THE BEST FIFA FOOTBALL AWARDS

A LONDON NIGHT TO REMEMBER
FIFA inspiring girls and boys to play football.
FIFA’s Grassroots programme is the core foundation of our development mission, aimed at encouraging girls and boys around the world to play and enjoy football without restrictions. Grassroots focuses on the enjoyment of the game through small-sided team games, and teaching basic football technique, exercise and fair play.

For more information visit FIFA.com
DEAR READERS OF FIFA 1904,

... ........................................

I was one of these boys who loved to play football from a very early age. It was my favorite pastime. At the age of seven, we moved from Cuiabá on the banks of the River Cuiabá south to São Paulo. One of my school teachers watched me playing in the school yard and convinced my mother to take me to a football academy. She did just that – and I was very happy that she did, just as I am now, of course. After all, I wanted to become a great player like São Paulo legend Rai, a tall, attacking midfielder. I dreamt about becoming as skilful and as successful as he was. I had just turned 12 when he helped Brazil win the 1994 FIFA World Cup in the USA. That was my most memorable football moment as a child: Brazil becoming world champions after a dramatic shoot-out against Italy.

Well, only eight years later in Korea Republic and Japan, I was part of the great team that also became world champions. So it goes! At the beginning, in childhood, there is a great desire to play, and then as training begins, you improve your skills, day by day, game by game. But you need to work hard at it – and then you need a chance to prove yourself on the pitch.

Today, as a FIFA Legend, that is exactly what I am striving to do, to encourage girls and boys to become young players and to fight for what they dream about. I aspire to show them, with my story, how much you need to sacrifice yourself – and just how rewarding the outcome can be.

As a FIFA Legend, I can help to stress the good values inherent in football. Therefore, my further plans in football are to look for new challenges that inspire me.

Yours in football,
Kaká
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Photo: Michael Regan/FIFA via Getty Images.

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A CITY IN THRALL TO FOOTBALL

One day in Fulham, a group of men got together and founded London’s first football club. Since then, the city has lived and breathed the game. How does that feel in the metropolis? Great.

By Alan Schweingruber (text) and Jordan Mansfield (photos) from London.
Craven Cottage
Fulham's ground on Stevenage Road is London's oldest. Shown here attempting a header in January 1950 is striker Bedford Jezzard (1927-2005).
What are we to think about people who purchase a piece of land with a house on it near an international airport and half a year later, they complain about the noise from the aircraft? That is a bit silly. Then there are those who have been living in the same place for a long time and simply had enough of the booming economy and the more “liberated” younger people who have moved into their area. They recently went out into the streets of London (as has also happened in a few other European cities) in their pyjamas and held their homemade signs aloft. An original protest, in fact. It didn’t help, of course. And then there are some people, like the man we meet out walking at Fulham FC’s stadium. “Up to 30 times an hour, the windows in my house in Horsham vibrate,” he said. “I like the planes. I can’t get to sleep without them anymore. The time when the planes were grounded due to the volcanic eruption in Iceland in 2010, for example, was bad.”

Here in the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham, the planes also fly over the houses, but a long way above them so that the residents barely notice this annoying sound and thus don’t need to take to the streets in their nightwear. Here on the Thames in West London are also a few really beautiful, exclusive buildings on the water – pubs, rowing club clubhouses and the impressive former warehouse of the luxury department store, Harrods, which has been empty for years (it is a listed building). A lot has come and gone. The modern has supplanted the stuffy, money has driven out nostalgia, and only one thing has remained over the many years: Craven Cottage, Fulham’s stadium, built in 1896, preserved in its original form thanks to a few renovations. From a Londoner’s perspective, you could say, this is where it all began with football in the capital: Fulham was the first football club in London (1879).

66 DERBIES

Naturally, the stadium is an impressive sight from the outside. A section of the former rustic hunting lodge from the balcony of which the players’ wives can wave to their husbands at half time, still stands within the stadium perimeter. Then there are the silhouettes of the wooden stands from the previous centu-
ry, the sunset and the glittering Thames behind, while to the right is the football pitch where children are playing, the ground still damp from the afternoon rain. The man out walking is further ahead now.

It is early Friday evening and a snapshot of London can be summarised as follows: to the west and south of Fulham, planes full of people ready to party are swooping down towards Heathrow and Gatwick, while to the north, urban Notting Hill, with its fine restaurants, is getting ready for the evening, and to the east is Paddington, with its small, pretty hotels and the constantly bustling Piccadilly Circus – so authentic and pristine, as if it were made of wax, and completely British. Ahh, London!

Wax like at Madame Tussauds, where young people in the eighties used to stand to take photos next to a rigid Sylvester Stallone to have them developed a week later in the photo shop back in their home town. Teenagers today send selfies with Emma Watson or Taylor Lautner out into the world – with three or four emojis added, of course. All of this reflects London itself a little – the colourful city that is always on the move and yet where certain things stand still, like the wax figures at Tussauds. Standing still also means maintaining and enjoying tradition. Does that sound cheesy? Perhaps. You could also substitute “football” for “tradition”. There are 12 professional football clubs in London, five in the Premier
League and seven in the English Football League (the three leagues below). The intensity of football in London is surpassed only in Argentina, where there are over 40 professional clubs in Buenos Aires alone.

If you brought these four English leagues together (for example in the FA Cup and League Cup), there is a possibility of 66 different derbies. Wealthy Chelsea might make the short trip to the third-oldest club in the city, Millwall, where 20,000 people will experience an unforgettable evening in The Den, if possible close to the linesman, with the scent of the freshly mown grass in the air. Cheesy? Far from it.

"FORGET ARSENAL"

One of the 66 possible derbies is taking place this Friday at 19:45. Queens Park Rangers, who have started their Championship campaign in mediocre fashion, are playing host to ambitious Fulham. It is, in fact, a little more than a derby – it is the oldest rivalry of two West London clubs, a love-hate relationship. A pleasant 70-minute stroll for those who want

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**PUB ORIGINS OF THE FA**

In October 1863, a group of like-minded individuals met up for a pie and a pint at the Freemasons’ Tavern in London’s Covent Garden, where they proceeded to create the world’s first football association with a view to drawing up rules for the game of football. Although the pub on Great Queen Street no longer exists, its place has been taken by the Grand Connaught Rooms conference centre, the downstairs bar of which commemorates that historic meeting 154 years ago with a fine array of memorabilia, including a portrait of The FA’s first president Arthur Pember, who was also renowned for his prodigious moustache.

However, anyone wanting a genuine pub atmosphere can head for the Freemasons Arms at 81-82 Long Acre, a mere three-minute walk away, where punters can enjoy live football on TV and traditional British cuisine in a cozy local where friends and families meet up for a spot of breakfast or lunch – or maybe both...
get from one stadium (Craven Cottage) to the other (Loftus Road) by foot. Of course, no one does that any more as they are too busy juggling work and leisure. But if you were to do so just for the sake of it, you would go past places that give the mind – which in the UK is constantly wrapped up in current issues such as Prince Harry’s new girlfriend or Brexit – and soul a lift.

