

FOOTBALL: THE ASSOCIATION GAME

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Football: The Association Game by C. W. Alcock

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C. W. ALCOCK

**FOOTBALL: THE
ASSOCIATION
GAME**

FOOTBALL.

THE ASSOCIATION GAME.

BY

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WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

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ASSOCIATION FOOTBALL.

CHAPTER I.

THE FORMATION OF THE ASSOCIATION.

ANY treatise on latter-day football would be incomplete without a sketch of the events which led to the formation of the Football Association. The modern revival of football, indeed, practically dates from the inception of that organization, the largest of the many societies which now direct the forces of football. The institution of the Association, as a matter of fact, marked the first attempt to bring the many different sects into which football players were then divided under the control of one central body. Forty years ago there was little or no football outside the public schools. In some of them it still lingered, the survival, in a modified form of course, of the rough and semi-barbarous sport of the last century. Even in the majority of these, though, it only occupied a comparatively inferior position, regarded merely as a part of the curriculum of physical training. An occasional visit of a team of Old Boys would arouse a little excitement, but only of a transient character, and with the arrival of spring the schoolboy's fancy would lightly turn to thought of other games. What was worse,

too, in many cases the schools had special codes of their own. Every one did what was right in his own eyes, and the consequence was a number of games widely different in character, and some of them so divergent as to present, according to outward appearance, no real basis of agreement.

It was to assimilate these conflicting elements, and to harmonize them under the influence of a common set of laws, that the Association first saw the light. At the outset, too, its success seemed to be well assured. At a meeting held at the Freemasons' Tavern on October 26, 1863, the Association was formally instituted by a resolution to the effect, "That the clubs represented at this meeting now form themselves into an Association, to be called 'The Football Association.'" The names of those who were present will show that there was then at least an honest desire on the part of all who were concerned to prepare a code of rules which would unite all football players under one common and reliable head. The N.N.'s of Kilburn were represented by Mr. Arthur Pember, who was subsequently elected the first President of the Association; Barnes, by Mr. E. C. Morley, who was for the first few years Hon. Secretary; the War Office Football Club sent Mr. E. Wawn; the Crusaders, Mr. H. T. Steward; the Forest club, Leytonstone, Mr. J. F. Alcock; the Crystal Palace club, Mr. F. Day. The Rugby clubs, too, were hardly in a minority, as Blackheath, Kensington School, Surbiton, Blackheath Proprietary School, Percival House (Blackheath) each sent a delegate. So far everything augured favourably for the formation of a body which would secure the adhesion of football players of every sect. The first election of officers, too, was conducted in a broad spirit. Mr. Arthur Pember, of the N.N.'s, who had taken a prominent part in

the organization, as well as in the successful conduct of the inaugural meeting, was, as already stated, appointed the first President. Mr. E. C. Morley, of the Barnes club, also well known on the Thames side as an amateur oarsman, another supporter of what I may term, for purposes of distinction, the dribbling game, had the distinction of being chosen the first Hon. Secretary; while the adherents of the Rugby game also had a share in the original management in the selection of Mr. G. Campbell, of the Blackheath club, to the post of Treasurer.

Constituted as the meeting was with a fair representation of both sides of football opinion, it is not to be wondered at that the initial stages of the movement for federation were marked by a certain amount of harmony. At that time Eton, Winchester, Westminster, Harrow, Rugby, and Charterhouse were recognized as the leading schools, and, with a view to amalgamate, if possible, their six codes into one uniform set of rules, the Hon. Secretary was instructed to procure the opinions of the different captains on the best means of adapting the various games to admit of a code that would be generally satisfactory. At the same time, as the result of a lengthy discussion, on November 10, it was resolved that the Hon. Secretary should draw up rules to be submitted to a subsequent meeting on the following lines:—

1. The length of the ground should not exceed 200 yards.

2. The width of the ground should not exceed 100 yards.

3. The goals should be defined by two upright posts, without any tape or bar across the top of them.

4. That a goal should be scored whenever the ball was kicked between the goal-posts or over the spaces between them,