

Soccer

Football is an 11-a-side field game played with a spherical ball; the most widely played team game in the world and the most popular spectator sport, followed avidly by millions of fans. It is often popularly called “soccer” (especially in the United States) which is a slang term dating from about 1891 as a shortening of “assoc.” or “association”. Association football is distinguished from American football, Canadian football, Rugby Union, and Rugby League football in that it is primarily played with the feet;

History

The ancestry of the game can be traced to 200 BC during the Han dynasty in China. Their game was called Tsu Chu (Tsu means roughly “to kick”, while Chu denotes a ball made of stuffed leather). Chinese emperors themselves took part. The Greeks and Romans had a variety of ball games (such as episkuros and harpastum) and some of them were probably foot- as well as handball games. In the 7th century the Japanese had a form of football called kemari. In 14th-century Florence there was the game calcio (giuoco del calcio, “game of the kick”) which was played 27-a-side with 6 umpires. This game allowed the use of hands as well as feet.

It is not until the 12th century that we find evidence of some form of football being played in England. Various forms of it were known in the Middle Ages. Basically, this was mob football which took place between rival factions and groups in towns and cities, and also between villages and parishes. Very large numbers of players took part and the goals might be a mile or more apart. Such games, which were often violent and dangerous, came to be particularly associated with Shrovetide and came to be called Shrovetide Football. Forms of this survived in England until well into the 20th century. Royal edicts by a succession of English kings failed to suppress mob football. In fact, such games flourished in the Tudor and Stuart periods. Oliver Cromwell managed to put a stop to them, but with the Restoration and the reign of Charles II it was soon revived. In the 18th century it was popular in English public schools but still involved scores of players on each side. A few public schools developed more organised forms and these have survived at Eton (Eton Wall Game, Eton Field Game), Harrow (Harrow Football), and Winchester (Winchester Football).

In 1846 came the first serious attempt to establish a code. This was instigated at Cambridge University by H. de Winton and J. C. Thring who met representatives from the major public schools with a view to creating a standardised set of rules. They agreed on and drew up ten, known as the Cambridge Rules. These were and are of vital importance in the history of what was later to be named association football, and which Thring described as “The Simplest Game”.

In 1855 Sheffield Football Club (FC), the world's oldest club, was founded, and in 1862 Notts County, the world's oldest league club, came into existence. In October 1863 the Football Association (FA) was founded at the Freemasons' Tavern, Great Queen Street, London. The idea for the Football Association Challenge Cup (the FA Cup) came from the secretary of the FA, Charles Alcock, who proposed his plans at a meeting attended by 12 clubs in October 1871. Fifteen teams entered for the first competition in 1872 which was won by Wanderers against Royal Engineers. Until 1892 nearly all the finals were held at Kennington Oval, London, which is better known for cricket. Up to 1883 all the winners were amateur clubs. Wanderers won six times; old Etonians won twice and were six times runners-up. In 1872 also, there was the first official international match (between England and Scotland), and in 1878 the first match under floodlights was held. In the late 1870s there began a long and sometimes acrimonious dispute over the rights and wrongs of professionalism and whether or not players should be paid money over and above compensation for expenses and wages lost by taking part in a match. In 1885 professionalism was finally legalised, but the dispute was to drift on for years and affect other countries. Another major event was the foundation of the Football League in 1888; this was to become a model for all countries that subsequently adopted the game. This adoption took place rapidly in Europe and many other parts of the world in the closing years of the 19th century.

British Competitions

The principal competitions in England are the FA Premier League, the Football League, the FA Cup, and the Football League Cup (both cup competitions are knockout events).

The Premier League was formed in 1993 and comprises 20 teams. The Football League is made up of three divisions with promotion and relegation between them. Promotion and relegation also exists between the First Division of the Football League and the Premier League (which has the stronger teams). Various companies have sponsored the Football League including Barclays Bank and Endsleigh Insurance.

The FA Cup is annually contested by all members of the Premier and Football Leagues and also by many amateur and semi-professional teams. It is organised on a knockout basis with the final game being staged at Wembley Stadium, London in May. The League Cup was instituted in the 1960-1961 season, but it was not until the 1969-1970 season that all 92 Football League clubs took part. All finals up to 1966 were played on a two-leg "home and away" basis but since then they have been played as a single match at Wembley Stadium.

