

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE OLYMPIC SOCCER TOURNAMENT FROM 1908-1928

by Joel Rookwood & Charles Buckley

This article explores the relevance of the Olympic soccer competition. The first international soccer match took place in 1872 between England and Scotland. The former nation was largely responsible for early regulations of the sport, as well as the structural organisation of domestic competitions (Murray, 1996). The first official multi-national competitive soccer event however, was established in the framework of the Olympic Games. Soccer has been included as a competitive male event in every Olympics, with the exception of the 1932 Games. Initially, the event involved unofficial demonstration tournaments, with the first formal competition held in London in 1908. This tournament is recognised as representing the first world title in the sport. This awarding function however, currently comes under the jurisdiction of the World Cup, organised by FIFA. From 1914, FIFA assumed official responsibility for redeveloping the Olympic soccer tournament as a 'world football championship for amateurs', organising the event at subsequent Olympiads. FIFA did not organise a separate soccer-specific world championships until 1930, an event which has subsequently become recognised

as establishing the world champions in the sport. This article explores the historical development of soccer and of international soccer competition, as well as the significance of early Olympic soccer tournaments. Also the role of FIFA in developing competitive international soccer competition is explored, together with the foundation of the FIFA World Cup and the significance of the development of professionalism and 'spectatorism' in this context.

A brief introduction to the historical development of soccer:

The modern form of association football (soccer) was developed in Britain. The game evolved from existing folk games, which were only partially organised and contended irregularly, often by teams of unequal numbers (Curry, 2003). Soccer progressed as a codified sport in England during the central spine of the nineteenth century, with the regulatory and competitive elements developed initially in the context of intra- and inter-institution sport within the English public school and university systems (Lupson, 2006). During this period, the game was "not so much a sin-



**The Successful British Team
for the 1908 Olympic Games in
London**

gle game as an array of roughly similar tribal codes preferred by different public schools" (Birley, 1993: 257). Giulianotti states that "we may refer to this process of codification and diffusion as football's 'traditional' period" (2000: 9). Up until the mid-1850s, the regulatory component of competitive soccer was often controlled exclusively by verbal agreement (Dunning and Sheard, 1979). In the decade that followed however, considerable effort was made to produce written regulations, in order to harmonize rules for general adoption and therefore facilitate effective competition within and between these academic sporting establishments (Green, 1954). The first written rules representing this code of soccer were produced by Eton School in 1847, with subsequent developments occurring as a result of the efforts of undergraduate students at Cambridge University. The formulation of this regulatory component was of fundamental importance to the progression of the sport, both within and outside the UK.

Soccer was subsequently diffused to the wider society in Britain, primarily by ex-public schoolboys. Due largely to changes in the structure of the working week and the advancement of transport networks, together with the increasing desire amongst British males to play and watch the sport, a network of English clubs subsequently developed, primarily through connections in industry and church-based organisations (Kerrigan, 2004; Collins, 1998). The world's oldest recorded football club, Sheffield FC, was formed on 24th October 1857, with numerous other clubs established throughout England during this period. The advancement of varying levels of local and regional competition, coupled with a continued lack of consensus about which rules the sport should be played according to, highlighted the requirement for an official nationally agreed set of regulations to be produced (Curry, 2003). In order to try and achieve this objective, representatives from twelve clubs and schools from the London area met on 26th October 1863 to frame a set of official rules, a meeting that effectively marked the formation of the Football Association. Despite the fact a governing body had been established, disputes over the rules persisted until the late 1870s. However, this body was largely responsible for the fundamental aspects of the regulatory framework that was eventually agreed. After 1880 soccer was increasingly adopted in this form by young members of the elite and upper middle classes in Europe (Guttmann, 1994).