Hammersmith Bridge: buses and cars shoot across the massive thoroughfare connecting Barnes and Hammersmith after work. The bridge was a striking setting for the Roman Polanski film *Repulsion* (1965), in which Catherine Deneuve totters across the bridge for a whole 90 seconds with murder on her mind. In the background is the rushing traffic and, for a brief moment, Fulham’s stadium too. You could get lost in the details. As a football fan, anyway. You could ask yourself when exactly in 1965 the scene was shot and whether England at that time had any inkling that the national team would win their first and, to date, only World Cup one year later. Yet it is thrilling and striking above all because the film was a personal masterpiece for the director and an international breakthrough for both Deneuve and Polanski. It formed the basis for the thriller trilogy with Polanski’s subsequent films *Rosemary’s Baby* (1968) and *The Tenant* (1976).
Perhaps Hammersmith Bridge was not the best thing to think of at this time. Some of the streets off Loftus Road are a tad dark. Now the old Polanski images are flaring up again. And at the same time, a very childish question comes to mind: where did Jack the Ripper actually live? Did he even exist at all? Definitely not, according to the young London-based photographer working on this piece, as if he himself had lived through it. And then, out of the mist or the fog, appear the first policemen on horseback. It cannot be much further to the stadium.

The friendly man at the till asks for GBP 34. The best seats in the stadium, he says. And indeed they are – right behind the gesticulating Fulham manager and next to a big man with a hat, who proclaims before kick-off: "Forget Arsenal or Chelsea. I have been going to see Rangers for 36 years. What you get here is real football." Which, it transpires, is decidedly loud. To the left and behind are QPR fans, standing in front of or on their seats. To the right, in the packed away stand, are the "travelling" Fulham fans. Remember 1987? A group of estate agents at the time had a strange idea: they wanted to merge the two clubs for financial reasons, and came up with the name "Fulham Park Rangers". Looking into the eyes of the supporters of the two teams, it would be like the World Wildlife Fund celebrating Christmas with the International Professional Hunters Association, arm in arm, swaying to music until two in the morning and enjoying a final home-made sausage. Which, in theory, might be a lot of fun, but is it not true that some things are separate because they do not belong together?

"FORGET ARSENAL OR CHELSEA. I'VE BEEN GOING TO SEE RANGERS FOR 36 YEARS. WHAT YOU GET HERE IS REAL FOOTBALL."

On the other hand, football and the television do belong together, like Arsène Wenger and Arsenal, like Great Britain and rain. But this seemingly inseparable pair, football and television, are kept apart in England every Saturday between 15:00 and 17:15. It is intended to encourage waverers to spontaneously purchase match tickets and go to the stadium. And it works quite well. In London, you can even buy and extend your pay-and-display parking ticket from your smartphone, so why not purchase a ticket for the game just around the corner if the weather is good and your local is empty?
Charlie Chaplin

Born and bred in London, the legendary comedian popped back to his home town for a visit in 1966 (above) – he was living in Switzerland by this time. One of his haunts in his younger days (small portrait) was The Jolly Gardeners (right), now known as Zeitgeist but still bearing its former name. The pub is a favourite of German football fans.
Every Saturday at 15:00, it drizzles. And the pub is full. Football is, in fact, showing, but not the games from the Premier League, nor even a recording of Fulham’s victory over Queens Park Rangers the previous evening (2-1) – it is German football. The pub on Black Prince Road is called Zeitgeist, and alongside a good sense of modern times and trends, you also get everything that a German heart desires: Bundesliga, pork knuckles and wheat beer. It is the English/German indoor package on the other side of the Thames. “You can’t have your cake and eat it”? Not true in this city.

**CHAPLIN’S PUB**

Talking of not having one’s cake and eating it, there was a time in London when you had to decide what you wanted and what you could go without. Charlie Chaplin (1889-1977), for example, grew up in a very impoverished neighbourhood, and when he wanted to go from one side of the city to the other in his younger days, possibly to go to the theatre, it was a challenge involving no little expense. The speedy London Underground, which was newly built at the time, was a luxury and, as an artist, Chaplin often visited the local pubs. One of his favourites was The Jolly Gardeners, where according to legend, Chaplin’s father, an entertainer, had played piano. The name of The Jolly Gardeners today? Zeitgeist.

Perhaps that is why this corner pub off the beaten track does not count as an insiders’ tip, although it is well known among Londoners. It is now 17:30 and Chelsea, the third and currently most successful club from the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham, are playing Manchester City at home. Match tickets are no longer available to mere mortals, but 17:30 also means that the private channels are allowed to show the games again, well into the night. The TV execs have sent their best people to Stamford Bridge for the job, that’s for sure. In London, taking a two-hour-plus break from football is a long time to go without. Someone should protest against that one day. In pyjamas, perhaps?
David Winner is a London-based sports journalist and the author of several successful books about football. We caught up with the 60-year-old maverick over a cup of tea.

David, what is the current mood in England?
David Winner: Very good, as far as football is concerned. England have just qualified for the World Cup, but people have become more cautious in terms of their hopes and expectations, which is as it should be.

Why?
In the past, England have had some painful defeats and have often been bad losers. Every time, they were expected to win the tournament, even when that was unrealistic based on the quality of players at their disposal. I think that the team needs to play good football for a lengthy period before we can talk about them winning World Cups and European championships.

When have England been bad losers?
The country has its own particular way of dealing with players who make mistakes in key matches. I remember Peter Bonetti, the goalkeeper who came in for Gordon Banks at the 1970 World Cup when Banks fell ill. He failed to keep out a shot from Franz Beckenbauer and is still, to this day, considered to have been partly responsible for England not retaining the World Cup they won in ’66. That’s grotesque.

What is your view of football in London?
We have great derbies and a fantastic atmosphere in the stadiums. I would also recommend anyone to watch a match in a pub from time to time, because you have lots of fans screaming at the screen as if the players were right there in front of them. It’s quite an experience. Overall, football in London is better than it used to be. In the past, players were strong, fast and eager. Displaying your artistry on the ball was frowned upon, but that is no longer the case. I remember 1995, when Dennis Bergkamp came to Arsenal. It was a minor revolution. The crowd couldn’t believe what they were seeing, what this new guy from the Netherlands was doing with the ball. It was just fascinating, unique. (Winner co-wrote the Bergkamp biography Stillness and Speed – Ed.)

You are an expert on Arsenal and the Dutch national team.
Arsenal, because my father used to take me to matches as a boy, and the Netherlands, because I was impressed by its culture and mentality. I was also influenced by the way Johan Cruyff and the other Dutch players of the seventies played, of course.

Why was your book Brilliant Orange such a success?
A lot has been written about Dutch football, so I tried to present a different angle of the Dutch idea. It was extensively researched. I lived in Amsterdam for a long time and tried to understand the country. Much of their mentality comes out in their football.

Does football really vary so much from country to country?
To give you an example, the Dutch have a different concept of space. Even in their paintings and architecture, they use space in a way that is foreign to us. It’s not so much about mathematics as the way the space is divided up and how efficiently it is used. Less is often more. Even now, I sometimes ask myself when I’m somewhere in the Netherlands: why is this statue at the front and not at the back? It just doesn’t make sense. But somehow it does. The use of space is an art form in itself.

