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## The Beautiful Game – The History of Soccer

- 01** Sports history tells us that soccer originated in England. But a form of the game was played in China some 2,300 years ago in the city of Linzi, the capital of the kingdom of Qi. The winners were awarded prizes, while the losers were flogged. Other versions of what we call football are associated with Egypt, Greece, the Roman Empire, and France. But it was in England in 1863 that the Football Association was founded which drew up the first rules of the game as we know it today.

From England the sport spread throughout the world. International matches and Olympic tournaments first made soccer popular in Europe. Then, in the 1920s the game also conquered Latin America.

The first World Cup tournament was held in Uruguay in 1930. In the final in Montevideo, the host nation defeated Argentina. The next two tournaments, 1934 and 1938, were won by Italy. In 1938 Indonesia became the first Asian nation to qualify for the World Cup finals. The 1950 tournament in Brazil saw Uruguay emerge as champions for the second time. Four years later the sensational winners in the Swiss capital, Berne, were West Germany who surprisingly defeated the hot favourites, the Magical Magyars from Hungary. In Sweden in 1958 a young man called Pelé burst on to the scene and helped Brazil become world champions for the first time.

- 02** Brazil retained their crown in Chile in 1962. Four years later, just over a century after the Football Association was founded, the tournament was held for the first time in England. The group matches provided a sensation as North Korea knocked out one of the favourites, Italy. The final between England and West Germany was a thriller with England emerging victors by four goals to two, although one of their goals was highly controversial. In the years that followed, African and Asian teams made tremendous advances. With superstar Pelé in the side, in Mexico in 1970 Brazil became world champions for the third time. Four years later the tenth World Cup tournament was held in West Germany. In the final the host nation defeated the much-fancied Dutch by two goals to one.

32 years later, Germany once again played host to a World Cup tournament – and it was one to remember. The weather was glorious, the games exciting and the atmosphere amongst the fans friendly and relaxed. Italy secured its fourth World Cup title, while the German team thrilled the host nation by reaching the semi-final. But no sooner is one World Cup over, than preparations for the next begin.