

When did football begin?

The UK's national sport

- 1 How many people in the world play football? Over 270 million. And there are about 3.5 billion fans! That's a lot of people! In the UK there are about 8 million players and it's the national sport. Every Saturday people play in matches or support their teams. But where did football start and when? Where was the first game?
- 2 Some people think it started in China two or three thousand years ago. Others think it was in Greece, Italy or Japan. But it probably started in England, many hundreds of years ago. In 1170 some young men went to a field 'for a game of ball'. They made a ball from an animal bladder with air inside! The game got more and more popular. The King was worried because too many people played football and stopped doing archery. And at that time archery was important for wars! There was a football ban!
- 3 But football continued. At first, football was a game for working people. It was fun, but there weren't many rules. Players had lots of fights. Sometimes there were 1,000 players on the pitch! In the eighteenth century boys at expensive schools (public schools) started to play football too. In 1848 there was a meeting to make better rules for the game. We still use a lot of those rules today.
- 4 The British took modern football to other countries. The first game outside Europe was in Argentina in 1867. Some Englishmen worked there and took the game with them. Now it's in every country, in every town and nearly every street!



GLOSSARY

ban (n) a rule that someone must not do something

bladder (n) a part inside your body that is like a bag and keeps water that your body does not need

fight (n) when people try to hurt each other because they disagree

support (v) to think that sb or sth is the best

war (n) when two or more countries fight

1 Read the text, match paragraphs 1-4 with photos A-D



2

Read the text again. What do these numbers refer to?

1 270 million

the number of

2 8 million

the number of

3 1170

the date of

4 1,000

the number of

5 1848

the date of

6 1867

the date of

3 Make up the phrases

fans	football	inside	in matches	sport	fights	Saturday	people
ban	in the world	schools	bladder	for wars	their teams		

1 national

2 every

3 play

4 support

5 animal

6 with air

7 important

8 working

9 expensive

10 modern

11 football

12 lots of

4 Read the text again and find the irregular verbs in the Past Simple form.

_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____