England's National-Team

The game of football originated in England and having taught the game to the

rest of the World, the English have had a great deal of trouble learning anything from the modern football powers. The first time a foreign idea was taken on board by the English national team was the sudden selection of a sweeper against the Netherlands in the 1990 World Cup. For a while this permeated into the English league but was soon dropped and English football has only begun to change since the advent of the Premier League and the associated influx of foreign playing talent. So, where did it all go wrong?

The first hint that the national side was not all that it should be came in the 1950 World Cup (the first that England had entered) with an embarrassing 1-0 defeat by the USA but the point was finally forced home with 2 games against Hungary. November 25 1953 saw England not only beaten at Wembley for the first time but destroyed by the 'magnificent Magyars' who ran out 6-3 winners. 6 months later, England played Hungary again in Budapest and lost 7-1. Clearly, something had to be done and England manager, Walter Winterbottom, the first visionary in the English game set out to do just that. Over a number of years, he persuaded the FA to allow him to select the team instead of a panel of FA bigwigs whilst persuading the players that listening and playing to his tactical ideas would produce better results than just going onto the pitch and playing how they pleased.

Within 13 years, the England team had come a long way and July 1966 saw Winterbottom's successor, Alf Ramsey lead his England team out onto the sacred Wembley turf for the World Cup final against West Germany. A pulsating match finished 2-2 after 90 minutes before Geoff Hurst's controversial goal gave the trophy to England (Hurst also scoring a late fourth to complete his hat-trick).

Two years later, England had their most successful European Championships to date. The team qualified for the last 8 by topping a group containing the other home nations before playing Spain in a two legged quarter final. England won the first game at Wembley 1-0 before going to Madrid a month later and winning 2-1. England joined Italy, Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union in Italy for the semi final round but lost 1-0 to Yugoslavia. Three days later, they picked themselves up and beat the Soviet Union 2-0 in Rome to take third place.

The English team that went to Mexico for the 1970 World Cup is thought to be the best of modern times with players like Banks, Moore and Charlton at the peak of their powers. Certainly, Pele was worried by England's presence in the same group as Brazil as he felt that the English were the only nation who could stop the Brazilians from taking their third World Cup. England opened their campaign with a 1-0 victory over Romania before they took on Brazil. This match was probably Bobby Moore's finest hour but his performance will always be overshadowed by Gordon Banks' astonishing save from Pele. The result could have hinged on this but Jeff Astle missed a sitter and Jairzinho hit the winner.

A victory over Czechoslovakia put England into a quarter final against their old rivals West Germany. Gordon Banks was taken ill and replaced by Peter Bonetti but it didn't matter as England coasted into a two goal lead. With 20 minutes left, Ramsey replaced Charlton and the rest is history. The Germans pulled the score back to 2-2 before scoring an extra time winner. The Germans again proved the thorn in England's side in 1972 as they knocked them out of the European Championships but things were about to get worse. The 1974 World Cup qualifying tournament found England underestimating their opponents and paying for it. Admittedly, the crucial match against Poland did see England dominate but the Polish goalkeeper, Jan Tomaszewski (famously derided as a clown by Brian Clough) saved nearly everything and by the time England finally scored, Poland had taken the lead after a mistake from Norman Hunter.

Alf Ramsey departed to be replaced by Don Revie. The national side went rapidly downhill as the players failed to respond to Revie's methods and this led to a second successive failure to qualify for the World Cup finals. Ron Greenwood took over with the nation clamouring for Brian Clough and Greenwood's first task was to qualify for the newly expanded European Championships.

England sailed through a tough looking group containing Bulgaria, Denmark and the two Irish teams. On June 12 1980, England kicked off in their first major finals for 10 years against Belgium in Turin. However, the match was marred by crowd trouble and the game finished 1-1. Hosts Italy were the next opponents in a game England had to win. They lost 1-0 and a 2-1 victory over Spain three days later was academic.

Qualification for the 1982 World Cup finals looked impossible in September 1981 as England's Fans listened in horror to the words 'Maggie Thatcher, your boys took one hell of a beating' uttered by a Norwegian commentator. England had lost 2-1 in Oslo to a team thought to be one of the whipping boys of international football. However, luck was on our side and two months later Hungary were beaten 1-0 at Wembley to seal qualification. The finals themselves were a bizarre affair as England went out unbeaten. France were the first victims losing 3-1 with Bryan Robson scoring the quickest ever goal in World Cup finals. Czechoslovakia and Kuwait were also beaten and England's reward for topping this group was a group containing West Germany and Spain. Both games finished 0-0 and the Germans progressed.