The interview with David Winner was conducted by Alan Schweingruber
Flying high at the London Palladium
The Beatles walk the tightrope (22 July 1964).
For more than a century now, entertainment enthusiasts in search of a special night out have flocked to a 2,000-plus-seat theatre on Argyll Street in the heart of London’s West End that, for many, is the most famous in the capital – and perhaps the whole of the UK. Trying to list all of the showbiz legends who have appeared at the London Palladium is a futile exercise: suffice it to say that the luminaries on the bill range from the likes of Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, Frank Sinatra and Josephine Baker through to Elton John and Robbie Williams.

The Beatles appeared twice at the Palladium, and on both occasions, fans swamped Argyll Street hoping to catch a glimpse, however fleeting, of John, Paul, George or Ringo. Once inside, on the other hand, they couldn’t miss their idols: unlike some other concert halls, the Palladium’s lavish layout is such that every member of the audience on the three floors feels close to the stage – rather like being at a British football ground, in fact.

On 23 October, the occasion at the Palladium was certainly more of a sporting affair than usual, as a galaxy of galacticos came to the venue at FIFA’s invitation to receive their awards. There was not a single no-show, and the stars were acclaimed by a veritable who’s who of the game, with FIFA Legends, fans, players and coaches from all four corners of the world paying homage. And just like in the days of Beatlemania, crowds thronged Argyll Street in an attempt to get a sight of their heroes on the green carpet as they made their way into the auditorium. As the gala proceeded, Fab Four fans would no doubt have appreciated the occasion – after all, the game of football is no stranger to the refrain of one of the lesser-known songs by the Scouse combo: All Together Now!

You would be hard pressed to find a more prestigious location than the London Palladium, venue to the stars and also where the best footballers and coaches on the planet were recently garlanded by FIFA.

Perikles Monioudis

HITTING THE HEIGHTS

You would be hard pressed to find a more prestigious location than the London Palladium, venue to the stars and also where the best footballers and coaches on the planet were recently garlanded by FIFA. Perikles Monioudis
FOOTBALL’S GREATEST NIGHT AT THE PALLADIUM

The Best FIFA Football Awards 2017 made their mark in the annals of history. See for yourself!
Oh, what an atmosphere
The nominees and guests are captivated by the exciting show.
A true gentleman Javier Zanetti graces the ceremony with his presence.

World-class and fabulous Celia Sasic, Carli Lloyd and Alex Scott (left to right) in the FIFA photo booth.

Neymar His signature in demand as ever, this time on the Green Carpet.
The perfect host
Actor Idris Elba conducts the ceremony with charm and verve.

Dapper former England international Sol Campbell is on form in the booth.

Aura
Zinédine and Véronique Zidane join the party.

Lending some Hollywood glitz
Welsh actress Catherine Zeta-Jones.
Composed in front of goal, composed in front of the camera Brazilian world champion Ronaldo.

Winning smiles Dani Alves and wife Juana Sanz.

“Permission to come aboard, sir” British acting legend Sir Patrick Stewart and wife Sunny Ozell.

Brimming with pride! Former FIFA Legend Cafu in fine form in the FIFA photo booth.

Maradona! The FIFA Legend is always in demand.
The Best FIFA Men’s Player 2017
Cristiano Ronaldo with his son and girlfriend Georgina Rodríguez.

The moment they’ll never forget. Young fans get an autograph from Lionel Messi.

 italian defender Leonardo Bonucci shows before the show.
The Best FIFA Women’s Player 2017
Lieke Martens expresses her pride and joy at receiving women’s football’s highest individual accolade.

Silver curtain, silver tongue
Spanish tenor Plácido Domingo is a true lover of football.

Safe hands
Gianluigi Buffon in his element.

One for the family album
Real Madrid’s Marcelo with his wife and children.

The Best FIFA Women’s Player 2017
Lieke Martens expresses her pride and joy at receiving women’s football’s highest individual accolade.
A definite thumbs-up
Sergio Ramos with partner Pilar Rubio.

Life is good
Arsenal striker and FIFA Puskás Award winner Olivier Giroud with wife Jennifer.

Say "aubergine!"
Croatian midfield maestro Luka Modrić and family are on form in the FIFA photo booth.

Catch me outside
Lionel Messi poses for a pic with a fan.
The phenomenal, the unique, the best in their field – they exist in all areas and at all times. A tour around the realm of superlatives.

By Perikles Monioudis

"Get up and fight, sucker!"
Muhammad Ali taunts a prone Sonny Liston during their WBC Heavyweight Championship fight in Lewiston, Maine, USA, on 25 May 1965.
Ataching someone as they do something impressive is truly a blessing. A well-prepared fried egg, for example, a good smoothie, not to mention a good haircut or a well-repaired mudguard. “Good” can be improved though, as its comparative is “better”. A better smoothie – and no one will contest this – is preferable to a good one, particularly when you enter the realm of superlatives and a smoothie made of, let’s say, banana, pear, wild berries, kiwi and lemon becomes “the best”, which has always been the prefix of choice in this special culinary area.

The best always needs someone to actually produce it, someone who can then be labelled the best in a particular area. The best male footballer and the best female footballer, for example, have those titles because their performances on the pitch were better than everything else on show around the world in the past year. It gets almost metaphysical if you take away that time restriction and try to name the best ever. That means people who have distinguished themselves in their field to such an extent that there is a broad consensus that they are the best of all time – to a certain extent even including the future.

“I’ve never recorded anything I didn’t like.”

Aretha Franklin

Consensus that they are the best of all time – to a certain extent even including the future. “I’m the greatest,” screamed Muhammad Ali from the ring, either to the crowd or into the microphones of the world’s press – and who could argue with him?

**THE NEXT LEVEL**

Ali became synonymous with boxing as a combat sport, as an art even – the art that Ali had made boxing. He took his sport to the next level – a level which, according to many,
no other boxer to date has been able to reach. The outstanding basketball player, Michael Jordan, is spoken of in similar tones. No one

“I can accept failure, everyone fails at something. But I can’t accept not trying.”
Michael Jordan

was a match for “Air Jordan”, the 6 foot 6 giant from Brooklyn, New York City, when he majestically pushed off towards the basket. Today, the 54-year-old is still at the top of the basketball rankings and revered as “The Greatest of all Time” or “The GOAT”, particularly by leading American sports broadcasters such as FOX Sports, CBS Sports and ESPN. Jordan, who shot to global fame after winning six NBA titles and five MVP awards, is still widely regarded as the best scorer, as one of the best defenders, and as a player who never ever gave up.

But what type of music does someone like Jordan listen to? Only one thing is for sure: rap and hip-hop are not his cup of tea. Is he partial to a little Aretha Franklin, maybe? If so, he wouldn’t be far from the taste of the leading American music magazine, the legendary Rolling Stone. On a list drawn up by 179 musicians and producers, the soul singer, who is now 75 years old, came out on top of the charts. “(You Make Me Feel Like) A Natural Woman”, “Respect”, “I Never Loved a Man (The Way I Love You)”, “Think” … these and other Aretha songs are still hits on the airwaves today. Ray Charles – “What’d I Say”, “You Don’t Know Me”, “Georgia on My Mind” – is number two on the list, in front of “the King”, the one and only Elvis Presley, who also shone on the silver screen.

