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# Contents at a Glance

<b><i>Introduction</i></b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b><i>Part I: Kicking Off</i></b> .....	<b>7</b>
Chapter 1: Welcome to Planet Football .....	9
Chapter 2: The Ball Starts Rolling: A Potted History of Football.....	19
Chapter 3: Getting Your Boots On: The Gear You Need.....	31
<b><i>Part II: Playing the Game</i></b> .....	<b>45</b>
Chapter 4: Laying Down the Laws .....	47
Chapter 5: Players, Positions and Tactics .....	67
Chapter 6: Honing Your Skills .....	91
Chapter 7: Keeping Fit for Football.....	115
Chapter 8: Coaching, Managing and Leadership .....	129
Chapter 9: Getting the Game On .....	141
<b><i>Part III: Exploring the World of Football</i></b> .....	<b>153</b>
Chapter 10: The World Cup .....	155
Chapter 11: Surveying the International Scene.....	169
Chapter 12: The Club Scene .....	187
Chapter 13: Focusing on Famous Clubs .....	213
Chapter 14: Women's Football .....	239
<b><i>Part IV: The Fans' Enclosure: Following the Game</i></b> .....	<b>255</b>
Chapter 15: Going to the Match .....	257
Chapter 16: Compulsive Viewing: Football on Screen .....	271
Chapter 17: Read All About It! .....	287
Chapter 18: Other Football-based Pastimes .....	305
<b><i>Part V: The Part of Tens</i></b> .....	<b>319</b>
Chapter 19: Ten Great Players .....	321
Chapter 20: The Ten Greatest Teams of All Time .....	331
Chapter 21: Ten Great Matches .....	339
<b><i>Part VI: Appendixes</i></b> .....	<b>347</b>
Appendix A: Roll of Honour .....	349
Appendix B: Glossary.....	361
<b><i>Index</i></b> .....	<b>369</b>



# Table of Contents

## *Introduction* ..... 1

About This Book .....	1
Foolish Assumptions .....	2
How This Book Is Organised .....	3
Part I: Kicking Off .....	3
Part II: Playing the Game .....	3
Part III: Exploring the World of Football .....	3
Part IV: The Fans' Enclosure .....	4
Part V: The Part of Tens .....	4
Appendixes .....	4
Icons Used in This Book .....	4
Where to Go from Here .....	5

## *Part 1: Kicking Off* ..... 7

### **Chapter 1: Welcome to Planet Football** . . . . . 9

Football: The Simplest Game .....	9
The basic aim: it really is that simple! .....	10
So why is football so popular? .....	10
Where do people play footie? .....	11
Explaining a Few Rules .....	11
The pitch .....	12
The players .....	13
General behaviour .....	13
Goal! .....	14
Keeping score . . . ..	14
. . . and keeping time .....	14
Playing the Game .....	14
Playing solo .....	15
Playing with others .....	15
Watching Football – and Supporting a Team .....	16
Following club and country .....	16
Winning trophies: the be-all and end-all? .....	17

### **Chapter 2: The Ball Starts Rolling: A Potted History of Football** . . . . . 19

The Birth of Football .....	19
Anyone for Cuju? .....	20
Kemari, Marn Gook and Calcio Fiorentino .....	20
England: The Home of Football .....	21
The 1850s: time to lay down some rules .....	22
Enter the FA .....	22



Step aside for the professionals!	22
The world's first league	24
The first international	24
The World Takes Notice	25
The game takes over Europe . . .	25
. . . then South America . . .	26
. . . and finally the world	26
Football's Golden Age	27
Television switches on	27
Players become stars	28
The Modern Game	29
How TV changed everything	29
Player power	30

**Chapter 3: Getting Your Boots On: The Gear You Need . . . . . 31**

Having a Ball	31
Getting Kitted Out	34
Shirts	34
Shorts	35
Boots	35
Trainers	36
Shinpads	36
Goalkeeping gear	37
The referee	38
Additional garments	38
Approaching Equipment	39
Goals and nets	39
First-aid kits	40
Training aids	40
Other kit and equipment	40
Meeting Up with Merchandise	41
Replica strips	41
Numbering and lettering	42
Retro shirts	42
Scarves	43
Other official merchandise	43
Knowing Where to Get It All	43