The English tabloids always had a lot to say about the national side but the reign of Bobby Robson from 1982-1990 saw them really come to the fore despite the fact that this was arguably England's most successful period since the days of Ramsey. The 1986 World Cup finals started badly with a 1-0 defeat against Portugal and a goalless draw with Morocco. England had to beat Poland to progress and a superb hat-trick from Lineker took them through to play Paraguay who were swiftly despatched 3-0. Argentina were the quarter

final opponents and after a close first half, the South Americans took the lead with Maradona's handballed goal. Soon afterwards, Maradona scored again (a goal recently voted the best ever by English television viewers) before Lineker got a late consolation.

The English tabloids decided that the 1988 European Championships were ours for the taking which was rather bizarre after their reactions to goalless draws in Turkey and Israel. England's group contained Ireland, the Soviet Union and the latest Dutch maestros. The crucial game would be against the Dutch but things went wrong in the first game as Ireland ran out 1-0 winners. The match against the Netherlands was a classic and a virtuoso performance from Marco van Basten who destroyed a young Tony Adams was the difference between the teams, 3-1 the final result. England also lost 3-1 to the Soviet Union.

The 1990 World Cup finals again saw England begin slowly with a 1-1 draw against Ireland but on the day of the match against the Netherlands, the newspapers were full of talk of a new system to combat the Dutch. This turned out to be the sweeper system and it worked a dream with England well on top for large periods of the game and 'scoring' late in the match with an indirect free kick from Stuart Pearce. The 'goal' was disallowed as no one else touched the ball. Egypt were despatched 1-0 in the final game and England now had to face Belgium in the second round. The Belgians struck the post twice during the game whilst England had a John Barnes goal disallowed and with the game approaching 120 minutes, it looked like a penalty shootout would be required. However, Gascoigne then floated a free kick into the penalty area and David Platt swivelled and volleyed the ball into the net. 1-0 to England and into the quarter finals.

The quarter final was another nerve shattering match against Cameroon. David Platt gave England an early lead but deep into the second half, Cameroon led 2-1 before they gave away two penalties which Lineker calmly slotted away. So, for the first time since 1966, England had reached a World Cup semi final and would meet Germany. This match was arguably the best of the entire tournament as two well matched teams fought out a fascinating battle. The Germans drew first blood with a wickedly deflected free kick early in the second half but England hit back with a typical Lineker goal. The game went into extra time and both teams hit the post before the nightmare of penalties. Germany scored all of theirs whilst Stuart Pearce and Chris Waddle missed.

So, Bobby Robson had gone to PSV but England had a new manager in Graham Taylor and a great opportunity to build on the semi final appearance. Things went well to begin with although dropping Gascoigne seemed a bizarre decision. England qualified for the 1992 European Championships from a tough group and there was a lot of optimism that England would perform well in Sweden. 0-0 draws against Denmark and France were followed by a 2-1 defeat against the hosts (the following day The Sun called Taylor, 'Turnip' for the first time). England were out and now had to concentrate on a tough World

Cup qualifying campaign.

They were in a group with Holland, Poland, Norway and San Marino. Two qualified and the nation were optimistic, not realising that Norway had become a dangerous team. The opening qualifying match soon made the English stand up and take notice of this Norwegian danger as what looked like being a comfortable victory at Wembley was turned into an ignominious draw when Norway scored a superb equaliser from 25 yards. San Marino were duly thrashed at Wembley in the next game before the big one - the Dutch at Wembley. The game began superbly with England playing their best match under Taylor and swiftly taking a two goal lead.

However, Bergkamp pulled one back before half-time with a supremely confident finish and late in the second half, Walker pulled Overmars down to give away a penalty. The gift was despatched and the nightmare continued. Due to English reluctance to schedule qualifying matches at the beginning of the season, two tricky trips to Norway and Poland were to come at the end of the season. In the first of these, Poland should have hammered us but failed to take advantage of our defensive frailty and allowed substitute Ian Wright to score a late equaliser.