SELF-DEPREICATION AND EMANCIPATION
Yet stealing the show from Humphrey Bogart would have been a rather big ask, even for Elvis, as Bogart is the best – at least according to the American Film Institute, which published its top 25 to celebrate the 100-year anniversary of American film. “Here’s looking at you, kid,” he whispered to Ingrid Bergman in Casablanca (1942). Even Cary Grant (in second place), who, after over 30 years and 77 feature films was one of the most popular film stars in Hollywood thanks to his self-deprecation and impeccable appearance, couldn’t argue with that.

“Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance, you must keep moving.”
Albert Einstein

Impeccable and cheerful, yet headstrong and straight-talking were all terms used to describe the best actress: none other than Katharine Hepburn. The character actress, who passed away in Connecticut in 2003, picked up four Academy Awards for Best Actress in a Leading Role – still a record for a performer. Hepburn was also known for her preference for trousers, and not only on the big screen, something that was rather rebellious for the 1930s, 40s and 50s. She was – and not for that reason alone –
one of the leading pioneers in the emancipation of women.

Albert Einstein could also justifiably be called a pioneer in many ways. In a survey of 100 leading scientists conducted by the magazine *Physics World*, it was the father of the theory of general relativity who came out on top as the greatest physicist “of all time” — pushing Sir Isaac Newton down into second place. Einstein changed our notions of how space and time are related, postulating that they were relative, meaning that they can be altered in their continuum.

**WANDERLUST AND EROTICISM**

Space and time have enticed humans into adventures since time immemorial. Discovering foreign worlds, unknown areas, on ships on uncertain voyages across the seven seas, on treacherous paths through mountains and deserts. Abu Abdallah Muhammad Ibn Battuta,
Driven by e-motion.
a Muslim explorer in the 14th century, was named the best in his field by the newspaper *India Today*. Born in Tangier, Morocco in 1304, Ibn Battuta undertook his pilgrimage to Mecca at the age of 21. From there, he trekked further and further. He is said to have travelled 120,000 kilometres through the entire Islamic world and beyond, recording his impressions in the form of a log entitled *Rihla*, meaning “The Travels”.

“Whatever one loves most is beautiful.”

*Sappho*

As was the case with Ibn Battuta’s predecessor, Marco Polo from Venice, who was 50 years his senior, all of the testimonies from far-away lands and all of the adventures he experienced there are personal accounts – that is the only source. Memory can be deceptive and here and there, small touch-ups really are needed sometimes – who today could distinguish between what is real and what is fiction in these wonderful reports?

Yet the feelings that wonderful works of poetry evoke in us are very real. One of the very first poets was Sappho, the most important lyric poet of the classic age. She was born in 630, way before our time, on the Greek island of Lesbos. Love and eroticism were her preferred subjects as she wrote hymns and love songs. Her works were brought together in nine books in the ancient world, but they have now been lost. Today, we read Sappho through references from other authors and quotes, some of which are based on fragments of papyrus. However, research is able to bring new Sappho poems to light time and again. For the American magazine *Esquire*, on a list of 75 women who have had the greatest influence on the world, she is number one – the best.

The realm of fiction – tragic stories and great theatre – is also where opera singers are at home. Female opera singers, according to a ranking by LGBTQ Nation, are a group led by Edita Gruberová. The soprano, born in Rača (in modern-day Slovakia) in 1946, is the best of all time when it comes to coloratura sopranos. Her nickname says it all: the “Queen of Coloratura”.

Voices have a career, they reach a peak, and what comes afterwards is left to every singer to decide for themselves. The same goes for sportsmen and women, the men and women who play football, who by no means can spend their whole life on the pitch, playing at the highest level. That is what makes the best of the best human. Even if they do appear divine!

“Whatever one loves most is beautiful.”

*Sappho*
The best XI in the world (back row, from left to right) Dani Alves, Sergio Ramos, Cristiano Ronaldo, Toni Kroos, Leonardo Bonucci, Gianluigi Buffon. (bottom row, from left to right) Luka Modrić, Andrés Iniesta, Neymar, Lionel Messi, Marcelo (FIFA FIFPro World11).
MEN’S PLAYER: Cristiano Ronaldo
WOMEN’S PLAYER: Lieke Martens
MEN’S COACH: Zinédine Zidane
WOMEN’S COACH: Sarina Wiegman
GOALKEEPER: Gianluigi Buffon
PUSKÁS AWARD: Olivier Giroud
FAN AWARD: Celtic FC fans
FAIR PLAY AWARD: Francis Koné

WORLD11:
Gianluigi Buffon; Dani Alves, Leonardo Bonucci, Sergio Ramos, Marcelo; Toni Kroos, Andrés Iniesta, Luka Modrić; Cristiano Ronaldo, Lionel Messi, Neymar.
FIRST LOVE

PLACE Salar de Uyuni, Bolivia
DATE 13 May 2015
TIME 16:03
PHOTOGRAPHER Dany Krom
Visa-free arrival now available

Exploring Qatar’s culture and attractions has never been easier.

Nationals from over 80 countries* can now take advantage of visa free entry into Qatar, thanks to our new visa waiver upon arrival. Discover an authentic Arabian treasure in the heart of the Gulf - a land famous for its heritage, innovation and hospitality now with the added benefit of a visa-free entry for citizens of over 80 countries.

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*Terms and conditions apply.
I have attended dozens of tournament draws in my life. In fact, I conducted many of them myself. And on each of those occasions I never failed to marvel at the sizzling energy that seems to spread through the room during those few minutes when such high stakes are placed into the hand of chance. It is fascinating to look into the eyes of the team representatives in the audience and discern a myriad of projections, calculations and mental pictures.

On 1 December, we are in for the most special draw show there is in the world of sport – and, for that, Russia is setting up a stage befitting the magnitude of the occasion, the State Kremlin Palace.

The Final Draw for the FIFA World Cup™ is the moment when the result of countless hours of hard work starts to take concrete shape. For football fans the world over, it is the kick-off for mounting expectation and innumerable talking points.

The results of the Final Draw in Moscow will loom over the whole world of football for the months to come: whenever a player faces a FIFA World Cup rival-to-be in a league game; whenever national team coaches turn up to matches to observe their opponents; whenever TV shows start to look back at previous encounters between two countries …

The FIFA World Cup has the power to create this kind of cascade, because the simple act of drawing plastic balls from pots and determining the group-stage fixtures immediately affects the game at large: players, managers, fans, the media and the 11 host cities eager to know who they will be welcoming.

The Final Draw is not the apex of this glorious four-year cycle for Russia. That is still to come. But it is probably the highest concentration of expectation-per-minute that you will find anywhere in the sporting world.

I hope you enjoy watching the show as much as I certainly will.