A general step into the history of international soccer competition:

The advancement of international competitive soccer was closely intertwined with the establishment of several ruling bodies. Tomlinson notes that the first

international match, which was between England and Scotland in 1872, "led directly to the foundation" of UK football governing bodies (1991: 27). The Football Associations of Scotland, Wales and Ireland were established in 1873, 1876 and 1880 respectively. The formation of the International Football Association Board that represented the associations of the four 'home countries' of Britain was established on 2nd June 1886. This organisation served to protect and preserve the rules of the game in the UK. Although the extensive growth of the sport within an international context did not occur until after this date, it is noteworthy that international soccer matches had taken place prior to the inception of this federation. The FA "Challenge Cup", represents the world's first national football competition, and was established in England in 1871. Its format is a knock-out competition based on the inter-house event that originated at Harrow School. Although primarily an English event, in its initial phase this competition also featured sides from Scotland and Wales. Scotland's Queen's Park FC for example, reached the final of the competition in 1884 and 1885. However, despite the cross-nation nature of this competition, the event was reserved for teams from Great Britain, and more significantly this was a club-based event.

An example of a pioneering competition that adopted a more diverse geographical approach in this regard was the international event organised in Turin by Sir Thomas Lipton in 1909. Teams representing the nations of Italy, Germany and Switzerland competed in the Sir Thomas Lipton Trophy. The Football Association in England were invited to send a team, although they declined to have any involvement. Lipton instead invited West Auckland from County Durham to partake on behalf of England, which they did, winning the event, and then successfully defending their title in 1911, on the only other occasion on which this tournament was staged. Again however, this tournament was based on inter-club competition. England's match against Scotland in Glasgow on 30th November 1872 was the first contest to take place between competing (non-club) teams representing given nations. The world's first international match of a competitive nature took place in Belfast in 1884 between Ireland and Scotland at the inaugural British Championship.

The competitive element of international soccer during this period progressed largely due to advancements in the activities of national teams and those that controlled the organisation of matches in this context. Inter-nation club soccer was relatively underdeveloped in this regard during this period, at least in competitive form. However, numerous English teams did arrange exhibition games on an individual basis, with southern amateur clubs serving as pioneers in this respect who: "Began arranging

individual exhibition matches and even full-blown tours of continental Europe towards the late 1890s" (Taylor, 2005: 219). This was not a trend that the Football Association or Football League supported, and therefore Football League clubs were "obliged to develop their own contacts and form individual networks of relationships on the international stage" (ibid: 202). Such fixtures became more common notably during the inter-war period, where numerous club and representative sides toured abroad: "By the 1920s, overseas tours were increasing in frequency and becoming more significant in the sporting calendars of the leading League clubs" (ibid: 220). This had a significant impact on the development of soccer on the continent, albeit in the 'less formal' context of non-competitive inter-club contests: "On a less formal level, British clubs, players and coaches were instrumental in the development of the administrative and playing side of football in continental Europe, the Americas and parts of the Empire" (ibid: 215-6). The advancement of Czech football for example, was partly attributed to the visit of touring English teams. It was considered no coincidence that the performances of Czechoslovakia, notably in the 1920 Olympic tournament came following a series of matches against experienced English opposition (Glanville, 1973).

However, the impact of such a mode of competition was also limited to a degree. For example, despite the increase in the number of such inter-season contests, not all English Football League clubs followed this trend, partly as some players were unwilling to travel at the end of a long domestic campaign, the importance of which was continually developing. In addition, others played first class cricket between soccer seasons, and so were unable to take part in non-competitive soccer matches abroad (ibid). Furthermore, although several soccer clubs took part in such matches, Huggins and Williams argue however that: "Hardly any calls were made in England for the establishment of international club competitions. English Football League clubs seemingly attached little importance to continental tours, and often performed poorly. Tours usually followed a hard season, and there was occasional player indiscipline" (2006: 118). Indeed the conduct of players at these events, both on and off the field was questioned, further undermining the rationale for involvement: "Foreigners who we have taught to play and enjoy football are complaining that touring teams either cannot or will not play up to the standard expected of them" (*The Times*, 9 June 1929). In terms of the position of the organisers of competition in England, the Football League exemplified insularity on the issue: "While it developed a formal dialogue, as well as administrative links, with other British associations and leagues, it made no such contacts outside Britain and did little to en-

courage its members to do so" (Taylor, 2005: 201). The Olympic tournament however, provided a context in which international contact was fostered.

