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Tom Dunmore

Soccer blogger

Scott Murray

Soccer writer



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DUMMIES®
2ND EDITION

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by Tom Dunmore and Scott Murray



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Dedication

This book is dedicated to all those who have built soccer in the United States, often against the odds, out of the sheer love of the game. I'd like to personally thank those who have supported the sport in my current hometown, Chicago, especially Peter Wilt, who built the club I support here, the Chicago Fire. Without that I may never have met my wife Monika, to whom I owe everything else.

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Introduction

Congratulations! You have a copy of *Soccer For Dummies*, 2nd Edition, in your hands. This book has been written specially for people who want to know all they can about the greatest and most popular sport on the planet: Association Football, whose name is usually shortened in the United States to *soccer* (avoiding confusion with that other sport of football). *Soccer For Dummies*, 2nd Edition, aims to satisfy your curiosity, help you to understand the basics of how to play the game, arm you with knowledge so you can enjoy watching it to the fullest extent possible, and show you a whole world of soccer to explore. There's a reason why soccer has taken off all around the globe and is becoming increasingly popular in the United States.

Soccer is the simplest of sports in principle — in the final analysis, all you need to know is that to win, one team has to score more goals than the other. Nevertheless, a plethora of rules, tactics, and skills exist that can easily flummox the beginner.

That's where this book comes in. I wrote it so that anyone who wants to enjoy soccer — whether by playing it, coaching it or watching it — can come to grips with the sport quickly and easily, without feeling overwhelmed or intimidated. And I promise it won't be long before you've become something of an expert on the most talked-about sporting pastime in the world. You'll never look back!

About This Book

The simple aim of this book is to provide you with all the basic skills and every scrap of crucial knowledge that you need to become a proper fan of the game. All the information you need is between the covers of this book. But although it's all crammed in here, don't feel daunted: You certainly don't have to read every word, from start to finish, to get the most from the book.

Each chapter covers a separate topic about soccer, so you can easily dip into the chapters to find out about something you don't quite understand. Say you're watching a World Cup game on television, but don't really know much about the history of the competition; just turn to the chapter that talks about the competition and this book fills the gaps in your knowledge.

If you're motivated to get up off the couch and play for or help to run a team yourself, this book explains how you can get involved. The book offers plenty of handy hints and practical skills you can develop. Maybe you'd even like to become a referee. Well, that's no problem. I even help you find a whistle.

And even if you're not an absolute beginner, I'm confident that *Soccer For Dummies* can still help you discover plenty that's new and fascinating from the long history of soccer.

Getting Started

Don't worry if you feel you know absolutely nothing about soccer. Chances are you already know more than you think, and this book helps you gain confidence in your knowledge.

But even if you don't have a scrap of understanding about the game to start off with, don't worry! This book soon gets you up to speed. And remember: Even folks who think they know everything about the game have some gaps in their knowledge. Soon enough, I'm confident the information you glean from this book will make an expert of you.

At the moment you may ask:

- ✔ Why do some teams kick the ball up in the air but others pass it around the floor?
- ✔ Why are there two people running up and down the side of the field waving flags?
- ✔ Why is there an offside rule, and how does it work?
- ✔ Who was the greatest soccer player ever?

This book answers those questions — and many, many more. My only assumption is that you know nothing about the game to start with. I take it from there, and it won't be long before you understand all there is to know about soccer.

How This Book Is Organized

This book is organized into six distinct parts. Each section focuses on a different — but important — part of the world of soccer.

Part I: Kicking Off

If you're a complete beginner, this part gives you a basic grounding in what soccer is all about. This part describes what soccer is and why people love playing and watching the game so much. It tells the history of the sport, from its early days in China to the modern game that's showcased in stadiums and on televisions all across the globe. And I show you how to get ready to join in, whether you'll be getting yourself onto the field or just watching from the stands!

Part II: Playing the Game

I don't waste any time getting to the nitty-gritty here. The first chapter in this part explains the rules of the game — which are the same whether you're playing a recreational game in a local league or playing in the World Cup final! The other chapters in this book explain what each player on the field is expected to do, the tactics they're told to employ, and the skills they need to play. Tips on coaching, how to keep fit, and where you can put it all into practice on the field are also included.

Part III: Exploring The World of Soccer

Soccer is the biggest sport in the world, and this part explores everything about the professional game. I explain all about the biggest show on earth — the FIFA World Cup — and other international tournaments such as the European Championships, Copa America and the CONCACAF Gold Cup. The part also explains how club soccer is organized across the world, from the English Premier League to Major League Soccer in the U.S. I run down all the important international and club teams, so you know your Brazils from your Barcelonas and your Argentinas from your Arsenals. Plus there's an in-depth look at women's soccer — a fast-growing sport in its own right.

Part IV: The Fans' Enclosure: Following the Game

If you love watching the game, this is the part for you. The chapters here explain what you can expect to find when you attend a professional soccer game, as well as point you in the right direction to find soccer on television and websites, and in newspapers, magazines, books, movies, and DVDs. I even explain what to do if you want to enjoy controlling a virtual game on your video-game console.

Part V: The Part of Tens

The part without which no *For Dummies* book would be complete. This part is packed full of nuggets of information you can squirrel away for use later, when you need to impress someone with your soccer knowledge. Who was the most controversial soccer player of all time? The answer's here — along with many other facts that are in turns funny, illuminating, tragic, and interesting.

Icons Used in This Book

To help you navigate through this book, keep an eye out for these icons, the little pictures that sit in the margin. They help you spot particular snippets of information. This list tells you what the icons mean.



This highlights small pieces of advice that can help you become a better player or a more knowledgeable soccer expert.



This information is especially useful to remember. If you only remember one thing from each page, make sure this is it!



Hopefully, this won't come up too much — but when it does, take heed, because the information accompanying it ensures you'll be prepared.



The great thing about soccer is the amount of random trivia it generates. There's lots of trivia in this book, and you'll quickly become an expert if you commit all these facts to memory.

Where to Go from Here

So here you are, ready for kickoff. Exactly what you get out of this book depends on your needs. If you're a complete beginner, the book gets you up and running. If you already know a bit about the game, the book soon fills in the gaps in your knowledge. And even if you think you may be something of an expert, well, everyone's still learning, so hopefully you'll find something new and fascinating in here, too.

But although I'd advise beginners to start at the beginning, even they don't have to. This book is designed for you to dip in and out of — so if you want to find out about the world's most famous clubs first, turn to that chapter. You can always turn to a different chapter to bone up on the rules of the game. Or its history. Or its most famous games. Or the hardest tricks to pull off to impress your team mates. Or . . .