***Part II: Playing the Game* . . . . . 45**

**Chapter 4: Laying Down the Laws . . . . . 47**

Living by the Laws	47
Law 1: the field of play	48
Law 2: the ball	49
Law 3: the number of players	50
Law 4: the players' equipment	51
Law 5: the referee	52

Law 6: the assistant referees ..... 53  
 Law 7: the duration of the match..... 53  
 Law 8: the start and restart of play ..... 54  
 Law 9: the ball in and out of play ..... 55  
 Law 10: the method of scoring ..... 55  
 Law 11: offside ..... 55  
 Law 13: free kicks ..... 57  
 Law 12: fouls and misconduct ..... 59  
 Law 14: the penalty kick ..... 61  
 Law 15: the throw in ..... 62  
 Law 16: the goal kick ..... 63  
 Law 17: the corner kick ..... 63  
 Other Points to Note ..... 63  
     Extra time ..... 64  
     Penalty shootouts ..... 64  
     Away goals ..... 64  
     The technical area ..... 65  
     Common sense ..... 65

**Chapter 5: Players, Positions and Tactics ..... 67**

Perusing Positions ..... 67  
     The goalkeeper ..... 68  
     Defenders ..... 71  
     Midfielders ..... 74  
     Strikers ..... 76  
 Tactics: Linking It All Up ..... 77  
     Dribbling: the first tactic ..... 77  
     The main styles of play ..... 78  
     Formations ..... 80

**Chapter 6: Honing Your Skills ..... 91**

Mastering the Basics ..... 91  
     Dribbling ..... 92  
     Basic passing skills ..... 92  
     Trapping the ball ..... 95  
     Heading the ball ..... 98  
     Shooting ..... 99  
 Keeping It Tight at the Back ..... 100  
     Marking ..... 100  
     Tackling ..... 101  
     Key defensive principles ..... 103  
 Sharpening Your Skills Up Front ..... 104  
     Shielding the ball ..... 105  
     Chip pass ..... 105  
     Outside of foot pass ..... 106  
     Back heel ..... 106  
     Bending the ball ..... 106  
     Feinting ..... 107

Free kicks .....	107
Taking penalties .....	108
Goalkeeping.....	108
Catching .....	109
Diving.....	109
One-on-one.....	110
Going for crosses .....	110
Punching .....	111
Parrying and tipping.....	111
Positioning .....	112
Distribution.....	112
Saving penalties .....	113
<b>Chapter 7: Keeping Fit for Football .....</b>	<b>115</b>
Keeping Fit.....	115
Stretching those muscles.....	116
Running .....	119
Exercising aerobically .....	120
Training with weights.....	120
Sorting out your stomach .....	121
Cooling down.....	121
Balancing Your Diet.....	121
Investigating Injuries .....	123
Preventing injuries.....	123
Treating injuries.....	124
<b>Chapter 8: Coaching, Managing and Leadership .....</b>	<b>129</b>
A Brief History of the Manager .....	129
Coach or Manager (Or Boss or Gaffer)? .....	130
What the role involves .....	131
Chess – or all-out war? .....	132
Player-managers.....	132
Building – and Picking – a Team .....	133
Building a squad.....	133
Choosing a captain .....	134
Selecting a first XI .....	135
Deciding on tactics .....	135
Taking Charge Yourself.....	136
Preparing the team .....	136
In-game decisions .....	137
Dealing with Kids .....	139
<b>Chapter 9: Getting the Game On.....</b>	<b>141</b>
Joining an Existing Team .....	141
Starting Your Own Club.....	143
Building the club from scratch .....	143
Affiliation: counties and leagues .....	144
Finding players.....	145