During the latter part of the nineteenth century, soccer was exported to several European and non-European countries. However, whilst club soccer was flourishing with the establishment of domestic league and cup competitions, there was a lack of structure and organisation involving competitive football in an international context (Murray, 1996). There was a notable exception, namely the Mitropa Cup, developed by Hugo Meisl, which ran from 1927-39 (Ballard and Suff, 1999). This involved champion club teams from Italy, Austria, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and Switzerland. Again however, this was not international soccer incorporating competing national teams. During the early stages of the twentieth century, representatives from several European nations expressed an interest in formulating a collective body to organise events and officially regulate international soccer. The Football Association representing England were initially unwilling to join with their European counterparts in developing a unifying international body, claiming they could not see the advantages of such a federation (Tomlinson, 1991). However, representatives from seven nations formed the European-based Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) at the headquarters of the Union Française de Sports Athlétiques in Paris on 21st May 1904.

Holt argues that the England Football Association's self-imposed exclusion from FIFA before 1905 was because: "The English felt football was their property and were disinclined to cooperate with foreigners" (1989: 273). Also in this regard, Taylor discusses "The isolation, insularity and sheer arrogance of the British authorities" (2005: 215). Giulianotti claims that Britain's concern at "discussing their sport on an equal footing" (2000: 25) with representatives from other nations, and the policy of distance to FIFA which the British subsequently maintained was due in part to the fact that: "Problematically, unlike Britain's opponents at cricket or rugby, these footballing rivals were not incorporated within the British Empire, but free to pursue their own cultural development" (ibid). Despite the initial temporary lack of British representation at the newly formed world body of the sport, the application of the laws of the game strictly established according to the English model became compulsory, further highlighting the significance of the UK codification. The foundation act was signed by representatives from the national football associations of France, Belgium, Denmark, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland. Five more national associations joined FIFA the following year, notably the Football Association of England, whose association with this international body com-

menced on 24th April 1905. The first non-European members to join FIFA were South Africa in 1910, Argentina and Chile in 1912 and USA in 1913.

Early Olympic soccer tournaments: 1896-1928:

Soccer was included within the early Olympiads, partly because founder Pierre de Coubertin had a "special partiality" for the game and in particular for English soccer (Müller, 2000: 438). The sport was played at the first modern Olympic Games in Athens in 1896, with teams from Denmark, Greece and Turkey taking part. Subsequently, soccer was played as a demonstration sport, with no medals awarded for successful teams, at the Summer Olympic Games of both 1900 and 1904, as well as at the 1906 Intercalated Games. Three teams participated in the 1900 event in Paris, with teams representing France, Belgium and Great Britain, and in St Louis in 1904, two local teams from the city, together with a team from Ontario competed in the event (Lennartz, 2004). In 1907 Coubertin commented that "This is the season of great football matches" (Müller, 2000: 667), emphasising the perceived success of these early contests.

Subsequently, in the 1908 Summer Olympics in London, soccer was held as an official competition for the first time (Lennartz, 1999). According to the Official Report, this event was held: "Under the control and management of the Football Association (England), whose decision on all matters relating to the Competition shall be final and without appeal" (p. 457). In addition, the competition was "Played according to the Laws of the Game as promulgated by the Football Association (England) and accepted by the Fédération Internationale de Football Association" (ibid). Whilst national federations were

largely responsible for arranging the involvement of national teams, it was notable that such organisations had not been established in all countries during this period. In such cases, responsibility was then handed to amateur clubs, highlighting the significance the latter institutions continued to occupy during this period. As the General regulations published in the Official Report state: "All entries shall be made by the governing Associations (or, where governing Associations do not exist, by Amateur clubs) through the Olympic Committee in each country" (ibid).

