Early Public School Football Codes

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Puddings, Bullies and Squashes

Edited by

Malcolm Tozer

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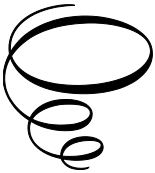

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Football at Charterhouse
The Illustrated News of the World, 15 February 1858

CONTENTS

PRAISE FOR THE BOOK

‘A couple of things leap out from reading *Puddings, Bullies & Squashes*. The first is how violent those early games were. … The other is how most matches … were based around the scrum rather than the individual, the mass not the maestro. … Each public school played a form of football by their own laws, as they were grandly called, until a meeting at the Freemasons’ Tavern near Covent Garden in 1863 agreed a common system. The story of the game’s development in these schools is admirably told in a collection of essays edited by Malcolm Tozer.’
—Patrick Kidd in *The Times*.

‘This insightful and original book … will be of interest to followers of all seven of the major football codes; to those interested in both the football and other sporting developments in the public schools in the mid to late 19th century; and there is plenty to ponder for the historians of both Association and Rugby football. … Each chapter provides interesting insights into the development of various aspects of each of the worldwide football codes and it is tempting to try to follow lines of rule development or specific playing features from a single source or school, such as the fair catch rule of American Football (that) can be found in the early rules of a number of the schools reviewed here.’
—Timothy Chandler in *Sport History Review*.

‘There are fascinating similarities in how forms of football emerged within entirely separate communities, usually with rules reflecting the environment in which the games were played. Most were brutal in nature and many characterised by the feature to which the book’s title refers – an amorphous, scrum-type assembly, confined around the ball to advance its progress. Some had defined playing numbers and locations: others involved most members of the school simultaneously. … This book will appeal to readers with interest in the history of all forms of football, and the considerable influence which the public schools had in elevating these pastimes to the carefully structured, worldwide games that they have become today.’
—Neil Rollings, *Independent Coach Education*.

‘If you have fond memories of boarding school or are a sports historian then you will find this book fascinating. … Prepare for a hit of nostalgia and a history lesson rolled into one.’
—Kitty Chrisp in *Scottish Field*.

Puddings, Bullies & Squashes ‘fills a gap in the market and is much needed as an important supplement and research resource for future scholars. [It] uncovers one part of the early years of the development of football and provides more information on a mightily complex story. … The many illustrations and photographs, there are no fewer than one hundred and sixty-four, add to the flavour of the book. … It is wholeheartedly recommended for the casual reader and the serious researcher.’
—Graham Curry in *Soccer & Society*.

‘As well as rich in history, chapters teem with relatable anecdotes. … That Eton figures at all in *Puddings, Bullies & Squashes* … is quite a feat. For these inclusions acknowledge that this school has been fundamental in developing the global phenomenon of football, a game played and consumed by billions today. We Etonians make much of our Prime Ministerial legacy; perhaps we ought to make more of our footballing one.’
—Ali Hirji Kheraj in *The Eton Chronicle*.

‘Malcolm Tozer has put together an important collection packed with insights and anecdotes. The chapters are written in an enlightening manner by excellent researchers, with more than 160 illustrations further assisting readers in their understanding of the period. *Puddings, Bullies and Squashes* is a significant contribution to the study of football and will be an important reference book for a wide audience interested in both the association and rugby games. … The authors have painted a vivid picture of football in the nineteenth century. … That most of Tozer’s contributors should provide the original rules or laws for early football at their respective schools or colleges has resulted in an impressive historical record.’
—Jonty Winch in *The International Journal of the History of Sport*.

‘*Puddings, Bullies & Squashes* [is] an anthology of meticulously researched essays from twenty public schools that detail the origins of early football codes. … The authors have crafted rich and evocative histories of the period via a range of representative forms including sketches, paintings, photographs, anecdotes and journal entries. … The book makes a valuable addition to the corpus of work that details the development of games during the Victorian public-school era. … Due to its anthological nature, it can be dipped into as

a reference work or read as a whole to provide a rich, vibrant, humorous and sometimes harrowing exposition of Victorian philosophy, invention and life. I recommend this book to casual readers with an interest in the development of football as well as to history scholars and educators.'
—Ruan Jones in *History of Education Researcher*.

'For anyone interested in the history or sociology of sport, and football in particular, this book will be of great interest. … An abundance of sporting detail which might otherwise be consigned to the archives and annals of the respective schools makes for interesting reading. … Readers with a sociological interest in the subject will find that the process-orientated, figurational approach of Norbert Elias is readily applicable to the case studies presented here. … For its range of detail, much of it unfamiliar, this book sits on a reading list alongside the work of Dunning & Sheard and Mangan. *Puddings, Bullies and Squashes* serves as a very readable charting of the nascent forms of football and offers further evidence of the significant role public schools played in the development of footballing codes.'
—Adam Morton in *Sport, Education and Society*.