Finding a manager..... 145  
 Fixtures..... 145  
 Booking a pitch ..... 146  
 Match officials ..... 146  
 Insurance ..... 147  
 Kit and equipment ..... 147  
 Results..... 147  
 Disciplinary procedures..... 147  
 Fees and funding ..... 148  
 Social events..... 148  
 Volunteer roles..... 148  
 Commercial Leagues ..... 149  
 Park Kickabouts..... 149  
 Five-a-side and Futsal..... 150  
 Soccer Schools and Training Camps..... 150  
 Becoming a Referee..... 150

***Part III: Exploring the World of Football..... 153***

**Chapter 10: The World Cup ..... 155**

The Biggest Show on Earth ..... 155  
 The long and winding road begins ..... 156  
 The shape of things to come ..... 157  
 The finals countdown..... 157  
 From Montevideo to Johannesburg: Eighty Years of Top-class Drama ..... 158  
 Uruguay and Italy set the template ..... 158  
 They think it's the World Cup's golden age . . . it is now!..... 159  
 Germany and Argentina take centre stage ..... 160  
 Brazil bounce back ..... 163  
 And so to 2010 . . . ..... 165  
 Teams to look out for ..... 165  
 Players to watch..... 166  
 And when it's all over . . . ..... 167

**Chapter 11: Surveying the International Scene ..... 169**

Friendlies ..... 169  
 The modern friendly international ..... 170  
 The European Championships ..... 170  
 How it's organised ..... 171  
 The early years..... 171  
 The Euros go large . . . and even larger..... 172  
 The Euros in the new millennium ..... 173  
 Copa America..... 174  
 How it's organised ..... 174  
 The oldest – and the best?..... 175  
 An erratic history..... 175  
 The Copa's revival ..... 176

Africa Cup of Nations .....	177
How it's organised .....	177
The ACN: A slow burner.....	178
The cup catches fire.....	178
Other tournaments.....	179
Asian Cup.....	180
Gold Cup .....	180
Nations Cup.....	180
Olympic Games .....	181
Confederations Cup.....	181
All Around the World . . .	182
England.....	182
Scotland .....	182
Wales .....	183
Northern Ireland .....	183
Republic of Ireland.....	183
Brazil.....	184
Italy .....	184
Germany.....	184
France.....	185
Spain .....	185
Argentina.....	185
Uruguay.....	186

## **Chapter 12: The Club Scene . . . . . 187**

Clubbing Together.....	187
The first clubs .....	187
The rise of the super clubs.....	188
The 'smaller' clubs.....	189
Clubs today .....	190
The players .....	190
The manager.....	191
Backroom staff .....	192
The chairman, owners and the board.....	192
Club Competitions.....	194
Seasons.....	194
Leagues .....	194
Cups .....	198
The Big Leagues.....	199
England: The FA Premier League .....	199
Scotland: The Scottish Premier League .....	200
Wales, Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland .....	202
Italy: Serie A.....	202
Spain: Primera Division.....	203
Germany: Bundesliga.....	203
Brazil: Campeonato Brasileiro Serie A .....	204
Argentina: Primera Division .....	204
USA.....	205



Domestic Cups .....	205
FA Cup .....	205
League Cup .....	206
Scottish Cup .....	207
Other famous cups .....	207
International Club Competitions .....	207
European Cup/UEFA Champions League .....	208
Europa League and UEFA Cup .....	209
Copa Libertadores .....	210
Other continental tournaments .....	211
Intercontinental Cup/FIFA World Club Cup .....	211

**Chapter 13: Focusing on Famous Clubs ..... 213**

England .....	213
Arsenal .....	214
Aston Villa .....	214
Chelsea .....	215
Everton .....	216
Leeds United .....	217
Liverpool .....	217
Manchester City .....	218
Manchester United .....	219
Nottingham Forest .....	220
Tottenham Hotspur .....	221
West Ham United .....	221
Scotland .....	222
Aberdeen .....	223
Celtic .....	223
Rangers .....	224
Europe .....	225
Ajax .....	225
Barcelona .....	225
Bayern Munich .....	226
Benfica .....	226
Internazionale .....	227
Juventus .....	227
Marseille .....	228
Milan .....	229
Porto .....	230
Real Madrid .....	230
South America .....	231
Boca Juniors .....	231
Flamengo .....	231
Fluminense .....	232
Independiente .....	232
Millonarios .....	232
Nacional .....	233
Peñarol .....	233

