

Here are a few of his essential tips for referees:

- Don't forget that players are not machines, but are human and possess a keen sense of injustice.
- Don't let criticism hurt you: some people rejoice to see a referee writhe under it. It tickles them, and really if you are a good referee it cannot harm you.
- Don't be afraid, but be bold and fear not.
- Don't worry your head about the noise spectators kick up. Free Britons have queer ways of enjoying themselves.
- Don't go on refereeing if your eyesight gets bad, or you get old and slow.

The Olympic football tournament went ahead very happily without the absentees. South American football was now thriving, so it wasn't a shock when Uruguay won the 1924 tournament (beating Switzerland in the Final) and repeated the achievement four years later (overcoming Argentina in a replay).

But it was time to create a genuine world championship, and Jules Rimet realised that by disengaging it from the Olympics, FIFA could make it an unashamedly professional event open to all players. Problem solved!

The deal was done at FIFA's 1928 congress in Amsterdam, when an organising committee was formed: the very first World Cup was to be held in 1930.

Money

Football is a delightful game, exciting to play and to watch, but the story that now begins to unfold is not for the pure-hearted. FIFA had created a monstrous juggernaut – a large and colourful contraption that it would desperately seek to control as it careered