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The History of Football

# Introduction

Soccer has been played in the different region around the globe. The early history of football started in the south American Indians who used a light elasticized ball. The early balls were made of the heads of human and animals such as cows and pigs. According to the pre-medieval history, people were playing by kicking the skull along the path mostly in the village's square. There is some evidence of the ancient Greeks and Romans who played a game of kicking and carrying round shape object. The medievals had a custom of taking pig bladders especially in winter they killed a pig and used the bladder for the game (You Jia, 2017, N.p). They used hands and feet in this game. Then they evolved it and covered the animal bladders with leather for better shape and strength of the ball. The football game and its ball evolved and developed in the 19th and 20th century as an international sport. The shape, size, and weight of the ball evolved during that era. Here the history of football will be discussed in detail.

**Football in 19th Century**

After the pig's bladder ball for the first time, a rubber ball was introduced in 1836 by Charles Goodyear. The balls before this were considered as the size of the bladder. It was an irregular shaped ball. It was unpredictable because of its shape it moved in unpredictable directions after being kicked. In 1855 Charles Goodyear designed another rubber soccer ball, a vulcanized ball for the first time in the history. This ball was better and brought a lot of changes and improvement in the game. The rubber panels were glued at the seam in the center. Both the panels were shaped similarly. The ball of that time is looking similar to today's basketball. The ball was used in the game between the Oneida Football Club, the first organized and established the team in the USA. The second team was Boston English school and players of Boston Latin. The revolutions of clubs and teams begin from here. This was a historic game played on Boston Common in 1863. The ball became the trophy of the match which is put in the National Soccer Hall of Fame in New York. The next ball was developed by Lindon in 1862, first rubber bladders inflatable ball (Koerte et al., 2016, Pp. 793). He blew up hundreds of pigs’ bladders, which caused lung problem to his wife and she died with that disease. The ball made of the bladder has remained oval and hard. Lindon actually invented the rugby ball, but he did not patent his idea. The ball was shaped as an oval, which was not preferred by the players at that time. People preferred to have a round ball for playing soccer.

In 1863 English Football Association was formed to make the laws and rules of the game. Initially, there were no descriptions regarding the ball in the first set of rules. Then in 1872, the rules were revised, and the standard for the ball was set for the first time. The association officials were agreed upon the size of the ball, that it must have a circumference of 27 to 28 inches (Brown, 2017, Pp.127). These rules still exist and are written in today's FIFA Laws. There are not enough rules written about the ball; it shows that the ball has remained almost the same after the rules set in 1872. About the size and weight the only written rules fixed are that set by the English Football Association in 1872. The rules were slightly changed in 1937 where the standard weight of the ball was changed from 13-15 oz to 14-16 oz. The weight of the ball was increased for the first time. The Encyclopedia of Football Association which was published in England in 1956, stated as "According to the law the ball must be spherical having a casing of leather or other approved materials of the outer surface of the ball (Allen and Ainissa, 2019, N.p).  The circumference shall not be more than 28 inches and nor less than 27 inches. Moreover, the weight of the ball must not greater than 16 oz nor less than 14 oz at the start of the game. In 2001 the laws of the game were published which stated the about the size and weight of the ball as discussed early. The things which changed during the decades are just the quality of materials. The standard of the materials improved with the time due to the advancement of technology and other factors.

**Football in 20th Century**

In the 20th century, the ball was made with bladders, while the bladders were made of strong rubber with heavier pressure. Most of the balls were produced with rubber bladders at that time. The ball was finally upgraded and was prepared from the thin inner tube which was covered with hard brown leather. This ball was able to bounce easily and could be kicked. The ball can fly higher and could not hurt the head of the player by heading it. There were some cases in which the players died and had some health issues because of the weight of the ball. Most of the footballs had a dark cover of leather with eighteen pieces sewed together organized in six panels contained three strips each (Madison, 2017, Pp. 218). All the sections were stitched combined by hands having five-ply hemp, and a slight lace-up cut was found on one of the sides of the ball. All of these stitchings were completed with the cover of the ball inside out. As the stitching completed once, the external cover of the ball was reversed so that the stitchings will come inside. The unfilled bladder is inserted in the leather cover through the slit. Then the ball is filled with air through an air pump. Once the ball was inflated, the tube was inserted in the ball through a small slit of 15 cm. Then the opening area of the ball is closed with laces tightly. These balls were good for the game and safer than the previous balls. However, still, it was causing head and brain injuring by heading the ball. The issue was the heavy stitchings and the absorption of water. The leather was absorbing water from the ground if there were any. The water made it heavier which could ultimately cause head injuries to the players. Other issues of the ball were the quality of the materials which were mostly not the same. For instance, the cowhides quality of the balls were not the same, so the thinness and the quality of one ball was found different from the other ball. Sometimes the balls were degraded during the match. The quality of the ball had played an important role in the first FIFA world cup in 1930 (Taylor, 2013, Pp. 157). There was a dispute between Argentina and Uruguay; they didn't agree on the ball that which one would be used in the game.

Finally, it was decided that in the first half the Argentinean ball will be used, while in the second half a ball supplied by Uruguay will be used. After the completion of the first half of the game, Argentina was leading with 2-1 goals using their provided ball. However, in the second half, Uruguay came back and won the contest with 4-2 goals with their provided ball. During world war II the quality of the ball was further improved. The use of carcass which is made of strong cloth was used between the bladder and the external cover of the ball. It helped in controlling the shape and improve its quality through the quality of the ball was continuously improved; however, it has been found that most of the balls were burst during the game. The reason for this issue was the use of low quality of leather covers. The problem of water absorption was overcome by using synthetic paints and some non-porous materials which coat the leader. This improvement was done after world war II (The Evolution of Football, 2018, N.p). The use of the white ball was permitted the first time in 1951 to help the spectators to see it easily. For making a white ball, the leather was whitewashed simply. The use of the orange ball was first introduced during the same era to make the ball visible in the snow. To avoid controversy regarding the use of balls in the international matches, FIFA standardized the weight, size, and type of balls.

**Suppliers of the Ball**

There is a number of companies in the world who provides balls for international events of FIFA. At earlier stages, most of the balls were manufactured locally. However, due to the globalization FIFA decided to use the best balls produced in any region of the world. Currently, Pakistan is providing more than 55 percent of all the footballs used in World cups and other mega-events. Other suppliers are India and China, who provide rest of the 45 percent footballs. Addidas was the sole supplier in the 1962 FIFA World Cup; it won the contract by solving an issue with the football (Ekblom, 2019, N.p).

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