Yours in football,

Gianni Infantino
FIFA President
FIFA NEWS

DRAW FOR THE FIFA CLUB WORLD CUP

Held in Abu Dhabi, the Official Draw for the FIFA Club World Cup UAE 2017, which will be held between 6 and 16 December, mapped out the road to global glory for the seven clubs taking part in the final tournament of the year, which takes place between 6 and 16 December. As the teams for the opening match were already known – Al Jazira Club (winner of the UAE league) versus Auckland City (winner of the OFC Champions League) – the draw decided the second-round pairings that will feature the winner of the opening match as well as Mexican club CF Pachuca, and the CAF and AFC champions. The draw also revealed who the second-round winners will face in the semis, when Real Madrid and the Copa Libertadores champions will join the competition.

The draw at a glance:

Match 1:
Al Jazira Club v. Auckland City

Match 2:
CF Pachuca v. winner of the CAF Champions League
The winner of Match 2 will meet the winner of the Copa Libertadores in the semi-final.

Match 3:
Winner of Match 1 v. winner of the AFC Champions League
The winner of Match 3 will meet Real Madrid, the winner of the UEFA Champions League, in the semi-final.

WOMEN’S FOOTBALL WORKSHOP

On 2 and 3 October, the FIFA Women’s Football Division held a workshop with nine leading women’s football experts from around the world. The aim of the two-day intensive workshop was to continue to develop a technical framework for two pilot projects which have been developed in partnership between the Women’s Football Division and the Technical Development Division. “These nine women’s football experts have been selected to support us in these projects based on their tireless efforts and hard-earned expertise in the fields of elite football, participation and development,” said Sarai Bareman, Chief Women’s Football Officer. The experts included former players, elite coaches, Olympic gold medal winners and technical directors from the world of women’s football.

The two proposed FIFA projects, the Participation Project and the Academy Project, cover two key areas of football development. The Participation Project deals with FIFA’s declared objective of increasing the number of women playing football to 60 million by 2026. It will focus on increasing participation in all areas – from schools to international competitions. The Academy Project is about youth elite development and setting up football academies for girls.
GLOBAL SUCCESS OF THE FIFA DIPLOMA IN FOOTBALL MEDICINE

The FIFA Diploma in Football Medicine, which was introduced 18 months ago, is enjoying overwhelming success around the world. As of 25 September 2017, the free online course had almost 25,000 users, with 1,200 of them having already obtained the certificate after successfully completing the 42 modules and quizzes. The course is being met with great interest and its users come from almost every corner of the world, with Egypt, the UK, India, Australia and the USA the five most represented countries. “This is possibly FIFA’s greatest medical achievement. Anyone from any part of the world who wants to have access to all the medical knowledge and experience that we have accumulated over the years just has to click a button,” said the chairman of FIFA’s Medical Committee, Dr Michel D’Hooghe. Each module is written by top international experts from the technical area in question and offers written content, podcasts and videos on examinations and links to journal articles and other resources. Well-known players also share their experiences of injury and what they learned during their treatment. The course covers the entire spectrum of football medicine, ranging from injury prevention to nutrition and mental health, and from pre-competition medical assessments to the handling of specific injuries, such as the anterior cruciate ligament. “The feedback of users has been extremely positive. We conducted a survey among graduates and the overall comments underlined that it was a great deal, which offered excellent instruction quality,” said Dr Mark Fulcher, the editor of the diploma. In light of the increasingly high demand, the diploma will now be translated into Spanish and new features will be added to make it even more interactive and serve the global sports medical community beyond the initial academic phase. The online platform will also include webinars, where experts can exchange tips, as well as a blog to provide news about updated practices.

ONGOING PREPARATIONS IN RUSSIA

A joint delegation of specialists from FIFA and the 2018 FIFA World Cup Russia™ Local Organising Committee (LOC) recently concluded its sixth stadium operational planning tour. The main aim of the visit was to monitor the latest developments of the renovation and construction work in eight stadiums, as well as to discuss how they will operate during the tournament. The group of experts started their journey on 26 September and travelled around the venues that did not host the FIFA Confederations Cup earlier this year: Ekaterinburg, Samara, Saransk, Nizhny Novgorod, Rostov-on-Don, Volgograd and Kaliningrad. The tour wrapped up on 5 October at the Luzhniki Stadium in Moscow, the glittering venue for the final of the 2018 FIFA World Cup. An important point on the itinerary was to inspect the venue-specific training sites and team base camps in almost all of the destinations. While the former are paired with the 12 stadiums and can be used for training sessions ahead of matches in the respective host cities, the latter will be chosen by the participating teams as a base at which to prepare and rest throughout the tournament, and can be located in different parts of the country. The joint FIFA and LOC delegation comprised specialists from various fields, such as stadium design, tournament preparation and hosting, security, transport, logistics, hospitality services, broadcasting, media services, human resources, marketing and ticketing services.
### FIFA/COCA-COLA MEN’S WORLD RANKING

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DAVID TREZEGUET

KHEIREDDINE ZETCHI MEETS WITH GIANNI INFANTINO

President of the Algerian FA (FAF) Kheireddine Zetchi has visited the FIFA headquarters in Zurich and was received by the FIFA President himself, Gianni Infantino. During their meeting, which was also attended by FIFA’s Chief of Staff, Mattias Grafström, and the Member Associations Director for Africa and the Caribbean, Véron Mosengo-Omba, they discussed the reality of African football and the everyday challenges in the current situation of football development around the world. They also considered the aspirations of Algeria (through the FAF) to sign up to a global development plan, which would be the culmination of the renewed focus on development and the ambitious plan to reform Algerian football adopted by the association’s management board. At the end of the meeting, Mr Zetchi presented the FIFA President with the shirt of the Algerian national team. The FAF president then briefly met with FIFA Secretary General Fatma Samoura to discuss the various areas in which the FAF and FIFA can work together, particularly in terms of education.

FLOODLIGHTS FOR NFA TECHNICAL CENTRE

The Namibia Football Association (NFA) technical centre has received floodlights from FIFA as an initiative to help develop football in the country. The technical centre was built in 2010 and recently got the much-needed boost as floodlights will be installed to allow for night events at the venue. NFA general secretary Barry Rukoro is excited about the new development and says that the floodlights will increase productivity and efficiency; it will also help reduce the pressure placed on the national teams. “We try to seize the daylight for training and all activities taking place at the centre. Both the men’s and women’s national teams have to train during the day and time is limited. This puts great pressure on the teams. Currently, for example, the Brave Warriors team can’t use the centre for training on Wednesdays because the girls’ centre uses it for the NFA Girls and Goals League. The team is forced to look for a training facility elsewhere,” explains Rukoro. He commended FIFA for providing the NFA with the funds to commission various programmes for the good of the game. “Without their involvement and generosity, we would not be able to aim high and reach our potential. We truly appreciate the continuous support from FIFA, their contributions have dramatically helped us to improve the game.”

PLANS TO RESTRUCTURE WOMEN’S FOOTBALL IN NIGERIA

With the 2016/17 Nigeria Women Football League (NWFL) underway, independent chairperson of the board Aisha Falode has declared that the mandate given to her team by the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) is to give the league a face-lift, through proper restructuring and a raising of standards. According to Ms Falode, who is also a member of CAF’s media committee and has forged a successful career as a sports journalist, the plan involves ensuring restructuring and building a stronger and more capable human resource base at all levels of Nigerian women’s football. “It’s our duty to look at the structure and see how women’s football in Nigeria can get the necessary attention and find a wider audience. Women’s football has what it takes to enjoy similar success to that of the men’s game but it’s going to take a while. Everyone believes we have done the same thing over and over again; it’s time to adopt a new approach. We need to look at a new strategy... That’s basically what this new board is all about,” she said.

