

Football Chronology I

Origins of Football: Ancient Times to 1883

c.1800 B.C.

Non-kicking ball games were played in Egypt.

c. 300 B.C.

Tsu Chu, a kicking game, was played in China.

c. 250 B.C.

Harpastron was played in Greece. Although sometimes considered an ancestor of football, the game more likely centered on running and throwing.

75-100 A.D.

Kemari, a kicking game perhaps related to Tsu Chu, was played in Japan.

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Harpastum, a version of the Greek Harpastron, may have been introduced to England by Romans.

c. 1000

English peasants played rough and tumble games that included kicking a ball and, according to legend, the skulls of their Danish conquerors.

1175

Kicking game was played in London.

1314

Edward II forbid playing of kicking games in London.

1349

Edward III extended the ban on kicking games, supposedly because they interfered with archery practice.

1486

The name "football" was first used in a document. It referred to a game played on foot rather than on a horse.

1500-1600

In England, Henry VIII and Elizabeth I continued bans and edicts against the game.

1583

English puritan Philip Stubbes wrote in vitriolic opposition to football playing. He called it "a freendly kinde of fight."

c. 1600

References to football were common in English literature, including several of Shakespeare's plays. In *King Lear*, a character is taunted as a "base football player."

1633

Church of England formally approved football play.

1638

Eight men drowned as a result of a football match attempted on frozen River Trent

1717

Eton Wall built. It will give rise to one of the most bizarre variations on football. Played next to the wall on a field 120 yards long by six yards wide with as many as 20 on a side, two teams attempt to muscle a ball to a "shy," after which a team may attempt a goal.

c.1800

Most English public schools were playing various versions of football.

c. 1820

At Princeton in the U.S. a game called "Ballown," a primitive relative of football became popular.

1823

Legend has it that a student at Rugby School named William Webb Ellis invented the game of rugby when he decided to run with the ball during a game. However, there is much evidence that students at the school were running in games several years earlier.

1827

"Bloody Monday" began at Harvard.

1846

Rules of rugby written, oldest surviving code of any kind of football.

1848

Cambridge University rules described soccer.

1855

Sheffield Football Club formed in England.

1860

Football playing banned at Yale and Harvard.

1862

Oneida Football Club formed in Boston.

1863

In England, a series of meetings to standardize rules resulted in the establishment of the Football Association and complete split of rugby and soccer into two different games.

Charterhouse and Westminster played the first interscholastic soccer match.

In the U.S. Oneidas play first "Boston Game"

1869

Rutgers and Princeton played a college soccer football game, the first ever, November 6. The game used modified London Football Association rules. Rutgers won 6 goals to 4. Princeton won the second meeting 8 goals to 0. During the next seven years, rugby gained favor with the major eastern schools over soccer, and modern football began to develop from rugby.

1870

Two games were played. Rutgers defeated Columbia but lost to Princeton.

1871

No intercollegiate games were played in U.S.

1872

Yale played its first game November 16, defeating Columbia 3 goals to 0; rules used were a modification of "Association Code"; Princeton and Rutgers were other competing teams.

In England, Cambridge and Oxford played first British inter-collegiate soccer match.

First English-Scottish inter-national soccer match resulted in a scoreless tie.

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Football Association established Challenge Cup, won by Wanderers in first year.

1873

October 19: Columbia, Princeton, Rutgers, and Yale representatives draft code of rules based on "Association" style at New York.

December 6: Yale played Eton Players of England in international game, winning 2 goals to 1; eleven players used on each side.

1874

May 14: Harvard and McGill U. play game under Harvard rules (soccer), Harvard winning 3-0; May 15: second Harvard- McGill game, played under rugby rules, results in 0-0 tie; first rugby game on U.S. soil.

1875

November 13: Harvard-Yale play under "concessionary rules" (modified rugby) at New Haven; Harvard wins

1876

Walter Camp entered Yale.

Uniforms consisting of "tights" appeared.

November 23: in a meeting at the Massasoit House, Princeton, Harvard and Columbia formed the Intercollegiate Football Association. Yale also was in attendance but did not join the I.F.A. At the meeting, the first rules for American football were written. The I.F.A. adopted the Rugby Union Code with the modification that a goal was made equal to 4 touchdowns and a game was decided by a majority of touchdowns (the English system scored by goals alone). Under the Code, a game consisted of 45-minute halves with a ten-minute intermission.

Yale halfback Walter Camp first became involved with the game as a rulesmaker. He will become known as the "Father of American football."

1877

According to historian Parke Davis, "The fifteen players constituting a side arranged usually as follows: nine men on the rush line, one quarter-back, two half-backs, one three-quarter-back and two fullbacks."

1878

Canvaspants and jackets replaced tights as uniforms

J.J. Lang admits to being a professional soccer player in England

1879

Princeton and Yale played a scoreless tie, as both finished undefeated.

1880

Princeton and Yale both finish with 4-0-1 records.

Rule Changes

Scrimmage invented and substituted for the rugby "scrum."

Position of quarterback created and forbidden to carry the ball.

Number of players reduced from 15 to 11; names of positions originated.

Playing field reduced from 140 by 70 yards to 110 by 53 1/3 yards.

1881

Rule Changes

In case of tie, two additional periods of fifteen minutes each were ordered to be played with an interval of five minutes between.

In case of a tie, a goal kicked from a touchdown was given precedence over a goal kicked from the field. If the game still remained a tie the side which made four safeties less than their opponents was declared the victor.

Strategy

Origin of "block tactics" by Princeton. According to this system the ball was held by the team in possession unless lost by a fumble.

1882

Yale won all eight of its games.

Rule Changes

Establishment of "downs" and "yards to gain" system. Originally it called for three downs to gain five or lose ten yards for a first down. Scoring: four touchdowns superior to goal from field; two safeties equal to a touchdown.

1883

For the second year in a row, Yale was 8-0-0.

Rule Changes

Numerical scoring established; originally, 1 = safety, 2 = touch-down, 4 = goal from touchdown, 5 = goal from field; later in year amended to 2 = safety, 4 = touch-down, 2 = goal from touchdown, 5 = goal from field.

Officials organized so as to provide for two judges, one to be selected by each team, presided over by an impartial referee.