Planet Football　足球世界

Throughout history, people have played some version of a kicking game. What the world now calls football, or soccer in the U.S., began as far back as 2500 B.C. with the Chinese game of tsu chu. The sport we're familiar with today originated in Britain; by the 1840s England's Football Association had established a set of rules, and the modern game was born. Today, more than 120 million regular players from all over the globe participate in the game annually, truly making soccer the world's sport.

綜觀歷史，人類擁有不同版本的踢球遊戲。美國有美式足球，英國有英式足球，而追朔到公元 2500 年前中國也有足球相關的遊戲。現在我們所熟悉的足球源起於英國，在 1840 年代英國足球聯盟建立了足球比賽的標準規章後，也使這個遊戲更加完整。現今，超過 1.2 億來自世界各地的足球選手會參與年度的世界足球賽，更證實足球為全球性的運動。

Europe has the largest number of soccer players on Earth and is also home to the world's richest and best-known professional teams. Europe's major clubs－such as Spain's Real Madrid and England's Manchester United－have evolved from local teams to global brands, with supporters all over the world. Some are owned by foreign businessmen, who invest large amounts of money in their clubs, hoping to earn significant returns on ticket sales, television, and advertising deals.

歐洲有世界上為數最多的足球選手，也擁有世界上最富有、最知名的職業隊伍。歐洲最主要的俱樂部－西班牙皇家馬德里與英國曼徹斯特聯－已經從本地球隊晉升為國際球隊，並擁有世界各地的球迷。有一些球隊由國外商人所有，這些商人投資大量的金錢在他們的俱樂部上，希望能從比賽的門票、電視以及廣告上獲得可觀的利潤。

Over the past two decades, an intense soccer competition among Japan, China, and South Korea has helped to increase enthusiasm for the sport across Asia. In China, for example, recent data suggest that soccer is now more popular than traditional Chinese favorites, such as table tennis and basketball. This enthusiasm has also helped to bridge differences and bring people together. The 2002 World Cup, co-hosted by South Korea and Japan, was a victory for cooperation and friendship, and in the Middle East, youth soccer teams have also helped to promote peace.

在過去的二十年，各式激烈的足球比賽風靡日本、中國與南韓，掀起亞洲對於足球的熱潮。在中國，舉例來說，數據顯示現在中國人對於足球的喜愛度已經超越傳統中國喜愛的桌球與籃球。這樣的熱情也幫忙建起了橋樑讓人們更加團結。

2002 的足球世界杯，由南韓與日本主辦，非常成功的展現合作與友誼，而在中世紀，青年足球隊也同樣協助宣導和平。