CBF TO USE VAR TECHNOLOGY IN BRASILEIRÃO

The Brazilian FA’s (CBF) refereeing committee plans to use video assistant referee (VAR) technology in the final rounds of the 2017 Brasileirão (Brazilian National Championship). Throughout the year, association representatives and Brazilian referees have attended theoretical and practical training sessions on the new technology, including a training programme held at the CONMEBOL headquarters in Asunción, Paraguay. Nevertheless, due to recent errors that could have been avoided had the technology been used, CBF president Marco Polo Del Nero met with the team and determined that VAR should be brought in to Brasileirão – Série A matches as soon as possible.
The grassroots football seminar, run by the technical staff of the Uruguayan youth football association (AUFI), concluded in Montevideo in September. The seminar was led by instructors Alejandro Garay, Gustavo Falaschi and Ariel Palena, under the supervision of Elvio Paolorosso and organised by the AUFI’s development department, which is overseen by Raúl Möller and Gustavo Bañales. It is yet another move by CONMEBOL to develop the sport in all its disciplines and to ensure that “the ball will keep rolling”, as the confederation president Alejandro Domínguez highlighted.

**AFA AND MINISTRY OF HEALTH SIGN AGREEMENT**

The president of the Argentinian FA (AFA), Claudio Tapia, and Argentina’s minister of health, Jorge Lemus, have signed an agreement of collaboration and cooperation to create activities promoting health and disease prevention. The agreement is part of the connection that has existed between the two institutions since 2003 with the aim of working together on health-related issues. Tapia said that “it is of the highest importance that the AFA can be involved in all sorts of activities to help prevent dengue fever and the zika and chikungunya viruses, and be able to support different measures in the stadiums around the country,” while he highlighted the potential of such campaigns as “the AFA organises more than 3,600 matches every weekend, whether beach soccer, women’s football, futsal, youth competitions or the professional leagues”. As part of the first acts under the new agreement, the technical experts of the health authority’s epidemiology institute will train clubs’ medical staff in the detection of symptoms consistent with dengue, zika and chikungunya. They will also then train other staff in checking for and eliminating breeding sites favoured by yellow fever mosquitoes.

**FIRST FINAL OF COLOMBIA’S PROFESSIONAL WOMEN’S LEAGUE**

María Victoria Daza, Luzmila González and Mary Blanco were the match officials for the grand final of the Liga Femenina Águila 2017, the first edition of the first professional women’s first division organised by the Colombian Football Association. “Since the start of the competition, each of us had the ambition and plan to be in the grand final and the association gave us the opportunity. From the moment we received the invitation, we started working together and got talking,” commented Maria Victoria. “We started talking, embracing our emotions and enjoying the butterflies in our stomachs... it was a beautiful moment because I think every female referee in Colombia was dying to officiate this game. We were determined firstly to enjoy it as much as possible and secondly to do an excellent job because we had so much responsibility,” continued Luzmila. Through DIMAYOR, the Colombian FA organised the first women’s club competition of the Colombian División de Honor, an unprecedented event and surely an example to other countries in South America.

**AGREEMENT ON EQUAL PAY IN NORWAY**

The Norwegian FA and the players of the men’s and women’s national teams (represented by NISO – the Norwegian players’ association) have reached agreement on new fees. As of the coming year, compensation payments for women should be adjusted to the level of that received by men. Female national players will receive a total of six million Norwegian crowns per year for their performances in the national team. Until now, they received around half of that (NOK 3.1 million). Norway’s male national players contributed a share of NOK 550,000 from a budget pot, which they receive for commercial advertising activities.

**LLAMAS RE-ELECTED IN GIBRALTAR**

Gibraltar Football Association (GFA) president Michael Llamas has been unanimously re-elected for a further four-year term at the GFA’s extraordinary general assembly. Llamas was elected as vice-president of the association in 2013 and subsequently became president in 2015.

**YOUTH COUNCIL PROGRAMME IN ROMANIA**

A seminar of a unique sports leadership platform in Romania gathered young people with initiative and gave rise to several potential projects with a focus on community development. The event was organised by the Romanian Football Federation, in partnership with the Friedrich Naumann Foundation at the Butea National Football Centre, where all of Romania’s junior national teams train. Positive values such as fair
play, team spirit, leadership, responsibility, respect and friendship were debated during project management, strategy, communication and marketing sessions by the young people that arrived in Buftea from all over the country. Sporting values are universal and young people have a strong voice in society, making the Youth Council a unique sports leadership platform in Romania that offers them the opportunity to affirm, know and implement ideas.

**DANILEVIČIŪS ELECTED IN LITHUANIA**

Tomas Danilevičius (photo) has been elected as the new president of the Lithuanian Football Federation (LFF). The former Lithuania captain and record scorer for his country’s national team will serve a two-year term as president. The position had been vacant since Edvinas Eimontas stepped down in May. Danilevičius, who turned 39 in July, won 72 caps for Lithuania, captaining the team for several years, and scored 19 goals, an all-time record. During his footballing career, he played for clubs in Belgium, England, Italy, Russia, Scotland, Slovenia and Switzerland. He made over 50 appearances in Italy’s Serie A, mostly for Livorno. “I’ve given a large part of my life to football,” said Danilevičius, “and I’ve always been a proponent of team work. I also know what it means to be a leader and have the trust of others. I think many things are in progress, and the LFF has already previously approved new statutes and a new strategy.” Danilevičius has recently been involved in an LFF scouting project. The extraordinary LFF congress also brought a landmark decision – Ingrīda Silūnienė was elected as the first-ever female member of the LFF executive committee.

**DFB STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF YOUTH TOURNAMENTS**

A study conducted by the German Football Association (DFB) has found that hosting youth tournaments can increase interest in football among the general public. The DFB based their findings on the UEFA European Under-19 Football Championship held in Baden-Württemberg in July 2016, and found that hosting competitions can also improve the perception of a national association’s image by almost 15 per cent. One of the main reasons the DFB ordered the research, which was carried out by the accadis University Bad Homburg, near Frankfurt, was to ascertain whether hosting youth tournaments, which generate no financial profit, is a worthwhile experience, especially when it comes to improving the perception of the national association in question. The DFB’s findings have the potential to be important for the future plans of other national associations. The evidence from Germany shows that the more they invest in hosting youth tournaments, the greater the chance of increasing not only the association’s image, but also the number of people who become interested in the sport. The report showed that the reach of a youth tournament can extend beyond those who go to watch matches, and that the considerable resources invested by the DFB into promoting the competition were worthwhile. These communications were focused particularly in engaging closely with selected schools in the area, to make children more aware that the tournament was taking place.