Three days later, Taylor employed a bizarre wing back system which was fated not to work right from the beginning. Ferdinand looked a lonely figure up front and another Walker mistake in the first half gave the Norwegians the lead. There was no improvement in the second half and Norway ripped England to shreds scoring a second goal which came straight from the Taylor handbook of direct play. This left three games to play and to have any chance, England would have to win the lot. The first was a crucial test against Poland at Wembley but England blew them away with a good performance, running out 3-0 victors. It was the next match which all feared and the lead up to the match in Rotterdam was full of Amsterdam bars being destroyed by English fans and running battles in the streets outside. The match itself was pulsating with England striking both posts and Platt being blatantly fouled by Koeman on the edge of the penalty area when clean through. Even the Dutch will admit that Koeman should have been sent off but he remained on the field to score from a twice taken free kick which Seaman was totally out of position for. The second goal from Bergkamp just rubbed it in.

England were down and out but had saved their lowest point for the last game away to San Marino - recognised at the time as the worst team in Europe. San Marino scored straight from the kick off after a woeful back pass by Stuart Pearce to score the quickest international goal ever. Taylor was out and the man who everyone believed would be the nation's saviour, Terry Venables was in.

Venables began with a 1-0 victory over Denmark in March 1994 and with England hosting Euro '96, this sort of friendly match would make up England's

fixtures over the following two years. This period was used as a testing ground by the new manager for both formations and new players. A more continental style of football gradually began to develop through these internationals and players like Le Saux and Anderton looked very impressive in their England debuts. Scoring goals seemed to be a problem though and the big hope in this department, Alan Shearer failed to score at all from the Autumn of 1994 until Euro 96 itself.

Most of these friendlies said very little about how good England actually were as many teams came to Wembley looking very lacklustre and uninterested. An away match in Norway in the autumn of 1995 was particularly frustrating as the Norwegians packed their whole team behind the ball and England failed to break them down in 90 minutes, one of the most boring 0-0 draws ever witnessed being the result.

The lead up to Euro '96 itself found the press in particularly critical mood after a 1-0 victory over a Hong Kong select team made up of ageing European professionals but this was surely just a warm up match of no significance - surely the tabloids could wait until the competition proper to spout their unhelpful views.

June 8 1996 was the day which opened the European Championships with a match between England and Switzerland – a rampant English team tore into the Swiss in the first half with Shearer scoring a well deserved goal (his first for over 18 months) and Gascoigne running around like a man possessed. However, the defence were caught out on a couple of occasions and the worrying signs of this were borne out when the Swiss equalised in the second half before nearly winning in the dying seconds – a poor second half performance by the England team was bound to be pounced on by the press but little did we know who their target would be.

Paul Gascoigne had performed excellently in the first half of the match but was pilloried remorselessly by the press over the following week - this was an attitude far removed from the English public, most of whom seemed to feel that Gazza was the crucial player. Jimmy Hill added his name to the Gazza attackers when at half-time in the Scotland match, he suggested that Gascoigne should be substituted. This looked ridiculous when Gazza fashioned a quite superb second goal to seal victory after Shearer had given England the lead and McAllister had missed a penalty for the Scots.

A draw was now enough to progress and three days later, a packed Wembley expected the usual close encounter between England and Holland - what they got was the most impressive England performance in 25 years and near elimination for the Dutch. A 4-1 victory was as comfortable as it sounds; Gascoigne and Sheringham ripped the Dutch defence to shreds while Shearer scored a quite superb goal. Only a late consolation by Kluyvert saved the Dutch from elimination and the anthem 'Football's Coming Home' was claimed by the

crowd as their own.

So, England were in the quarter finals where they would meet Spain. The tabloids had now moved from criticising the national team to insulting the opposing nation and Spain was disgracefully derided in The Sun as the birthplace of syphilis and a nation where all the women had moustaches. This sort of journalism is a disgrace and it unsurprisingly fired the Spanish team up to their finest performance in the competition. They had two goals disallowed for offside (one of which looked a good goal) and after 120 minutes, had to face a penalty shoot out. Hierro and Nadal missed, Wembley celebrated by singing 'Football's Coming Home' over and over.

The semi final was against England's old rivals, Germany and two days beforehand, the Daily Mirror produced an issue full of war imagery - this was another disgraceful act although they were rumoured to be planning a leaflet drop on Berlin which would have been supremely offensive. This sort of tabloid excess has hopefully now ended.

England v Germany was the match of the tournament; Shearer scored early but an equaliser soon followed. The game was end to end but neither side could quite score the winner so extra time followed. England attacked from the outset and should have won when Anderton hit the post from close range. Gascoigne also missed a cross by inches whilst Germany scored a goal disallowed for pushing. Penalties again and both teams converted their first five. Gareth Southgate stepped up and saw his effort saved before Andy Moeller thumped in the winning spot kick. It was 1990 all over again.