The 1908 event was regarded suspiciously by some as a show rather than a competition, with the sparse field representing a range of experience, reflected in some of the results. Only five nations competed in the event, including Denmark, England, Sweden and Holland. Each competing country was "entitled to enter four teams" (ibid), as was stated in the official report, and consequently France completed the field, entering two teams. Despite the fact that the organisation of the world game had its origins in Paris, both French teams were particularly unsuccessful however, with France 'B' losing 9-0 in the very first official Olympic match, and France 'A' later defeated by Denmark 17-1, with the latter scoreline still the largest goal-tally in Olympic history. Eleven teams competed in the subsequent event at the 1912 Games, which again allowed for multiple entries from single competing nations. This competition produced the same winners of each medal as the respective tournament in 1908. Great Britain won both competitions, effectively represented by the England national amateur football team.

The 1920 Olympic soccer tournament in Antwerp was significant for a number of reasons. It was the first event to feature non-European representation, with

**Scene from the 1912 Final Match:
Great Britain vs. Denmark 4 : 2**



Egypt joining the list of participants, together with thirteen European nations. In addition, England's global dominance in the sport came under close scrutiny for the first time, as they were eliminated in the opening round 3-1 by Norway. Czechoslovakia were dominant throughout the tournament, scoring fifteen goals and conceding only one en route to the concluding stages. However, they were beaten 3-0 in the final by Belgium. The competition in Paris in 1924 became an even more global event, with Uruguay the first team from the Americas to take part. Uruguay won the gold medal, beating the Netherlands 3-0 in the final. Four years later at the Amsterdam Games, in the final Olympic tournament to be held as the undisputed 'world championships', Uruguay retained their crown, beating Argentina in the only all South American final in Olympic soccer history.

The importance of the Olympic tournament to International soccer:

After the first official tournament in the sport, soccer: "rapidly became one of the highlights of the Olympic Games after 1908" (Walvin, 1994: 133). Importantly the Olympic event was the sole multinational soccer tournament until the FIFA World Cup was established. Therefore it served as a platform, representing the highest level of performance and achievement in the sport, set in the context of the Olympics, a quadrennial sporting event already considered the most prestigious in the world. However, a key element of significance regarding the Olympic soccer competitions related to the notion of attendance, and at early events, the development of the profile of the competition and the line-up of teams was fraught with inconsistencies. Although the tournament came to be "perceived as the stage upon which the progress of a vibrant nation could be exhibited" (Torres, 2003: 6), both the organisers and the proposed and potential participants faced numerous challenges in the collective bid to assure the success of the various tournaments. For example, despite the notable development of the sport in a domestic context in several Latin countries, South American nations were notably underrepresented in the early tournaments, with Uruguay the only team from that continent to compete in the first four official Olympic events.

In South American countries such as Uruguay and also Argentina, the internal management of the sport experienced considerable challenges, as rival governing bodies competed to assume control of the organisation of the sport. In some cases, such power struggles impacted the very participation of certain nations in the tournament. According to Torres, it was "the prospect of Olympic football participation" (2003: 15) that generated such division. The absence of the Argentine Olympic soccer team at the 1924 Olympic tournament for example, was due to a serious rift



**Scene from the 1920 Match:
Belgium vs. Spain**

between soccer's ruling bodies in Argentina (Mason, 1995; Archetti, 1999). This was largely a reflection of the desire of certain elite fractions to manage what was perceived to be an increasingly profitable enterprise (Torres, 2003). Recognition from FIFA served as the deciding factor in determining whether a national governing body could organise for a national team to be sent to the Olympic tournament, which during this period was considered to be "the world stage" of soccer (ibid: 17). Tournament organisers FIFA, were clearly aware of such challenges, and were keen that any problems be mitigated in order to ensure the continual progression and expansion of the event, and of the global soccer calendar. In response to Argentina's non-attendance in 1924, FIFA president Jules Rimet stated: "I deplore the absence of the Argentines in the Olympic football tournament, and trust they will be represented in the IX Olympiad" (ibid: 19).