**ZLATKO DALIĆ NEW HEAD COACH OF CROATIA**

The Croatian FA’s (HNS) executive committee has unanimously decided on the termination of Ante Čačić’s contract. The appointment of Zlatko Dalić as his successor has also been unanimous. Mr Dalić is a coach with a proven track record with Varteks, Rijeka, Slaven Belupo, Dinamo Tirana, Al-Faisaly, and Al-Hilal, with Al-Ain of the United Arab Emirates as his last coaching career stop. Moreover, he was a part of the Croatia U-21 coaching staff until 2011. “We have analysed the situation and decided to hire Zlatko Dalić, who accepted the offer without hesitation. The HNS wanted a Croatian coach, and now we have to support him and believe in a positive outcome,” explained HNS president Davor Šuker.

The second FIFA Women’s Coaching Course in Singapore came to a close on Saturday, 16 September. For five days, the 30 participants were engaged in lively discussion sessions with each other as well as FIFA technical instructor Belinda Wilson, sharing their ideas on coaching women’s football and putting into action their newly learnt skills at practical sessions. Belinda, who is also the technical director of the Guam Football Association and head coach of the Guam women’s national team, was pleased with what she saw at the course. “The engagement with the participants during the course and the interaction...
among them has been exceptional. They have the confidence to step out of their comfort zones and the standard of ideas exchanged is very high.” However, she pointed out that due to the participants’ varying backgrounds – some are teachers, some are players and some are full-time coaches – the transition from theory to practice was not as smooth for all. She added: “We have a group of players who have not attended a coaching course before, and they are learning a lot. What is lacking is their experience, which can be built up. But in terms of where they’re at, they are at a fairly good level to move forward quite quickly.” Singapore women’s national team head coach K. Balagumaran found it a “privilege” to attend the programme conducted by the FIFA instructor. He said: “I have been learning from Belinda not only from what she shared as an instructor but also from her experience as a former player. While I have a lot of experience in men’s football, this course has given me more insight into women’s football.”

29 September 2017. The practical sessions were held at the University of Asia and Pacific futsal court while the theory sessions were held in the student activity centre. The FIFA instructor for the course was Graeme Dell of England. Mr Dell was the former head coach of the England national futsal team.

**BOOST FOR PROFESSIONAL FEMALE FOOTBALLERS IN AUSTRALIA**

Westfield W-League players will receive a significant pay increase and improved employment conditions following a landmark collective bargaining agreement between Football Federation Australia, the Westfield W-League clubs and Professional Footballers Australia. Under the new two-year agreement, all players, other than those on scholarships, are guaranteed a minimum retainer of at least AUD 10,000 for the coming season and AUD 12,200 for the 2018/19 season, with no prescribed maximum cap on any one player’s retainer. The average retainer for Westfield W-League players is expected to rise from AUD 6,909 to AUD 15,500 for the 2017/18 season. Previously, many players were considered amateur and received only reimbursement for expenses. The new agreement provides contract certainty, larger roster sizes, a significantly increased salary cap, an agreed commercial framework to underpin the growth of the women’s game, enhanced minimum medical standards, key principles for the first-ever formal maternity policy for Westfield W-League players and the establishment of a formal partnership with the players through the Professional Women’s Football Committee to drive further employment, performance and competition reform. While the new agreement sets minimum standards, the highest earning Australian female professionals – those playing in the Westfield W-League, other professional leagues overseas and for the women’s national team, the Matildas – are expected to now earn at least AUD 130,000 a year. FFA chief executive officer David Gallop said that, while more needed to be done to bridge the gap to what professional males were being paid, this was an important next step for the Westfield W-League. “This is the start of a new era for professional female footballers in Australia,” said Mr Gallop.

**BESPOKE ROOF PILLARS INSTALLED AT AL WAKRAH STADIUM**

The late Zaha Hadid’s vision from paper into structural form is in the back of everyone’s mind.” There are now seven tower cranes on site and two 600-tonne cranes that were used to install the pillars that resemble hockey sticks and measure approximately 30 metres. The 40,000-seat stadium will have a retractable roof that will be able to close in approximately half an hour using a number of steel wires brought together at an oculus support in the centre of the roof. This light sleeve will provide shade to the entire pitch and contribute to the efficiency of the cooling system before the match.

**TTFA LAUNCHES ELITE INTER-REGIONAL COMPETITION**

The Trinidad and Tobago Football Association has
Visa. Worldwide Partner of the 2018 FIFA World Cup Russia™
The Cook Islands FA has kicked off a U-14 girls’ academy. The academy was born out of the success of the recent successful U-16 women’s campaign at the OFC Women’s Championships in Samoa in August with the team qualifying for the semi-finals. In total, 20 girls were invited to the academy from the seven domestic clubs from within Rarotonga. CIFA technical director Jess Ibrom said: “It’s important we are preparing our national academy players as soon as possible and thus giving ourselves a greater opportunity to be more successful on the international stage. This was evident with the U-16 women who we trained from February up to the OFC Women’s Championships in Samoa in August. Their success on the field was reflected by the preparation that had gone on prior to the tournament.” Since February 2017, the Cook Islands FA has developed six national academies: the U-20 and U-17 men, U-14 and U-11 boys, U-17 women and now the U-14 girls are all geared towards future Oceania Football Confederation tournaments.

The Barbados Football Association’s grassroots programme has headed to the north of the island. The programme, which caters to children up to 12 years of age, started off at the White Hall playing field in St. Peter and lasted until about midday. The programme also headed out to the Checker Hall playing field in St. Lucy for a similar showcase before returning to the Speightstown Playing Field in St. Peter. During this time, children got to join in fun games and coaching from certified football coaches who were overseen by the BFA technical director and his assistant. All of the events were provided free of charge to the participants.
1986
COLORADO SPRINGS, USA

England manager Bobby Robson oversees a warm-down session in the pool.
The Honduran U-17 national team enjoy a spot of R&R between two World Cup matches.
Quick off the mark, tricky, an eye for goal and always with a smile on his face – little wonder, then, that Dwight Yorke came to be known as the “Smiling Assassin”. The Tobago-born striker was first discovered at the age of 17 by Aston Villa boss Graham Taylor during a club tour of the West Indies in 1989. After nearly ten years with the Villans, Yorke moved to Manchester United and played a major role in their historic Treble-winning campaign in 1998-99. At international level, he was part of the Trinidad & Tobago side that defeated Bahrain in 2005 to secure the country’s first-ever appearance at a World Cup, and he then went on to captain the side at Germany 2006.

1989-1998 Aston Villa
232 games, 73 goals. 1 League Cup.
The pitch may be bobbly and uneven but Yorke’s aim is true, the ball nestling in the bottom right corner before he sets off for a celebratory dance around the corner flag. Yorke is just 19 when he scores his first goal in the English top flight.

1998-2002 Manchester United
96 games, 52 goals. 3 league titles, 1 FA Cup, 1 Champions League, 1 Intercontinental Cup.
“When we started playing together, it was like meeting a special woman and falling in love. Everything felt right. We could alter our play depending on the opposition: I’d go long, he’d go short. Nobody knew how to mark us,” says Yorke about his dream partnership with Andy Cole.

2002-2004 Blackburn Rovers
60 games, 12 goals.
Reunited with Andy Cole, Yorke helps Blackburn finish the 2002-03 season in sixth place, sealing qualification for the next season’s UEFA Cup.

