



## READING COMPREHENSION

Read the following text and do the exercises below.

### THE HISTORY OF FOOTBALL

Football is one of the world's most popular games. It is played in nearly every country by everyone; from kids in the streets to professional players in giant stadiums. Professional football is watched by billions of people all over the world, and it is probably the world's most popular spectator sport.

#### History

The earliest known form of the game was developed in China around 500 B.C. (Before Christ). It was known as *cuju* (kick-ball) and it was played with a leather ball. The object was to kick the ball into a net stretched between two goal-posts. By 800 A.D. (After Death), there was a well-organized professional league in China, and similar games were also being played in Korea and Japan.

The earliest form of the game that we know in Europe was played in England around 1100 A.D. It was played between big teams, sometimes whole villages, on a large field, and the ball could be thrown, kicked or carried towards the opponent's goal. There were very few rules and games were often wild and rough. The game was repeatedly banned by the authorities because of the violence and injuries it caused.

The modern game first developed in England in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Football Association was set up in 1863 and the Laws of the Game were drawn up in the same year. In 1882, the International Football Association Board (IFAB) was formed, and this organization still oversees the rules of the game. Then FIFA (Fédération Internationale de Football Association) was founded in 1904 to run international competitions. FIFA still runs the World Cup, as well as regional competitions, such as the European and Asian Cups.

## **How the game works**

The modern game is played by two teams of eleven players on a rectangular field with a goal at each end. Players pass the ball to each other by kicking or heading it, with the aim being to score goals by getting the ball into the opponent's goal. The game lasts for two 45-minute halves, and the team scoring the most goals wins. Draws are common but if a winner has to be found, a game can go into extra time. If the score is still tied after thirty minutes of extra time, a penalty shootout can decide the winner.

The goalkeeper is the only player who can touch the ball with his hands or arms, and all the other players can just kick or head the ball.

Players can tackle an opponent in order to get the ball from them, but they must do so without pushing or tripping the player. Pushing and tripping, along with other illegal actions, such as handball and offside, are fouls that can be penalized with a free kick. If a foul is committed in the penalty area near either goal, the referee can award a penalty kick, meaning a player can have a free shot at goal, with only the goalkeeper being allowed to try to block it. If a player commits a more serious offence, such as dangerous play, the referee can issue a yellow card as a warning or issue a red card, in which case the player is sent off and cannot be replaced by a substitute. Teams are normally allowed three substitutes, which can be used to replace players because of injury or for tactical reasons.

## **Famous Players**

### **Pele**

Edison Arantes do Nascimento, or Pele, is rated by many as the greatest footballer of all time. The Brazilian champion was given the title of Athlete of the Century by the International Olympic Committee and jointly named FIFA Player of the Century with Diego Maradona. He was part of three World Cup winning teams, and was known for his brilliant passing, his speed, his strong heading of the ball, as well as for his brilliance at shooting and scoring goals.

### **Diego Maradona**

Diego Maradona is one of the most well-known footballers of all time. He played in four World Cups for his country, Argentina, and led them to their victory over West Germany in 1986. He also won many trophies with Boca Juniors in Argentina, FC Barcelona in Spain and SSC Napoli in Italy. Together with Pele, he was named FIFA Player of the Century in 2000. Maradona's strength and speed made him a difficult opponent for defenders. He had great ball-control and passing abilities, and he was

often able to create goal scoring opportunities for his teammates. He also scored many goals himself, including 34 goals for Argentina in international competitions.

## **Worksheet**

**1. In the old Chinese game *cuju*, the ball was made of...**

- a. rubber
- b. plastic
- c. leather

**2. The earliest form of the football game that we know in our continent was played in...**

- a. China by 800 A.D.
- b. Korea and Japan by 800 A.D.
- c. England around 1100 A.D.

**3. The Laws of the Game were created for the first time in...**

- a. 1882
- b. 1863
- c. 1904

**4. FIFA was set up in England in...**

- a. 1904
- b. 1863
- c. 1882

**5. The World Cup is run by...**

- a. IFAB
- b. FIFA
- c. IOC

**6. Pele shared the FIFA Player of the Century award with...**

- a. Maradona
- b. Ronaldo
- c. Beckham