So, three months on, England look in better shape than they have in years - a tough World Cup qualification group will be a good test for new boss, Glenn Hoddle who has already shown his forward thinking by selecting young David Beckham and a 3-0 away win over Moldova has laid the foundations for our attempt on the 1998 World Cup in France.

Most Successful Clubs

Arsenal London

Initially known as Dial Square after a workshop at the Royal Arsenal - where most of the original team worked - the club began life in 1886 under founder Daniel Danskin, a Scotsman from Kirkcaldy. From the earliest days until 1891, it played under the name Royal Arsenal.

The leading light at the time was former Nottingham Forest player Fred Beardsley, who got his old club to help out by giving him some spare red shirts and a football. Apart from a brief trial with red and light-blue stripes in 1895, the team played in an all-red strip until 1933.

A pig farm was among the local venues used until the club moved to the Invicta Ground at Plumstead in 1890. Becoming professional as Woolwich Arsenal in 1891, the club was elected to the Football League's Second Division two years later. Not long afterwards, it bought a ground at Manor Field.

Promoted to the First Division in 1904, increasing debts forced the club into liquidation in 1910 - only to be rescued by property developer Henry Norris, who initially suggested a merger with Fulham.

Relegated in 1913 after winning only one home game, a new start was made, despite vociferous local opposition, at Highbury in North London. From 1914, the club was re-christened 'The' Arsenal before, in 1927, it adopted the name which has become famous throughout the world.

Henry Norris grabbed the opportunity presented in 1919 when the First Division expanded. He managed to secure one of the two new places for The Arsenal, even though the team had finished only fifth in their division. The club holds the record for an unbroken run in the top-flight of English football.

Meanwhile, Mr Norris was forced out of the game because of financial irregularities, including his unauthorised use of a chauffeur. His final legacy was to recruit manager Herbert Chapman who, after his arrival in 1925, went on to build some of the club's greatest successes in the Thirties.

Liverpool

Liverpool can thank arch rivals Everton for their creation. In 1892, Everton failed to strike a deal with John Houlding, the owner of Anfield, and left for Goodison Park instead. As a result, the Anfield landlord decided to form his own team - which was also briefly named Everton.

Playing its first Football League game in 1893, the team was dominated by 10 Scotsmen. Only goalkeeper Bill McOwen was born in England. Never having been lower than the Second Division, Liverpool's record is unparalleled.

Throughout its distinguished history, fans have been able to watch an array of talented players, whose earliest stars were goalkeepers Sam Hardy and Elisha Scott as well as Billy Liddell. Even heavyweight boxer Joe Louis signed for Liverpool in 1944, although he never played a match.

It was with the arrival of the legendary Bill Shankly, another Scotsman, in 1959 that Liverpool reached the pinnacle of the world club game.

Under his passionate guidance, Shankly drew on a seemingly endless supply of big names, including Ray Clemence, Emllyn Hughes, Roger Hunt, Kevin Keegan, Tommy Smith, Ian St John, John Toshack and Ron Yeats.

After Shankly's surprise decision to stand down in 1974, Bob Paisley took up the reins, signing Kenny Dalglish and Graeme Souness - both of whom went on to make their names as managers with a club which has won a record 18 league championships.

The big names continued to emerge: John Barnes, Peter Beardsley, Ian Rush, to name only a few. With the disasters of Heysel, in 1985, and Hillsborough, in 1989, Liverpool fans know - better than any - football's true tragedies as well as its glorious successes.

Manchester United

The seeds for Manchester United's future success were sown when workers with the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway decided to form a team of their own in 1878.

It was run by the Dining Room Committee of the Carriage and Wagon Works, and was known as the Newton Heath Lancashire and Yorkshire Cricket and Football Club.

Only after Newton Heath went bankrupt did Manchester United emerge from the ashes in 1902. Having joined the Football League in 1892, the club has played in one or other of the top two divisions ever since.

With winger Billy Meredith a powerful influence, Manchester United earned their first major honour in 1908 when the club won the championship. It followed up its league success the next year with an FA Cup victory. Although it won the league again in 1911, there followed a notably barren spell lasting until after the Second World War.

During the war, heavy bomb damage meant Manchester United had to temporarily abandon its Old Trafford ground and play matches at their Manchester rivals' Maine Road stadium.

