Football's Past Revisited

Further Investigations into the Early Development of the Game

This book delves into the complex, yet fascinating evolution of football. From a relatively unruly mob game played on festival days, the game was adopted, codified and 'civilised' by the major English Public Schools, then diffused into the wider society to become a codified, modern sports-form. The birth of the Football Association in 1863 in London provided compromise rules, enabling teams geographically divided by distance and football's differing interpretations to oppose each other, which marked a pivotal moment for the sport. Thereon, history records the establishment of the FA Cup, football's internationalisation, the advent of professionalism and, perhaps finally, the establishment of a national league structure, all of these developments originally taking place in the British Isles. Within this multifaceted framework, eminent sociologists and historians have attempted to wrestle with these processes. As a result, over the past two decades, researchers and academics have reached the conclusion that, although a solid grounding in the macro-history of football is required, testing the existing hypotheses and questions in the early development of the game is best explored by drilling down deeply into local studies using a micro-historical approach. Consequently, many of the chapters included in this book, on Staffordshire, Norfolk, London, Sheffield, East Lancashire, Rugby School, follow this methodology. This book is an essential read for students, scholars and academics of sports studies, history, sociology, development and management, as well as an engrossing read for anyone interested in the early history of football. The chapters in this book were originally published as a special issue of Soccer & Society.



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