As part of the evolving structure of competitive international soccer, the Olympic event was an important prequel to the World Cup, the early success of which was largely a function of the experience FIFA had gained, and the contacts that had been established in organising the Olympic event. The first international soccer competition staged by FIFA took place in Switzerland in 1906. This was arranged for nations outside of the Olympic framework, and was met with little success or approval. This serves to further emphasise the importance of the context of the Olympic Games, the prestige of which provided FIFA with a platform and a framework to expand the tournament, increase their own bank of national affiliates, and discuss the possibility of establishing an independent tournament. Many of the competing nations viewed the Olympic soccer competition extremely highly, and such tournaments "proved to be highly prestigious and lucrative ventures which competing nations approached with a frightening and escalating determination" (Walvin, 1994: 134). This competition for example, encouraged the English to take part, despite a series of disagreements with event or-

ganisers FIFA. This tournament therefore assumed a pivotal role in helping bring the Football Association out of their self-imposed isolation during this period: "Before 1914 England played only seven soccer matches against continental countries but played nineteen in the 1920s and twenty-eight in the 1930s" (Huggins and Williams, 2006: 118). The Olympic tournament facilitated the progression of the sport. Much of the progress on the continent in this regard had gone unnoticed in the 'home' of football, and "the action of the British governing bodies in distancing themselves from FIFA appeared to symbolise this position" (Taylor, 2005: 215). By helping to involve the English soccer team in the event, whilst also developing their dialogue with FIFA, the Olympic soccer event therefore reduced this separation to a degree.

In addition, apart from the fact that competing nations were focussed on presenting themselves as strong countries by attempting to win the event, nations such as Argentina viewed mere participation in the Olympic tournament as an achievement in itself. This was because it was considered to provide an opportunity for them to make a mark in the community of nations (Torres, 2003). The fact that the competition was viewed in such regard further highlights its significance. Also, another of the key functions the involvement of South American nations provided in the event, related to their distinctive style of play. The Olympic soccer tournament provided exposure for the sport in this regard, which supported the evolution of the game, for which all competing nations were beneficiaries. This related notably to tactical and technical developments, as the Olympic event provided exposure to external practices in this regard.

Amateurism and the emergence of professionalism in soccer:

The concept of rewarding players financially for playing soccer was first introduced within English domestic soccer. Prior to 1885, the Football Association's perceptions of the game and who should be allowed to play it remained based on the Public School model, as the game continued to be played by men whose social standing was far lower than those in charge of the FA: "The amateur-professional split was a profound one, reflecting deeply held class prejudices. Certain key members of the FA were extremely disturbed by professionalism in sport and had only accepted it if they could somehow control it, and in their view, safeguard the principles essential to 'true' sport" (Harding, 1991: 3). Dunning (1986) claims that with the development of competitive soccer in the UK, the gradual demise of 'amateur' values in the game was being replaced by professional attitudes and structures. In addition, Taylor discusses "the 'intrusion' of professionalism into amateur sport"

(1986: 32). In terms of when this development was first introduced, Mason claims that: "It is difficult to be exact about when football players were first paid for playing" (1980: 69), but that, "whoever the first professional was, rumours of professionalism were widespread in the 1880s" (ibid: 70). In discussing the shifting trend towards competitiveness in soccer however, Curry claims that this "eventual acceptance of professionalism" (2004: 338) in Britain occurred in 1885. More specifically it has been stated that professionalism entered the British game in July 1885, when the FA failed to limit payment to reimbursed expenses and so reluctantly recognized professionalism in the sport (Giulianotti, 2000).