River Plate.....	234
Santos .....	234
Some Selected Others .....	235
Al-Ahly and Zamalek.....	235
Raja Casablanca .....	235
Asante Kotoko and Hearts of Oak.....	235
LA Galaxy .....	236
New York Cosmos.....	236

## **Chapter 14: Women's Football . . . . . 239**

From China to Crouch End: How It All Began .....	240
Dick, Kerr Ladies get popular . . . ..	240
. . . and the FA get sexist .....	242
The women fight back.....	242
The FA lift the ban – and FIFA get serious .....	243
The Game Today.....	243
England.....	244
Rest of the world.....	244
The Women's World Cup.....	245
1991: The first World Cup .....	245
The tournament comes of age.....	246
The 2011 World Cup .....	246
Other Major Tournaments .....	246
Major International Teams .....	247
United States .....	247
Germany.....	248
Norway .....	248
England.....	248
Great Players.....	249
Lily Parr (England).....	249
Kristine Lilly (United States) .....	249
Mia Hamm (United States).....	250
Michelle Akers (United States).....	250
Sun Wen (China) .....	251
Birgit Prinz (Germany) .....	252
Kelly Smith (England).....	252
Marta (Brazil) .....	253

## ***Part IV: The Fans' Enclosure: Following the Game . . . . . 255***

### **Chapter 15: Going to the Match . . . . . 257**

Preparing for the Match.....	257
Season tickets.....	257
Choosing where to sit.....	258
Looking into club membership .....	259
Buying a single ticket in advance.....	259

Buying a single ticket on the day .....	259
Away games .....	260
Executive boxes .....	261
International matches .....	261
Making Your Way to the Match .....	262
Obtaining your tickets .....	262
Making travelling arrangements .....	262
Dressing for the occasion .....	263
Taking a look round the city .....	264
Checking out the ground .....	264
The club shop .....	265
A pint . . . ..	265
. . . and a pie .....	266
Matchday programmes .....	267
The Game Itself .....	267
Kick-off .....	268
Shouting, screaming and other matters of general etiquette .....	268
Wireless communication .....	269
Half-time .....	269
Stewards, police and PA announcements .....	269
Keeping out of trouble .....	270

## **Chapter 16: Compulsive Viewing: Football on Screen . . . . . 271**

Television .....	271
Terrestrial .....	273
Satellite and cable .....	273
Official club channels .....	274
Essential shows and channels .....	274
The Internet .....	277
Live streaming .....	277
Recent action .....	278
Classic clips .....	278
Exploring Radio .....	278
Live commentaries .....	279
Round-ups .....	279
Listener phone-ins .....	279
Podcasts .....	280
Focusing on Football Films .....	280
Escape to Victory .....	280
Zidane: A 21st-Century Portrait .....	281
The Damned United .....	281
The Firm (1988 TV movie) .....	281
The Arsenal Stadium Mystery .....	281
Gregory's Girl .....	282
Looking for Eric .....	282
Discovering DVDs .....	282
Season reviews .....	282
Club histories .....	283

Other club titles .....	283
Country histories .....	284
Player histories .....	284
Tournament histories.....	285
Classic matches.....	285
Novelty titles .....	285
Classic television programmes .....	285
<b>Chapter 17: Read All About It! .....</b>	<b>287</b>
Knowing the Newspapers .....	287
What newspapers offer .....	287
The nationals.....	289
The locals.....	289
Employing the Internet .....	290
What the Internet can do for you.....	290
The mainstream media .....	291
Blogs and other websites.....	291
Making the Most of Magazines.....	292
FourFourTwo.....	292
Champions .....	292
When Saturday Comes .....	292
World Soccer .....	293
France Football.....	293
The Official Club View.....	293
Matchday programmes .....	293
Official club magazines .....	294
Official websites .....	294
The Fans' View.....	295
Fanzines .....	295
Internet sites.....	296
Forums and message boards.....	296
Branching Out into Books .....	297
Autobiographies.....	297
Biographies.....	298
Club-specific books.....	299
Country specific books .....	300
General history.....	301
Reference .....	302
Literature .....	303
<b>Chapter 18: Other Football-based Pastimes .....</b>	<b>305</b>
Betting.....	305
The pools .....	306
Fixed-odds betting .....	307
In-game betting.....	309
Spread betting.....	309
The bookies or punter exchanges?.....	309

