

# British Culture 6 - British Sports (Part 1)

## Football

Football, also known as soccer, was first played by the Greeks and the Romans. We also know that the Chinese played a sport like football in the second century. Football was introduced in Europe during the Middle Ages. At that time, an inflated pig's bladder (= the organ that is shaped like a bag in which urine collects before it is passed out of the body) was used for the ball!

In 1314 King Edward II banned (= prohibited) football because he thought it was difficult to control the people who played that sport. If people were caught playing football, they were sent to prison. In 1618 King James I released his Book of Sports which listed all the sports and recreations permitted on Sundays.

Schools approved of football. They thought the sport encouraged competitiveness and promoted exercise.

The Football Association was created in 1863 and the Fédération Internationale de Football Association, better known as FIFA, was created in 1904, in Paris.

The British Empire with the process of colonisation helped spread football all over the world.

Football is a very popular sport all over the world simply because the rules are simple and they have not changed a lot since its beginning.



## Rugby

Rugby was born in ... Rugby, Warwickshire, in 1823! One day, while playing football, William Webb Ellis, a student at Rugby School, took the ball into his hands and started to run with it. His gesture was totally against the rules but it marked the beginning of rugby!

What people like about rugby is the violent aspect of the sport: you can hit someone and not go to jail (= prison) for it! They also like this sport because you run a lot and the more you practise, the stronger your body becomes. The last reason is that it is simply just fun to play this sport! But rugby can be a little dangerous: you can break a bone or a limb (a leg, an arm), you can get injured and get stitches.



# Cricket

Cricket has a long history: a game like cricket was played in 1300 in Kent. The sport was first played in the South East of England, probably by shepherds. Nowadays 120 countries around the world play cricket! There are 11 players in a cricket team.

Cricket is a great sport because it is a tactical, intellectual, and therefore unpredictable game. It is both an individual game and a team game. It is also a very skilful game: you must learn many different gestures. Finally, it is a great sport because it is the essence of England!

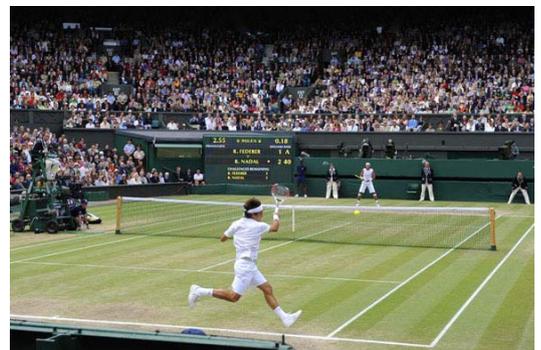


# Tennis

Tennis did not start in England! It started in France about 900 years ago.

The famous tennis tournament in the UK is Wimbledon. The first match was held in 1877.

At Wimbledon, tennis players play on grass under the supervision of an umpire who makes sure the rules of the game are respected.



# The Boat Race

The Boat Race is a rowing race on the river Thames between the University of Oxford and the University of Cambridge. The course is 4 miles and 374 yards long (= 6,779 km).

The first race took place in 1829.

The current Course Record is 16 mins 19 secs (set by Cambridge in 1998).

Oxford's team is in dark blue whereas Cambridge's team is in light blue.