Elias (2000) states that this shift in focus was more the function of unplanned processes and the consequences of the fusion of purposive actions of numerous individuals over several generations, rather than something more intentional and deliberate. The Football Association's acceptance of professionalism was according to McArdle (2000) contingent upon how much professionals could earn and whom they could play. Clubs in the north of England who attracted the largest crowds and were the most successful, such as Blackburn Rovers and Notts County, were secretly paying their players before professionalism became legalised (ibid). Professional soccer was therefore a reality in the English game, although the FA refused to acknowledge that it even existed, and certainly would not sanction the practice of professionalism in the sport. For them, "Football would always be a sport, never a business, while those who played in it would always be 'sportsmen' never workmen" (Harding, 1991: 3). Certain wealthy clubs therefore continued to make underhand 'boot money' payments to players, or provide them with token employment (Russell, 1997). When the FA decided to allow professionalism, they did so reluctantly, acknowledging that they were only accepting the inevitable (McArdle, 2000).

In the first official Olympic soccer tournament in 1908, the event was staged in London and planned by the Football Association, and was reserved for amateur players only. The Official Report provides the following definition in this regard: "An amateur player is one who does not receive remuneration or consideration of any sort above his necessary hotel and travelling expenses actually paid, or who is not registered as a professional" (p. 457). This was particularly significant as professionalism had featured within England's domestic game since 1885 (ibid). Subsequently in 1914, a congress was staged by the Federation of French Football in Christiania, and on that occasion, a proposal was ratified, namely that FIFA would recognise the Olympic Tournament as a world football championship for amateurs, providing the event is managed according to FIFA regu-



**Scene from the 1924 Match:
 The Netherlands vs. Sweden**

lations. However, in terms of agreeing a definition of professionalism, "FIFA, with so many varying attitudes amongst its membership, could not agree" (Crouch, 2006: 2). In addition, despite the fact that this tournament remained true to the Olympic ideal of amateurism, pressure was mounting from national associations, some of whom had a professionalized domestic league. FIFA decided to allow "'broken time payments' to remunerate amateur players who missed work in order to compete in matches" (Guttmann, 1994: 56) at the 1928 Olympic Games, a notion that was clearly antithetical to the Olympic ideal. This highlighted the evolving differentiation between amateur and professional codes of the sport, and brought the connection between competitive soccer and the Olympic structure into question.

As a consequence the British federations departed from FIFA "in fits of principle" (ibid): "When FIFA agreed with the IOC that footballers receiving broken time payments could play in the Olympics, the FA believed this would destroy the basis of amateur sport" (Huggins and Williams, 2006: 116). Therefore, as well as the practical and economic factors that prevented certain nations from attending these events in the 1920s, and potentially threatening the dominance of the South Americans in the process, the issue of professionalism also caused some countries to 'refuse to participate': "In the two inter-war Olympics, those of 1924 and 1928, English football refused to participate because of a dispute about amateur status which had led to its withdrawal from FIFA, and the title fell to Uruguay" (Walvin, 1994: 134). Despite the developments in the economic structure of their own domestic game, Britain had always been represented by genuine amateurs (Glanville, 1973) in the Olympic tournaments, however the issue of prevent-

ing professionalism prior to 1928 was also "keeping out such rising countries as Austria and Hungary, while many of those who competed were professionals in all but name" (ibid: 15).

The Olympic soccer tournament therefore played an important role in the development of the sport, in terms of the organisation of international competition, and also in relation to the socio-economic evolution of the sport, which had a subsequent impact on issues such as the contractual agreements of players in the context of national domestic soccer. The details of such agreements during this period were largely controlled by governing bodies, as Harding states: "That the pro-player was a workman with a legal contract and recognised as such (after a struggle) by the law of the land would make no practical difference. For the FA, football was a world within a world, and they were its rulers" (1991: 3). However, it was the very fact that professionalism was gaining increasing acceptance that served as the key issue, a development that the Olympic soccer tournament effected considerably.