Taking Control with Fantasy Football.....	310
The rules .....	310
How to choose your players.....	310
Scoring points .....	311
Collecting memorabilia.....	312
Cigarette cards .....	312
Stickers.....	312
Programmes .....	313
Newspapers .....	313
Old shirts .....	313
Autographs .....	314
Visiting Grounds .....	314
The 92 club .....	314
Playing Computer Games .....	315
PES and FIFA.....	315
Championship Manager and Football Manager .....	316
Joining Supporters' Clubs .....	316
Regional clubs .....	316
Supporters' federations .....	317
Owning Your Own Club .....	317

***Part V: The Part of Tens..... 319***

**Chapter 19: Ten Great Players ..... 321**

Pelé.....	321
Diego Maradona.....	322
Franz Beckenbauer.....	323
Johan Cruyff .....	324
Garrincha.....	325
Zinedine Zidane .....	326
Alfredo di Stéfano .....	326
Ferenc Puskás .....	327
George Best .....	328
Gerd Müller.....	329

**Chapter 20: The Ten Greatest Teams of All Time ..... 331**

Preston North End (1881–1890).....	331
Austria (1931–1934).....	332
Torino (1943–1949).....	333
Hungary (1950–1954).....	334
Real Madrid (1955–1960) .....	334
Celtic (1967) .....	335
Brazil (1970) .....	336
Netherlands (1974–1978).....	337
Milan (1987–1994).....	337
Barcelona (2009).....	338

<b>Chapter 21: Ten Great Matches</b> .....	<b>339</b>
Arbroath 36, Bon Accord 0 (Scottish Cup, 1885) .....	339
Brazil 1, Uruguay 2 (World Cup, 1950).....	340
England 3, Hungary 6 (Friendly, 1953).....	341
Charlton Athletic 7, Huddersfield Town 6 (English Second Division, 1957) .....	341
Real Madrid 7, Eintracht Frankfurt 3 (European Cup, 1960).....	342
England 4, West Germany 2 (World Cup, 1966).....	343
Manchester United 4, Benfica 1 (European Cup, 1968) .....	344
Brazil 4, Italy 1 (World Cup, 1970).....	344
Nigeria 3, Argentina 2 (Olympics, 1996) .....	345
Liverpool 3, Milan 3 (Champions League, 2005).....	346
<b>Part VI: Appendixes</b> .....	<b>347</b>
<b>Appendix A: Roll of Honour</b> .....	<b>349</b>
World Cup.....	349
European Championship .....	351
Copa America.....	352
Africa Cup of Nations .....	353
Confederations Cup.....	354
Olympic Games .....	355
Women's World Cup .....	356
European Cup / Champions League .....	357
<b>Appendix B: Glossary</b> .....	<b>361</b>
<b>Index</b> .....	<b>369</b>

# Introduction

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**C**ongratulations! You've got a copy of *Football For Dummies* in your hands. This book has been written specially for people who want to know all they can about the greatest and most popular sport on the planet: association football. *Football For Dummies* aims to satisfy your curiosity, help you to understand the basics of how to play the game, arm you with knowledge so you can enjoy watching it to the full and show you that you have a whole world of football to be explore. There's a reason football has taken off all around the globe, after all!

Millions are passionate about the sport, from fans of the 'beautiful game' in Brazil to lovers of 'soccer' in the US. And none more so than fans in the British Isles, where the game as you know it today took off back in the mid 1800s. It's the simplest of sports in principle – in the final analysis, all you need to know is that one team has to score more goals than the other to win. Nevertheless, a plethora of laws, tactics and skills exist that can easily flummox the beginner.