With the end of hostilities, Matt Busby took over as manager and - with the help of captain Johnny Carey - set the club on the path to phenomenal post-war success.

While players such Jack Rowley and Stan Pearson helped them to win the 1948 FA Cup and the 1952 league championship, the club increasingly became renowned for nurturing youthful talent. And so were born the 'Busby Babes': Roger Byrne, Bobby Charlton, Duncan Edwards, Tommy Taylor, and many more.

Quickly dominating English football, the new team won the First Division in successive seasons before the 1958 Munich air crash claimed the lives of eight

players.

From the wreckage, Busby set about building another magnificent team, using the skills of Charlton and Denis Law, and harnessing the teenage talents of George Best. At the height of its power in the mid-Sixties, every Manchester United player was an international.

FA Cup winners in 1963, First Division champions in 1965 and 1967, the pinnacle of the team's achievements was the 4-1 win over Benfica at Wembley in the 1968 European Cup Final.

Managers found it difficult to emulate Busby's success, despite the efforts of men such as Tommy Docherty, Dave Sexton and Ron Atkinson. Only under Alex Ferguson, who took over in 1986, have star players managed to combine to live up to the memory of their heroic predecessors.

England's Soccer Stars

Bobby Charlton, born in 1937, was one of the most famous of all English players. Born in Ashington, Northumberland, he was signed by Manchester United when aged 17. Initially an inside-right, he switched to outside-left with England and finally became a deep-lying centre-forward renowned for his powerful shot. His total of 49 goals for England remains a record. Charlton scored 198 goals in 606 League games for Manchester United and helped them win the European Cup in 1968, the FA Cup in 1963, and the Football League championship in 1957, 1965, and 1967. He was in England's winning World Cup side in 1966 and his total of 106 caps (1958-1970) was an England record until passed by Bobby Moore in 1973. Having retired in 1973 he became manager of Preston North End, worked as director of Wigan Athletic, and in 1984 was appointed director of Manchester United. His brother, Jack Charlton, was also an England soccer player and successful manager of the Irish national team. A modest man of great integrity, Bobby Charlton set and maintained the highest standards of sportsmanship. Charlton was awarded a CBE in 1974 and a knighthood in 1994.

Sir Stanley Matthews, born in 1915, played professionally at the top level until the age of 50. Matthews was born in Hanley. He made his debut at age 17 for the local First Division professional team, Stoke City. Two years later, he was selected to play for England.

A right winger, Matthews was a wonderful dribbler whose subtle body swerves, acceleration, and superb ball control unsettled virtually every defender he faced. In 1947 he moved to Blackpool and it was then he finally won a Football Association (FA) Cup, in 1953. At the age of 41, Matthews won the first-ever European Player of the Year award. In 1965 he was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II, becoming the first active football player ever to receive the honour. Widely respected as the perfect sportsman, Matthews was never

cautioned by a referee throughout his 33-year career.

More than 35,000 fans attended Matthews's retirement game in 1965. So many of the world's top players came to the game to honour him that four teams formed and played two matches.

Paul John Gascoigne, born in 1967, is a midfield star in the 1990s. He was apprenticed to Newcastle United in 1982 and made his Football League début in 1985. In 1988 he joined Tottenham Hotspur and made his England début that year. Gascoigne was outstanding in the 1990 World Cup for England but was injured in the 1991 FA Cup Final which Tottenham won. In 1992 he was transferred to the Italian club Lazio for £5.5 million. Gascoigne took several months to recover from his injury and sustained further injuries at Lazio which limited his effectiveness as a player. Although popular with Lazio's fans, he signed for Glasgow Rangers in July 1995 for £4.3 million. The following season (1995-1996) Rangers won the league championship for the eighth successive occasion as well as the Scottish Cup, and Gascoigne was voted Scottish Player of the Year by his fellow professionals. He was a key player for England in the 1996 European Championship (Euro 96).

Gary Winston Lineker, born in 1960, is one of the most celebrated footballers of modern times. Born in Leicester, the son of a market trader, he made his first team appearance for Leicester at the age of 18 and played for them for seven years. He played for Everton 1985-1986, Barcelona 1986-1989, and Tottenham Hotspur 1989-1992. He concluded his career with Nagoya Grampus Eight in Japan.