'Spectatorism' in soccer:

Holt argues that the notion of introducing professionalism in the sport and the establishment of a professional football league in England marked the "beginning of the end of an important social movement" (1989: 144). Similarly, Holt also claims that the growing trend of 'spectatorism' was considered the antithesis of sport: "It was perfectly acceptable for keen players to watch others playing for the love of it, but it was quite another for thousands of youths and men to shout and swear... Far from being rational this was the no more than mindless fanaticism, obstinate and arbitrary partisanship devoid of sense, morality, or self-restraint" (ibid: 144-5). Several

other academics have traced problems with the behaviour of spectators at soccer matches back to the development of the professional game in the 1870s, notably Hobbs and Robbins (1991) and Dunning *et al.* (1988). However this problem was noted in such work within the context of domestic club soccer, often regarding inter-club rivalries, as opposed to that illustrated on an international level.

Despite the emergence of such disorder within some countries however, the Olympic soccer tournaments provided a notable illustration of how spectatorism in certain contexts served as an appropriate component of such sporting events, in keeping with Olympic ideals. Coubertin was keen for patriotism, namely the love of one's own nation, to be a key focus of the Games, but for nationalism, which he defined as hostility to other countries, not to be promoted within the Olympics (Holt, 1989). Importantly the Olympic Movement aimed to direct the "new power of national identity into constructive and peaceful channels" (ibid: 274). It has also been argued that the practicalities of the competition and of the sport in general lent themselves to maximum appeal from the audience. Soccer, as a stadium event, therefore held a degree of significance over events located externally, given that the "competitions outside the stadium do not appeal to either patriotic pride or the imagination in the same way as the Games proper" (*The Times*, July 16 1908, p. 12). No disorder was reported at any the Olympic soccer tournaments discussed here, despite the fact that the crowds who gathered to watch the matches increased with each Olympiad. This illustrates the fact that the early developments in international spectator culture during this period, which were primarily determined and reflected through this tournament, also illustrated 'peaceful' conduct from spectators.

The establishment of the FIFA World Cup:

In 1904 FIFA "decided rather grandly that it alone had the right to organise a world championship. This right was not to be exercised for twenty-six years" (Glanville, 1973: 15). In 1914, FIFA made the decision that the Olympic soccer competition would represent the world title in the sport, and assumed responsibility for the organisation and management of the tournament. However, during meetings staged at such events, representatives of FIFA considered the notion of staging a FIFA World Cup, completely independent of the Olympic Games. Under the guidance of President Jules Rimet, questionnaires were sent to those associations affiliated to FIFA, to determine whether such a competition should be developed and, if so, under what so conditions. Subsequently, in 1924, at the Paris Olympics, a number of FIFA personnel met to discuss the idea of a World Cup in serious detail.

Many of the arguments presented as a rationale for introducing the event related to the perceived restrictions of the Olympic model, relative to the fast developing sport of soccer, which notably related to the notion of amateurism. At a FIFA congress in 1926 FIFA secretary Henri Delaunay proclaimed: "Today international football can no longer be held within the confines of the Olympics; and many countries where professionalism is now recognised and organised cannot any longer be represented there by their best players" (Glanville, 1973: 15). In the 1928 Olympic soccer tournament in Amsterdam, Uruguay retained their title after beating fellow South Americans Argentina in the final. This event further highlighted the development of non-European nations, and by extension, the growing popularity and influence of the game (Kennedy, 2004), and the potential for an expansion of a global competition dedicated to the sport. It was at this tournament, where: "Delaunay's resolution that the World Cup be set on foot at once was adopted" (ibid: 15). The first FIFA World Cup was staged in 1930 by double Olympic Champions Uruguay, who subsequently won the competition.