That's where this book comes in. I wrote it so that anyone who wants to enjoy football – whether by playing it or watching it – can get to grips with the sport quickly and easily, without feeling overwhelmed or intimidated. And I promise it won't be long before you've become something of an expert on the most talked-about sporting pastime in the world. You'll never look back!

## *About This Book*

The simple aim of *Football For Dummies* is to provide you with all the basic skills and help you remember every scrap of crucial knowledge that you need to become a football fan. All the information you need is between the covers of this book. But although it's all crammed in here, don't feel daunted: you certainly don't have to read every word, from start to finish, to get the most from the book.

Each chapter covers a separate topic about football, so you can easily dip into the chapters to find out about something you don't quite understand. Say you're watching a Champions League game on television, but don't really

know much about the history of the competition; just turn to the chapter that talks about important football competitions and *Football For Dummies* will fill the gaps in your knowledge.

If you fancy getting up off the sofa and turning out for a team yourself, *Football For Dummies* explains how you can set about getting involved as a player. The book offers plenty of handy hints and practical skills you can develop. Maybe you'd even like to become a referee. Well, that's no problem. I even help you find a whistle.

And even if you're not an absolute beginner, I'm confident that *Football For Dummies* can still help you discover plenty that's new and fascinating from the long history of association football.

## *Foolish Assumptions*

Assumptions are indeed foolish, so I'm not making any of them. Don't worry if you feel you know absolutely nothing about football. Chances are you already know more than you think, and this book helps you gain confidence in your knowledge.

But even if you don't have a scrap of understanding about the game to start off with, never mind! *Football For Dummies* soon gets you up to speed. And remember: even folk who think they know everything about the game have some gaps in their knowledge. Soon enough, I'm confident *Football For Dummies* will make an expert of you.

At the moment you might ask:

- ✔ Why do some teams kick the ball up in the air but others pass it around the floor?
- ✔ What on earth are the crowd singing?
- ✔ Why are there two people dressed in black running up and down the side of the pitch waving flags?
- ✔ What on earth is the offside rule?
- ✔ Who was the greatest footballer who ever played the game?

This book answers those questions – and many, many more. My only assumption – and this one isn't so foolish! – is that you know nothing about the game to start with. I take it from there, and it won't be long before you understand all there is to know about football.



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## *How This Book Is Organised*

This book is organised into six distinct parts. Each section focuses on a different – but important – part of the world of association football.

### *Part I: Kicking Off*

If you're a complete beginner, this part gives you a basic grounding in what football is all about. This part describes what football is and why people love playing and watching the game so much. It tells the history of the sport, from its early days in China to the modern game that's showcased in stadiums and on televisions all across the globe. And I show you how to get ready to join in, whether you'll be getting your boots dirty or just watching from the stands!

### *Part II: Playing the Game*

I don't waste any time getting to the nitty-gritty here. The first chapter in this part explains the rules of the game – which are the same whether you're having a kickaround in the local park or playing in the World Cup final! The part goes on to explain what each player on the pitch is expected to do, the tactics they're told to employ and the skills they need to play the game. This part also includes tips on coaching and management, how to keep fit and where you can put it all into practice – on the pitch.

### *Part III: Exploring The World of Football*

Football is the biggest sport in the world, and this part explains everything about the professional game. I explain all about the biggest show on earth – the FIFA World Cup – and other international tournaments such as the European Championships, Copa America and the African Cup of Nations. The part also details how club football is organised across the world, from the English Premier League to Major League Soccer in the US. I run down all the important international and club sides, so you know your Brazils from your Barcelonas and your Argentinas from your Arsenals. Plus there's an in-depth look at women's football – a fast-growing sport in its own right.

## Part IV: The Fans' Enclosure

If you love watching the game, this is the part for you. Chapters go through the routine of going to the match, as well as pointing you in the right direction of the best television programmes, Internet sites, newspapers, magazines, books, films and DVDs. I even explain what to do if you fancy a flutter, or just enjoy controlling a virtual match on your video-game console.

## Part V: The Part of Tens

The part without which no *For Dummies* book would be complete. This part is packed full of nuggets of information you can squirrel away for use later, when you need to impress someone with your football knowledge. Was there really someone more talented than Pelé in the famous Brazil team of the 1950s and 1960s? The answer's here – along with many other facts that are in turns funny, illuminating, tragic and interesting.

