

Development of organised football in england



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The development of football in England can be seen as far back in history as the medieval times, with medieval mob football in the 12th century (Wigglesworth, 1996). But the game began to develop into the game we see today during the early 19th Century, with the working class folk football and middle class public school football (Dunning, 1999), the concept of masculinity played an important role in the development of these two forms of the game. The development of the Football Association and Football League had very different backgrounds and there was conflict between the working class and the middle class. There was also the rejection of women in football as it was seen as a masculine men's game.

Public schools were in a 'crisis' in the 19th century, as the older children would often pick on the younger children and used them as 'slaves', which they would often beat, this was known as the fagging system (Bailey, 1995). The teachers wanted to eradicate this behaviour and turn the boys into gentlemen; they did this by introducing their own rules to the game of football, such as Thomas Arnold did for Rugby School. The teachers wanted to codify the game and use it as a way for the boys to become men and develop leadership skills and as a form of discipline. Many teachers in public schools saw the game of football as a way to civilise the boys (Collins, 2005). They taught the boys to play in a more civilised way and to abide by the rules of the game.

At the same time as the civilisation of football in public schools the working class folk football was also going through a period of change, and had quite an important role in the development of the modern game of football. The working class folk form of football was originally very rough and had no

regulations, with ' a lack of written rules, no fixed limits on territory or on numbers of players, a loose distinction between players and spectators, an absence of officials controlling the play, and an unusually high level of violence' (Goulstone, 2000: 135). The values of the working class began change, as their attitudes towards health and the idea of manliness grew, they also began to have more leisure time (Holt, 2006). The working class changed from being rough and violent to becoming more interested in science and therefore turning from squires to gentlemen (Holt, 1989). The working class began to become more civilised and the game of football needed to develop to meet this change, therefore they began to create rules and arrange matches between local teams to show pride in the area that they came from, and play against their local rivals (Collins, 2005).

There were often differences between the middle class and the working class on the direction that football should take, and this can be clearly seen in the development of the Football Association (FA) and the Football League. The Football Association was created in 1863 by the southern middle class ex-public school boys, and their aim was to create a set of universal rules so that everyone could play the game and enjoy it for its own sake (Arnold, 2004). They were opposed to the paying of players and wanted the game to be played by gentlemen for their own enjoyment. The Football League was quite the opposite, as it was formed by mainly working class men from the midlands and the north. Their aim was to create competition between local teams and improve local culture and identity through the game, and they encouraged professionalism as a way to improve the game.

Professionalism, amateurism and masculinity within football are all linked together. The debates against allowing professionals to play in football were all focused around the masculinity of the game. Many of the members of the Football Association didn't want to allow professionals to play in the game as they believed the game should be played for its own sake and as a leisure activity, not as a job, and professionalism would remove a lot of the civilisation and gentlemanliness of the game (Mason, 1980). Amateurism was very important to the public school as they saw it as a way to 'ensure the virility of the British race and the strength of the British Empire' (Holt, 2006: 353), therefore they saw participating in amateur sports as a form of elite masculinity. The change towards professionalism was influenced by the working class. They began to demand more from the game and wanted competition at a higher standard. This resulted in football clubs moving away from the control of the upper class and the working class having a greater influence in the running of their club (Korr, 1978). This can be seen in the running of West Ham United and how the working class moved stadiums so that they could have more control over the club and to become a professional club.

Britain and the Football Association were very reluctant to play football abroad, the reason for this is that many thought that foreigners would damage the values and the gentlemanliness of the game (Giulianotti, 1999). They also didn't want politics get involved in football as the gentleman who played football played it for its own sake and not for any other political involvement (Stoddart, 2006), while FIFA (International Federation of Association Football) wanted football to help bridge political differences

between countries (Beck, 2000). When FIFA was created in 1904 Britain didn't have much involvement as they thought it would destroy many of the values that British football had, although they had a lot of influence on the board of FIFA. Britain had a tenuous relationship with FIFA, as they withdrew twice over a couple of decades. The second time they withdrew was due to the rise of professionalization of many other countries, as they wanted the game to be between amateurs, and also due to the political influence that FIFA wanted the game to have.

Football was seen as a man's game and women were strongly discouraged from participating in the game at all (Williams and Woodhouse, 1991). There were some women that resisted the views of men and wanted to play football and they created their own teams (McCrone, 1991). Men thought that if women played football they would become masculinised, as they saw women as housewife's that were there to do the domestic chores. They also thought that women would destroy the masculinity of the game by taking away that idea that it is a game for the gentlemen. Many doctors were noted at the time saying that football would damage the reproductive capabilities of women as it is a dangerous game, and therefore they would be less of a woman (McCrone, 1987). Although women were strongly discouraged for participation in football about five to ten percent of the crowd in the 1880's and 1890's were middle class women (Lewis, 2009). Many of these women did not behave the way in which women were expected to at the time. They were often very abusive and violent towards people on the pitch and were seen as rowdy and many people thought that women playing football were the worst thing that anybody could see (Williams and Woodhouse, 1991).

Masculine values were very important in the development of the modern day game of football. The public school was very much focused around turning the uncontrollable boys into gentlemen; by civilising the game and playing it for its own sake with no interference from the outside. The folk working class football developed from the social changes that the working class were going through at the time, with a rise in the importance of health and the changes to their working patterns. Although the middle class had a great impact on how the working class football was organised and run the working class did rebel against this and moved more towards running their own teams and the creation of the Football League. One of the reasons for the split of the working class and middle class was that the middle class wanted to play the game for its own sake and to enjoy it as amateurs, as this was the gentlemanly way, while the working class wanted to compete and for professionals to play, as they wanted to enjoy the game and support their local club as local men. The reluctance to participate in FIFA was due to the Football Associations rejection on professional and the political connections that FIFA wanted football to have, as this was seen as un-gentlemanly. Finally the resistance of women into the game showed that men thought that women would damage the image of the game and they wanted the game to be a way of escaping the family life and to enjoy with other men.