

TOPICAL TIDBITS



March/April 2013

Volume 2 Issue 2

SOCCER

Soccer, one of the world's most popular sports, is the topic of this issue of Topical Tidbits. Whether you watch it, play it, or just talk about it, soccer speaks a universal language.

World Cup, the biggest soccer tournament in the world, is held every four years in a different country. Billions of people watch these games on television as national teams from countries around the world compete to see which team will take home the World Cup.

The next World Cup Championships will be held in Brazil from June 12 - July 13, 2014. Pretend that you are going to Brazil to witness the World Cup games. What else might you see and do while you are in Brazil? Using a 4 x 6 inch file card or paper, design a post card depicting some aspect of your stay in Brazil - maybe the game or a tourist site. On the back side of the card, write a message that you might send to your friends back in the United States. It might tell about attending the soccer games, a prediction of who you think might win the World Cup, or perhaps it will tell about some of the sites you visited while in Brazil. Five entries will be chosen to receive the souvenir sheet issued by the United States in 1994 for the World Cup. Deadline for entering is April 30, 2013. Send your entries to: MaryAnn Bowman, Topical Tidbits - Soccer, P.O. Box 1451, Waukesha, WI 53187.



SOCCER

Nobody can specifically point out the origin of the game of soccer (or “football” as it’s known in most of the world). However, there is evidence that some of the earliest forms of the game existed thousands of years ago throughout the world, especially in China, Egypt, Greece, Italy, and Meso-america. But modern soccer as we know it was developed in England in the nineteenth century. It is said that the game helped develop team spirit and character formation among youth in public schools. The various rules of the game were harmonized into the standard Cambridge Rules in 1863. Thus, England happens to have some of the oldest soccer clubs. From then on, the game spread to other parts of the world. The nineteenth century was a time of European colonization of other peoples. Colonial officials, soldiers, and sailors exported the game to the colonies in Africa, Asia and the Americas.



This block of stamps from Monaco shows soccer being played in different time periods.

The creation of the Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) in Paris in 1904, helped make soccer the most popular sport in the world. Clubs were formed in many countries and the game was soon accepted as an Olympic sport. Uruguay was the first country to issue a stamp celebrating soccer. It was in honor of their Olympic gold medal win in 1924.

The stamp shows “Winged Victory,” which is an ancient sculpture of the Greek goddess Nike.



The world’s first soccer stamp.

The first president of FIFA, the Frenchman Jules Rimet, promoted the idea of organizing a world cup competition every four years to promote peace among nations. The first World Cup took place in Montevideo, Uruguay in 1930. 90,000 fans watched as Uruguay defeated Argentina in the finals. Uruguay did not issue any stamps commemorating their victory. Italy, the next World Cup host, issued quite a large number of soccer stamps after beating Czechoslovakia in the finals. These stamps were also issued in the Italian colonies.

The tradition of World Cup commemorative stamps was made popular during the 1966 World Cup in England. Since then, countries around the world issue World Cup commemorative stamps. These feature the FIFA logo, mascot, trophy, or the words, “World Cup.” There are also stamps featuring stadiums, goals, and soccer balls. Some stamps show the game in action – goalkeepers, defenders, midfield-players, and strikers.



This se-tenant strip of stamps from the Soviet Union shows different action shots of the players.



This souvenir sheet from the United Arab Emirates is shaped like a soccer ball.

SOCCER (CONTINUED)

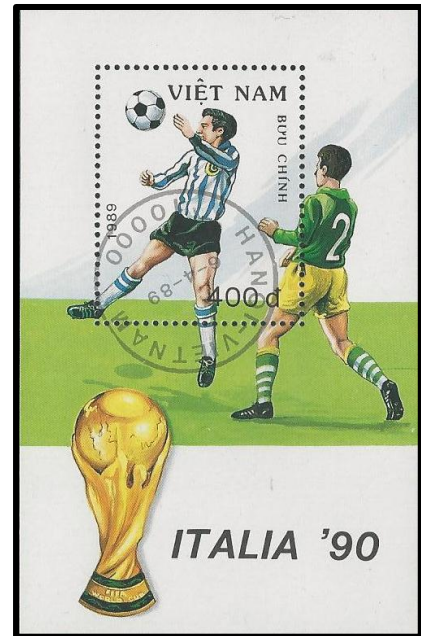
The United States issued a soccer souvenir sheet in 1994 when it hosted the World Cup (which was won by Brazil). U.S. soccer has a proud history; in fact, the U.S. men's team beat England 1-0 in the 1950 World Cup in Brazil. The winning goal was scored by a Haitian immigrant who was a dishwasher in a New York restaurant. The US women's team has performed extremely well since the Women's World Cup was instituted in 1991. They were world champions in 1991 and 1998 and are currently number one in world rankings. ESPN polls have indicated that soccer is the second most popular sports among young Americans (ages 12-24) and Major League Soccer (MLS) has attracted international stars such as David Beckham, Thierry Henry, Robbie Keane, and many others.



This souvenir sheet was issued in 1994 by the United States to commemorate the World Cup.



This cover, by Warren R. Reed of Wild Horse Cachets, shows a Brazilian player named Pelé. He is regarded by many as the best soccer player of all time.



A souvenir sheet issued by Vietnam features the World Cup trophy.



This maximum card is from Cyprus and commemorates the 2006 World Cup held in Germany.

 **Only seven countries have won the World Cup.** 

Country	Number of Wins
Brazil	5
Italy	4
Germany	3
Uruguay	2
Argentina	2
England	1
France	1
Spain	1

SOCCER FUN

Crossword Puzzle

Across

3. Another name for soccer
4. One player who uses his hands
5. Where a game is played
6. Set of players
7. Those who play
8. Shoes used in soccer
10. Type of Kick
11. Strike out with foot
12. Shirt the players wear

Down

1. Soccer Position
2. Number on a soccer team
4. Points won
8. One who trains the team
9. Special position



For philatelic crossword puzzles, visit: www.philatelicdatabase.com



DID YOU KNOW?

In March 2008, the Austrian Post Office issued the world's first stamp made of soccer ball material. It was in honor of the UEFA Euro soccer tournament which took place in Austria.

JOKES

Q: What do you call it when a dinosaur makes a goal with a soccer ball?

A: A dino-score!

Q: Why did the soccer ball quit the team?

A: He was tired of being kicked around.

Q: What position does a ghost play in soccer?

A: Ghoulie!

Q: Why can't Cinderella play soccer?

A: Because she's always running away from the ball.



Soccer