## Appendixes

This part contains two really useful collections of information: a roll of honour of the greatest tournaments in football history and a glossary of useful phrases.

## Icons Used in This Book

To help you navigate through this book with the ease of Diego Maradona slinking past Terry Fenwick, keep an eye out for these icons, the little pictures that sit in the margin. They help you spot particular snippets of information. This list tells you what the icons mean.



This highlights small pieces of advice that can help you become a better player or a more knowledgeable football expert.



This information is especially useful to remember. If you only remember one thing from each page, make sure it's this bit!



Hopefully, this won't come up too much – but when it does, take heed, because the information accompanying it ensures you don't come a cropper.



The great thing about football is the amount of random trivia it generates. There's lots of trivia in *Football For Dummies*, and you'll quickly become an expert if you commit all these facts to memory!

## *Where to Go from Here*

So here you are, ready for kick off. Exactly what you get out of *Football For Dummies* depends on your needs. If you're a complete beginner the book gets you up and running. If you already know a bit about the game the book soon fills in the gaps in your knowledge. And even if you fancy yourself as a bit of an expert, well, everyone's still learning, so hopefully you'll find something new and fascinating in here too.

But although I'd advise beginners to start at the beginning, even they don't have to. This book is designed for you to dip in and out of – so if you want to find out about the world's most famous clubs first, turn to that chapter. You can always turn to a different chapter to bone up on the laws of the game. Or its history. Or its most famous stadiums. Or the hardest tricks to pull off down the five-a-side court. Or . . .

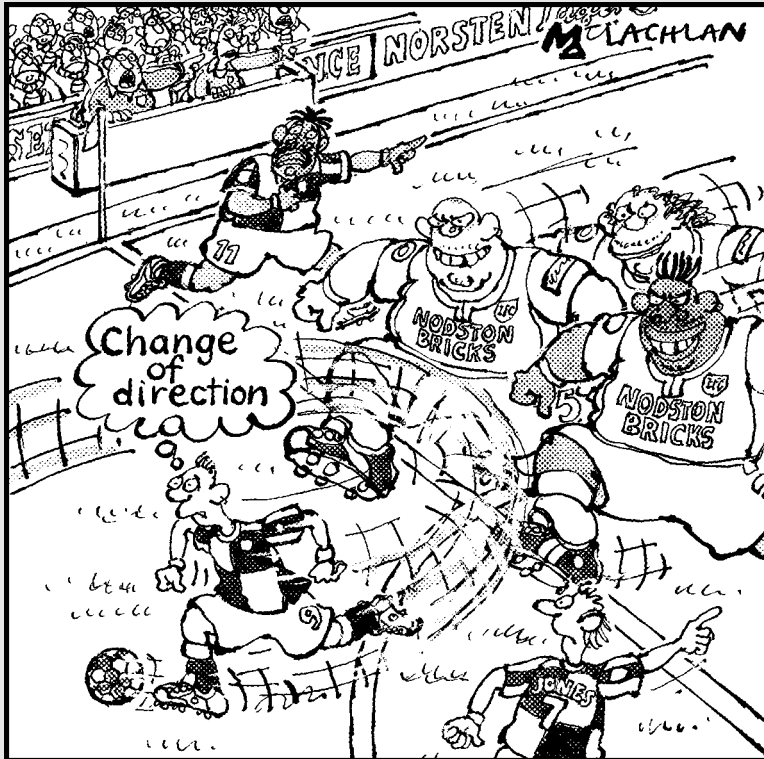
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## Football For Dummies

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# Part I

# Kicking Off



## *In this part . . .*

**T**o break you in gently to the great game of association football, this part provides an introduction to the game, covering how it began, and what it is all about. Those of you who are new to football receive a comprehensive rundown of the whys and wherefores of the game right here.

In this part of the book, I describe how football has become the most widely played and watched team sport on the globe. I explain the basic aims of football, the pitch on which the game is played, and, last but not least, what gear you need to have to play it.