

The First Football Rules: *Reading Worksheet*

Modern football began in English public (private) schools in the early 1800s. At Eaton and Harrow 'houses' or teams competed against each other. From the 1840s house teams began wearing different coloured shirts.

Many of the football-playing schoolboys went on to the two English universities: Oxford and Cambridge. The problem was that students from the different schools played with different rules and regulations.

Cambridge Rules

In 1848 Cambridge University introduced a common set of rules.

- After every goal the teams changed ends.
- You could catch the ball if it came directly from another player's foot.
- You could not touch the ball coming from the direction of your own goal until an opponent touched it.

The Cambridge Rules included two key concepts. The first was the idea of the '**foul**' and 'foul play'. The other was that the ball was only 'in play' inside a defined area called **the pitch**.

Sheffield Rules

In 1857 Sheffield FC started. It is the oldest surviving football club in the world. Sheffield played with the Cambridge rules but made changes:

- Pushing with the hands was permitted.
- Kicking, tripping and running with the ball in the hands was not allowed.
- There was no limit on the number of players, or the size and shape of ball.
- There were no referees. The two team captains settled any dispute.
- Each player wore a cap. One team wore red caps and the other wore blue.

Quick Check: True or False?

1. Organised team football was first played at the universities.
2. At Eaton every player wore a different coloured shirt.
3. The universities needed one set of football rules.
4. In the Cambridge rules teams changed ends after each goal.
5. Sheffield rules introduced referees for the first time.

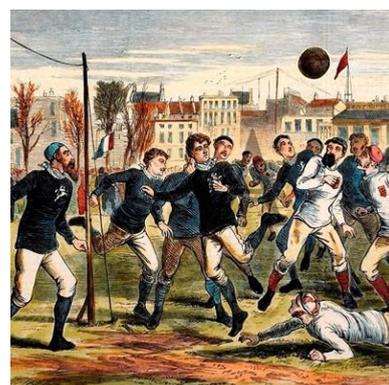
Comprehension

- A. What were 'house teams'?
- B. Why were the Cambridge Rules introduced?

The Football Association (FA)

On 26 October 1863 representatives from all the English school, university and independent football clubs met at the Freemason's Tavern in London. They formed the first football association or FA.

Over four more meetings the new FA agreed a code of twelve rules of *association football* (soon shortened to *soccer*). These 'laws of the game' are the basis of the modern game. They established:



- the length of the pitch (about twice the length of today)
- the size of the goals. These were three times as wide as big as today
- Players could still catch the ball, though not pick it up or run with it.
- Boots with iron toes or soles were banned.

Further modifications to the 'laws of the game' were rapidly added over the next few years. By the end of the 1860s the ball was round and there were eleven players on each team. Only one player on each team - the **goalkeeper** - could handle the ball.

The height of the goal was also regulated. There were not yet solid **crossbars** but tape was tied between the top of the two posts.

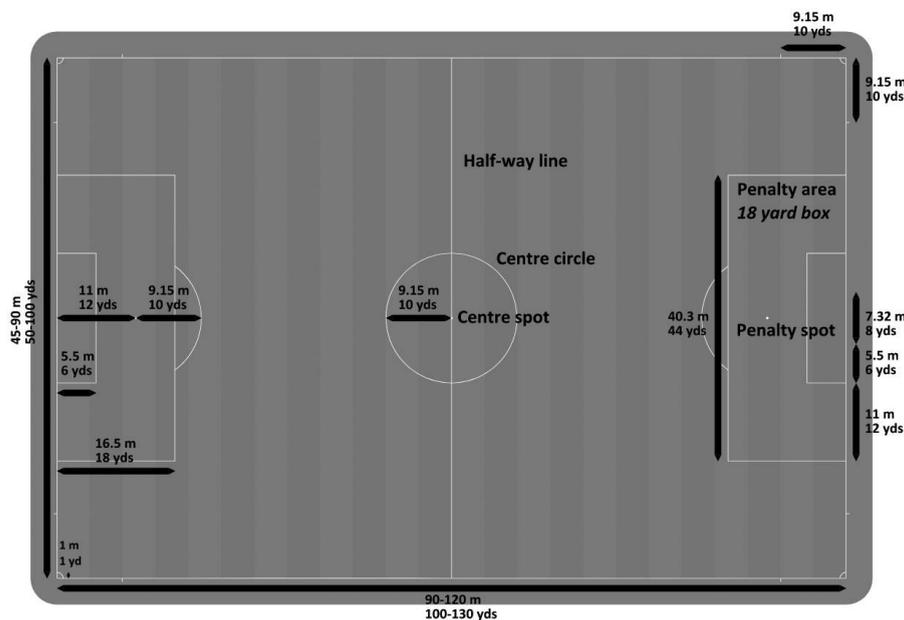
Quick Check

6. The first meeting of the new Football Association was in Sheffield.
7. The word soccer comes from *association football*.
8. Pitches and goals were much bigger under FA rules.
9. Players could not pick the ball up.
10. Players could wear iron football boots.

Comprehension

- C. What was agreed at the meeting at the Freemasons Tavern?
- D. How were pitches and goals different from today?

Vocabulary: The football pitch



1. What is the name of the line across the centre of the pitch?
2. In which area of the pitch does the game start?
3. What is another name for the *18 yard box*?
4. Where do you place the ball to take a penalty?
5. In front of the goal is the *six yard box*. How wide is six yard in metres?