'Over the past two decades the part played by public schools in the development and diffusion of modern football has been the subject of much polemical debate. A great deal of this mostly revisionist work has attempted to focus on the presence and nature of football outside the public schools, thus challenging the traditional "origins of football" paradigm. Perhaps an unintended consequence of this has been that the full complexity of football's development within the public-school realm – especially at the less famous of these elite establishments – has been rather neglected. Malcolm Tozer's useful collection brings this dimension of football history and culture into clearer light. Consequently, this is a valuable book for anyone interested in the various nineteenth-century football codes and in the traditions of Britain's (overwhelmingly England's) public schools, as well as their linkage to the modern games of association football and rugby.'
—Paul McFarlane in *European Studies in Sports History*.

INTRODUCTION

Puddings, bullies and squashes were the terms used at Radley College, Uppingham School and Charterhouse respectively to describe that distinctive feature of every early public school football game – the melee.[1] The massed boys of one team, perhaps half the school, pushed hard to drive the ball through their opponents' goal while the defenders, the other half, did their utmost to thwart the offensive effort. The scrum of the modern rugby game is but a pale imitation of the original and the defensive wall in soccer a flimsy substitute. This is the story of these early public school football codes before the nationalisation of the game by two rival bodies: the Football Association from 1863 and the Rugby Football Union from 1871.

Public Schools

The public schools are a highly distinctive English educational institution that has been readily exported to the rest of Britain and even farther afield. They were not, however, dominant in the early years of the nineteenth century, and were even perhaps at the lowest point in their history.[2] All provision of schooling in the British Isles was independent of the state before the implementation of William Forster's Elementary Education Act in 1870 and Arthur Balfour's Secondary Education Act of 1902 but popular demand for efficient secondary education for children above the age of 11 had been growing much earlier. Sons and daughters of the aristocracy and the gentry were customarily taught at home by governesses when very young and by tutors when older, but this was inevitably an expensive process. Offspring of the professional and middle-class families received their education at small private schools. As portrayed in the novels of Charles Dickens and William Makepeace Thackeray, these schools varied

[1] Eton College and Westminster School also had bullies; Marlborough College, Repton School and Shrewsbury School had squashes; but it seems that Radley alone had puddings.

[2] 'Public' because they accepted pupils from all parts of Britain, unlike the grammar schools which catered for 'local' or 'private' clienteles, and because access to them was not restricted on the basis of religion or occupation.

greatly in standard and reputation but supervision by teachers was much stricter than that in the public schools.

There were also around 800 old grammar schools at the turn of the nineteenth century. These were usually endowed schools for boys that owed their foundation to the generosity and public spirit of merchants, yeomen or clergy in Tudor times. Their restrictive curriculum and traditional teaching were much the same as they had been at the time of their creation, consisting mainly of rote learning of Latin and Greek in preparation for the universities at Oxford and Cambridge or for entry to the professions, especially the Church. These schools were generally shunned by the artisan classes, who viewed their curriculum as irrelevant to their needs, and so most were small and content merely to exist. Some public schools, Shrewsbury School and Rugby School for example, were originally grammar schools but had grown in size, status and renown under powerful headmasters and through improvements in communication and travel. In this way it was possible for a small school with purely local connections to develop into a fee-paying boarding school that drew its pupils from across the country. Other public schools were linked to colleges at the two universities: Eton College with King's College, Cambridge and Winchester College to New College, Oxford are two examples. These schools were wholly boarding from their inception.

Seven schools were recognised as public boarding schools at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and two more as public day schools. Shrewsbury, Rugby, Eton and Winchester, together with Harrow School, Westminster School and Charterhouse, comprised the former; St Paul's School and Merchant Taylors' School, both in London, were the latter. The poor quality of teaching was broadly similar at the public schools and the grammar schools but, in addition, the public schools had their own particular problems. Boarding facilities were crude and discipline was harsh. It was customary for the headmaster to have sole responsibility for pupil management in a school for several hundred boys aged 8 to 19, and occasionally even older. Bullying, rebellion and mass flogging were all part of the reaction, whilst drinking, gambling and other vices were rife among the boys.

The national social reforms of the second quarter of the century eventually reached the public schools and soon they came under concerted attack. Their classical curriculum did not meet the needs of the Utilitarians and the boys' vices did not satisfy the code of the Evangelicals. Reforms had to be made. The work of a small group of headmasters, notably Samuel Butler and Thomas Arnold, saved the public schools from near extinction

and brought them to a position where their influence was to be far-reaching and long-lasting.