The Olympic soccer tournament was therefore seriously under threat, due to the introduction of the World Cup, and the perceived difficulties with which the IOC were then faced, notably in defining what an amateur was. The IOC could not find a solution regarding the amateur status of soccer players, and consequently, FIFA decided not to organise a soccer tournament at the 1932 summer Olympic Games in Los Angeles. The eight-year absence of the Olympic soccer tournament, together with the fact that FIFA held its second World Cup in Italy in 1934, served to make the World Cup the premier competition. From this point on the World Cup, not the Olympics would be the premier competition. The fact that the World Cup included sixteen teams from four continents, and embraced and reflected the transformations in the game, including the allowance of the involvement of professional players, further cemented this position.

Despite the experience FIFA had gained in organising soccer events within the context of the Olympic Games, the organisation of the World Cup produced some initial problems regarding individual national associations, notably in Britain. This was largely a reflection of differences of opinion concerning the notion of prioritising competitions, for example, whether the focus should be on the domestic or international context (a unilateral focus), or on both (a position of duality) (Holt, 2007). Giulianotti states: "England declined to enter the first three World Cup finals, retraining their sights on extraordinary mass spectacles of domestic football as attendances increased phenomenally" (2000: 25). Despite inter- and intra-governing body disagreements however, FIFA continued to organise the quadrennial event, which continued to expand.

Conclusion:

Although soccer was principally developed as a codified sport in Britain, the focus of the competitive structure in the UK remained largely in the form of domestic and some international club-based contests. The initial advancement of international competitive soccer was organised primarily by FIFA. This was arranged in the context of the Olympic Games. For those countries that competed in the event, this provided a framework in which international contact was fostered. It also served as an opportunity for national bodies and teams to make a contribution in the evolving community of nations (Torres, 2003). In addition, the media coverage the competition received encouraged other na-

with each Olympiad. Although elements of disorder from football supporters were being noted in countries such as England in the context of domestic inter-club competition during this period, no instances of disorder were reported at any of the Olympic soccer tournaments discussed here. These competitions therefore provided an example of how to direct patriotic support for a nation and appreciation for elite performance in a sport into 'constructive and peaceful channels' (Holt, 1989: 274).

However, although the Olympic event provided FIFA both with valuable experience in managing an event, as well as with a template for staging a world championship in the sport, FIFA officials came to the conclusion in the mid 1920s that a global inter-



Scene from the 1928 Match:
Portugal vs. Yugoslavia

tions to compete in subsequent tournaments. The event involved competing nations who had developed and adopted a diverse range of styles in terms of how the game was played. The Olympics therefore provided exposure for the sport in this regard, contributing to the evolution of tactical and technical components of the game. The Games provided an outlet to represent elite performance in several sports, and came to be considered the most prestigious sporting event in the world. Soccer quickly became one such sport and benefited from the platform the Olympics provided (Walvin, 1994).

The tournament also presented organisers FIFA with a structure to not only expand the tournament but work towards the formulation of their own independent competition, increasing their bank of national affiliates in the process. In addition, the Olympic tournaments also attracted large crowds, and interest and support for the events increased

national football championship could no longer be confined to the Olympic Games. The Olympics had provided a structure, and FIFA had made use of the association with such a prestigious world sporting event. However an event reserved for amateurs was, by the 1930s not considered an appropriate stage for a sport in which professionalism was becoming increasingly recognised. With club soccer expanding, notably in Europe with the formation of the Mitropa Cup in central Europe in 1927 (Missiroli, 2002): "Olympian virtues were a poor reward for financial investments in trophy-hungry clubs" (Giulianotti, 2000: 4). FIFA therefore required a competitive international structure that supported rather than contradicted or restricted the already established and rapidly evolving domestic arrangements of the game. The eight-year absence of an Olympic event and the staging of two successful FIFA World Cups during this period served to redirect the global competitive

focus to the latter competition. From 1930 onwards therefore, the winners of the World Cup were considered the undisputed World champions of soccer, whilst the Olympic tournament, which resumed in 1936, adopted secondary importance.

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