1989 The fall of the Berlin Wall brings down the Iron Curtain and paves the way for German reunification 12 months later.

1998 James Cameron’s Titanic, with Leonardo DiCaprio and Kate Winslet in the starring roles, becomes the first film to break the USD 1 billion mark at the box office.

2002 The euro is introduced as the common currency in 12 member states of the European Union (as well as in Andorra, Monaco, Montenegro, San Marino and Vatican City).
2004-2005 Birmingham City
13 games, 2 goals.
Before moving Down Under, Yorke returns to the Midlands for a year to play for Villa’s second-city rivals.

2005-2006 Sydney FC
21 games, 7 goals. 1 league title.
Yorke moves to Australia and becomes a fans’ favourite and one of the stars of the new A-League. “I had a fantastic time with the club and the other lads in the team and, of course, Sydney is a fantastic city.”

2006-2009 AFC Sunderland
59 games, 6 goals. 1 Football League Championship.
Yorke joins Championship side Sunderland but helps them gain promotion back to the Premier League in his first season. He is impressed with life at the Black Cats: “The passion and the support of the fans are unbelievable.”

2004 Harvard student Mark Zuckerberg founds Facebook.

2005 “Live 8” concerts take place in 11 different cities around the world under the motto “Make Poverty History.”

2006 Pluto loses its status as a planet, falling under the new designation of “dwarf planet.”

“It’s not over until it is.”
Dwight Yorke
Keeping fit With plenty of time on their hands before their reintegration into society, some prisoners in Saint-Martin-de-Ré (France) while
some of it away with exercises and a game of football (1978).
INNOVATIONS

ALL FOR THE BALL

A ball is a ball is a ball? Far from it! Truly good balls are high-tech products that have to roll and bounce their way through a strict certification process.

By Perikles Monioudis

The ball – the best of the best when it comes to sporting equipment. Every child is fascinated by something (perfectly) round. The call to play emanating from the ball to us all is magical. We follow that call into the sport, some of us – as young people, or as adults – into competitive sport. We are happy to finally have a ball that is not a heavy leather sack that soaks up every last drop of rain outside. Images of long pendulums to practice your heading and medicine balls from the dim and distant past may come to mind here.

Yet the present looks bright. The quality of footballs has increased over the decades and has now reached a plateau at a stage where it is actually quite rare to get a truly poor football from industrial production. Of course, that does not mean that every ball would be fit for a World Cup final. Only balls of exceptionally high quality are used for that.

So when is a ball a good ball? And what does good mean? Law 2 of The International Football Association Board’s (IFAB) Laws of the Game states that a ball must be spherical, made of a suitable material, have a circumference of not more than 70cm (28ins) and not less than 68cm (27ins), not weigh more than 450g (16oz) and not less than 410g (14oz) at the start of the match and be of pressure equal to 0.6-1.1 atmosphere (600-1,100g/cm$^2$) at sea level (8.5lbs/sq in – 15.6lbs/sq in).

More than 20 years ago, FIFA introduced a quality programme to harmonise and improve the quality of footballs. The programme is intended to help satisfy the increasing requirements placed on the balls. The “FIFA QUALITY PRO”, “FIFA QUALITY” and “IMS – International Match Standard” logos on a ball confirm that in addition to the minimum requirements stated in Law 2, it also meets the specific technical requirements for the respective logo (impact properties, roundness, water absorption, etc.). These additional requirements have to be approved by The IFAB, and the institutes that carry out the tests need to be licensed by FIFA. A return to the embarrassingly heavy leather balls at elite level is therefore not to be expected, even in the very long term.

An exceptional piece of equipment
A match ball at the highest level
A technical development
“FOOTBALL IS A UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE”

Fans have the last word: Jessica Badillo from Mexico was able to experience The Best FIFA Football Awards live in London. In an interview, she shares her love for football and reveals her favourites of the year.

Annette Braun asked the questions.

Jessica, what attracts you to football?

Football is a universal language. You can go anywhere in the world and everybody will understand what you mean when you say Messi, Ronaldo, Pelé or Maradona. Fútbol, football and soccer have the same meaning: passion. The game offers you a chance to interact and bond with new people. Juan Villoro, a Mexican writer, says that “football says a lot about us and who we are”, and I agree: football gives you the ability to express, feel and live things in a way that you usually wouldn’t do.

Did you have an idol when you grew up?

Ramón Morales. He played for Chivas and for the Mexican national team. I remember him being the best player in Mexico. He didn’t steal the limelight but he was everywhere, making sure the team was playing the way it should. Moreover, he was the guy who took the free kicks. He almost never missed one and was always talking and leading the team. It was like having an assistant coach on the field.

Which football experience will you always remember?

Tuesday, 25 March 2014: the Copa MX semi-final. A sold-out match and my first one working for Los Alebrijes. Every football fan in Oaxaca was there. The energy was intense and you could almost feel everyone’s heart beating in the same rhythm. During the first five minutes, we were already down two goals but we never stopped believing. Then I saw my team score once followed by a successful penalty. In the 89th minute came the miracle: the goal that took us to the final. I had never seen my city celebrate the way it did that night.

Which player impressed you the most this year?

I have been keeping an eye on Deyna Castellanos since the U-17 World Cup last year. She is from another planet. How she led the Venezuelan team was really impressive. I am very happy that there is a young woman out there that everyone is talking about and that is opening up the conversation about women’s football. Paulo Dybala has also been great. Ever since he arrived at Juventus, he has stood out but 2017 has been his year – and he is just my age!

What qualities are essential to succeed?

I think the most important thing is to be a complete player. You should not only exercise your body but also your mind and heart. The feature I would look for though is fair play. Trophies are useless if you don’t behave and respect the game. You should always stay humble and use your popularity to give something back.

Who would be a worthy recipient of a “The Best” award one day?

Manuel Neuer is unlike any other goalkeeper. He is almost impenetrable and his reflexes are incredible. With him, you are playing with an extra defender. The way he controls and distributes the ball is out of this world. As a goalkeeper, you can be a hero or you can be a villain but most of the time, you are overshadowed by the ones scoring the goals. Neuer is 31 and recovering from surgery. However, if he comes back and plays just as well as before, then I hope he will be rewarded.

23-year-old Jessica Badillo (seen here with team mascot Brije) works as a freelance marketing and communications specialist for her local club Alebrijes de Oaxaca.
COMING UP

DECEMBER 2017/JANUARY 2018

FINAL DRAW FOR THE 2018 FIFA WORLD CUP RUSSIA™

On 1 December, the 32 teams going to Russia for the 2018 World Cup will be drawn into eight groups of four at the Final Draw in Moscow’s State Kremlin Palace. The end-of-year double issue of FIFA 1904 will focus on all things Russian and feature some of the country’s fascinating football stories.

Full of anticipation
Zabivaka, the Official Mascot for the 2018 World Cup, is raring to go – and has been for some time.

Stuart Franklin/FIFA via Getty Images
Football is a powerful unifying force. Participating in the beautiful game is a joy, but it also means we all have a responsibility: to treat each other with respect and sportsmanship, whether we are players, officials or fans.

What happens on the pitch is not restricted to the touchlines: it can inspire the world.