Butler was headmaster at Shrewsbury from 1798 to 1836. During that time he not only revised the curriculum and teaching methods, and in the process made his school the foremost for the two classical languages, but he also introduced delegated management of school organisation to the senior boys through the introduction of a prefectorial system. Arnold was headmaster at Rugby from 1828 to 1842. He altered the teaching of classics, favouring Greek above Latin, and made both more relevant to nineteenth-century needs by applying them to examine contemporary social issues. Arnold saw his school as a microcosm of the ideal Christian-Platonic society as he strove to instil manliness in his charges. Decisive leadership, strong pastoral care, a morally earnest curriculum, the prefectorial system, a chapel-centred school life, and his weekly sermon: these were his means, and his purpose was to convert evil boys into saintly men. Material conditions improved with smaller dormitories, individual studies and stricter adult supervision.[3]

The work of Butler, Arnold and other headmasters lifted the public schools to a position of eminence that they had not enjoyed since the seventeenth century. As a result, the sons of the aristocracy were removed from their home-based tutors to join the throng at the leading schools and the rise of the middle classes made them affordable to an even larger clientele. By the end of the 1850s it was vital that the sons of respectable families should attend these schools, not least to learn from the aristocrats how to become gentlemen. The number of public schools increased three-fold by 1860 to meet this demand.[4]

Some of the new schools were founded as joint-stock companies and so were originally termed proprietary schools to distinguish them from the nine public schools that were above them in the social pecking order, and the numerous private schools below. Radley and Marlborough College are examples. As their fame grew, so they would soon be grouped with the nine as public schools. A number of long-established grammar schools were now gaining national reputations for good teaching under forceful headmasters and the best were granting themselves public school status or were being raised to it by ambitious parents. The schools at Sherborne, Tonbridge and Uppingham were in this category. By the time of the Schools Inquiry Commission, set up under Lord Taunton's chairmanship in 1864, there were the nine original public schools, 122 proprietary schools (some with public

[3] For more on Butler and Arnold see Tozer, *Manliness*, 33-43, 206.
[4] Tosh, *A Man's Place,* 117-118; Tosh, *Manliness*, 85.

school status) and about 800 grammar schools, of which a few were well known.[5]

Games

At the beginning of the nineteenth century scant attention was paid to sport as an ingredient of education. Although there was undoubtedly an increase in such activity in schools by the middle of the century, it is hard to ascribe the changes to the intended or conscious efforts of educationalists, other than the introduction of prescribed exercises in some elementary schools from the 1830s.

Well before 1800, however, games had been played in the public schools. Thomas Gray wrote in 1747 in his *Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College* of the chase of the 'rolling circle's speed' and the urging of 'the flying ball'. Cricket, boating and fives were popular there in the 1760s and instructors were on hand to teach boxing, fencing and dancing; all sports were organised by the boys for their own recreation. Less formal but seemingly more popular pastimes included fighting, poaching and other forms of general lawlessness.[6]

Lord Byron talked his way into the Harrow XI for the inaugural cricket match against Eton at Lord's in 1805, although he was keener to indulge in the post-match drunken festivities than to make his mark in the game. Cricket, football and rowing were popular at Westminster in London from 1808 when the headmaster, William Carey, curtailed the boys' freedom to roam and restricted them to the school's grounds. Boys arranged all their own games at Shrewsbury during the long headmastership of Samuel Butler; he saw no educational value in them.[7]

The lawless recreations of the boys at other schools came under attack during the reforms of the public schools in the second quarter of the century. George Butler, headmaster of Harrow in Byron's time, was probably quickest off the mark; by the time of his retirement in 1829 games had effectively been compulsory for many years. The boys controlled everything but the licence to impose compulsion on a school of over 200 came from Butler. One of the earliest actions of Benjamin Kennedy when he succeeded the other Butler at Shrewsbury was to provide a playing field

[5] The Taunton Commission examined all schools between the public school nine and the mass of private and elementary schools. It led to the Endowed Schools Act of 1869, which in turn created the Endowed Schools Commission that had extensive powers over the administration of individual schools.
[6] Percival, *Superior*, 21.
[7] Tyerman, *Harrow*, 159; Chandler, "Athleticism", 313, 321.

for cricket so that the boys might have 'the means of innocent amusement and exercise in their leisure hours', but he allowed the boys' hunt to remain. Arnold thought otherwise on his appointment to Rugby, for he banned hunting and poaching, and disbanded the boys' pack of hounds.[8]

The check on these pursuits led to an increase in other forms of recreation on the school site. Cricket had long been the popular summer game at the seven boarding public schools but it was not until the closing years of the eighteenth century and during the first half of its successor that football was adopted as the winter game, often replacing hockey. The rough play of this ancient pastime became relatively more civilised and rules were established by these sons of gentlemen to allow for the local conditions and customs at each school: some developed a kicking and dribbling form, others championed a handling and carrying variety. What follows is their story.