Very swift, a brilliant positional player and snapper-up of chances, he played in 80 internationals for England and scored 48 goals (one fewer than the record tally of Bobby Charlton). He scored six goals in the 1986 World Cup which made him its top scorer, and four in the 1990 World Cup. In 1986 he was voted Player of the Year. While with Barcelona (for whom he scored a famous hat-trick against Real Madrid) he helped them win the 1988 European Cup Winners' Cup. In 1991 he won an FA Cup Winners' medal with Tottenham. He is also a very gifted amateur cricketer, snooker player, and golfer. In retirement Lineker became a television sports commentator and hosted his own weekly radio programme. He was awarded the OBE in 1992.

Peter Leslie Shilton, born in 1949, was one of the finest goalkeepers in the world during his very long career in which he won a record number of 125 international caps. Known as "Shilts", he has very large hands, is a perfectionist, trains rigorously, and has developed a scientific approach to his role.

Shilton joined Leicester City in 1966 as understudy to Gordon Banks, transferred to Stoke City in 1974, and to Nottingham Forest in 1977. Shilton played an important part in Nottingham Forest's League Championship win in 1978 and their two European Cup triumphs in 1979 and 1980. Shilton also

played for Southampton and Derby County. In 125 internationals he conceded only 80 goals. In 1992 Shilton became player/manager of Plymouth Argyle and went on playing well into his forties. He was dismissed by then during the 1994-1995 season and moved to Bolton Wanderers as a goalkeeping coach and an occasional player. He was awarded the OBE in 1990.

The Premier League this Year

The final table

	P	HOME					AWAY					Pts	GD
		W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A		
01 ARSENAL	38	15	2	2	43	10	8	7	4	25	23	78	35
02 Man Utd	38	13	4	2	42	9	10	4	5	31	17	77	47
03 Liverpool	38	13	2	4	42	16	5	9	5	26	26	65	26
04 Chelsea	38	13	2	4	37	14	7	1	11	34	29	63	28
05 Leeds	38	9	5	5	31	21	8	3	8	26	25	59	11
06 Blackburn	38	11	4	4	40	26	5	6	8	17	26	58	5
07 Aston Villa	38	9	3	7	26	24	8	3	8	23	24	57	1
08 West Ham	38	13	4	2	40	18	3	4	12	16	39	56	-1
09 Derby	38	12	3	4	33	18	4	4	11	19	31	55	3
10 Leicester	38	6	10	3	21	15	7	4	8	30	26	53	10
11 Coventry	38	8	9	2	26	17	4	7	8	20	27	52	2
12 Southampton	38	10	1	8	28	23	4	5	10	22	32	48	-5
13 Newcastle	38	8	5	6	22	20	3	6	10	13	24	44	-9
14 Tottenham	38	7	8	4	23	22	4	3	12	21	34	44	-12
15 Wimbledon	38	5	6	8	18	25	5	8	6	16	21	44	-12
16 Sheff Wed	38	9	5	5	30	26	3	3	13	22	41	44	-15
17 Everton	38	7	5	7	25	27	2	8	9	16	29	40	-15

18 Bolton	38	7	8	4	25	22	2	5	12	16	39	40	-20
19 Barnsley	38	7	4	8	25	35	3	1	15	12	47	35	-45
20 Crystal Palace	38	2	5	12	15	39	6	4	9	22	32	33	-34

Fans and Hooliganism

During the 1970s and 1980s, hooliganism, drunkenness, and violence among club supporters (especially of British clubs) began to bring the game into disrepute and to deter spectators. Riots—before, during, and after matches—and running battles in the streets between fans became commonplace. There were also several major disasters: at Ibrox Park, Glasgow, in 1971, at the

Lenin Stadium, Moscow, in 1982, at Heysel, Brussels in 1985, at Bradford, England in 1985, at Hillsborough, England in 1989, and at Bastia, Corsica in 1992.

It was essential for football authorities to clean up the game on and off the field and to make life safer for spectators. The general improvements include the introduction of all-seater stadiums (and some indoor stadiums), big video screens for pre-match entertainment, facilities such as family stands to encourage women and children to attend and to promote family participation, crèches, better catering arrangements, much better club match programmes in the shape of glossy brochures, and *fanzines* (fan magazines) in which club supporters can express their views. Other features are improved surveillance by stewards, police, and video cameras. Hospitality/executive boxes have been installed to bring in more money. By the mid-1990s the measures seemed to have largely succeeded, and this was illustrated by the friendliness of the supporters from throughout Europe who attended the “Euro 96” European Championship that summer.