The Essays

The editor is grateful to the archivists, directors of sport, heads' secretaries, old boy chairmen and more at the fifty schools who responded to his initial enquiries about whether or not each school had its own early code of football. Twenty schools not only had such a code but also had enough material in their archives to support a 5,000-word essay and, more importantly, had an author willing to take on the task. Eton, with the Field Game and the Wall Game, provided two essays.

Most of the schools are in England and none is in Wales: all Welsh schools adopted the Rugby School code from the outset. One is in Scotland and one in Ireland. Some schools had very scant records of their early football, including one that played an important role: Cheltenham College was an early exponent of the 'passing game'. A few had lost all their records, including one with a claim for playing in the earliest inter-school match: those for Merchiston Castle School disappeared when it changed site in 1930. The two Clarendon day schools, St Paul's and Merchant Taylors', had no records of early football – changing sites may again be the culprit. Other schools could only offer tantalising snippets: a rule of 1856 at St Peter's School in York prohibited 'standing on the goal post to intercept the ball'; Glenalmond College in Scotland adopted the Winchester code shortly after its founding in 1847, but why?[9] Records of early football codes at more

[8] Tyerman, *Harrow*, 192; Fisher, *Shrewsbury*, 189.
[9] Charles Wordsworth, the first Warden (or headmaster), had been Second Master at Winchester.

schools may emerge in the future but, for the present, twenty-one examples give the modern reader enough material to marvel at the breadth of imagination of boys at nineteenth-century public schools when it comes to how to propel a ball down the pitch and through the opposition's goal. Did their Latin and Greek get the same devotion?

Finally, this book would not have come to fruition without the contributions from the authors of the individual essays. I take this opportunity to record my thanks to them. I am confident that their enthusiasm for their research and their affection for their schools will shine through their writing. Thanks must also go to the six colleagues who helped with the preparation of the book – Tony Collins, Graham Curry, Robert Hands, Peter Henderson, Dale Vargas and David Walsh – and to the team at Cambridge Scholars Publishing who produced this new edition.

Malcolm Tozer
Portscatho, Cornwall
1 January 2022

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PREFACE

TONY COLLINS

> Football, more than any other game, develops qualities which are in the highest degree useful in life – courage, coolness, unselfishness, and presence of mind. There is more headwork in it than is often supposed. And I am sure that if masters held it up as just as much a boy's duty to keep on the ball, to play an unselfish game, and not to show the white feather, as to do his best in the school-room, the same boy would very generally come to the front in both field and school.
>
> H. H. Almond, Headmaster of Loretto School.[1]

The early years of Victorian England witnessed a remarkable transformation in the status of the game of football. For centuries, the sport in all its various guises was regarded as a pastime of the plebeian masses. The Earl of Kent's description of a 'base foot-ball player' in Shakespeare's *King Lear* is just one of the many references down the centuries that emphasise the game's low standing in national culture.

By the start of the nineteenth century, it appeared to many commentators that the rising tide of the Industrial Revolution would mean football would go the way of cudgels, cock-throwing or beating the bounds, and disappear into history. Yet, at the end of the century, the game was a social, economic and cultural juggernaut, played, watched and loved by millions of people across Britain – and soon by even greater numbers around the world.

Public schools provided the modern codes of football with many of their rules, most of their professed values, and even the very name of the rugby version of the game. Whether professional or amateur, players and officials of all variations of football paid at least lip-service to the principles of the game as it was played in Britain's most famous schools. In the 50 years between the publication in 1845 of the first set of football rules by a public school and the creation of rugby league in 1895, the world witnessed a sporting revolution the like of which had never been seen before, where a game for boys was transformed into seven different organised football codes. The public schools were at the heart of this revolution.

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[1] Almond, 'Athletics', 292.

Although football in the British Isles dates from at least the Middle Ages, it seems that the first school to have recorded a reference to it being played was Eton in 1519. The game is mentioned as being played at Charterhouse in the 1680s and there is also evidence of football at Westminster and Christ's Hospital in the early eighteenth century. Yet these were probably no more than informal games organised on an ad hoc basis by boys during breaks or other time away from the classroom. Borrowed from, or imitative of, the folk football games of the rural working population, schools' football was neither codified nor seen as anything other than a rambunctious recreation that occasionally led to injury or at worst to temporary acts of disorder.

It would not be until the 1820s that the game began to acquire more than this incidental importance. Organised school football was very much a product of the economic development of industrial Britain and the growth of the professional and administrative classes in the mid-nineteenth century. The rise of muscular Christianity and its belief in the importance of physical activity gave sport – especially cricket and football – a previously unknown importance in the educational philosophy of public schools old and new.

The relationship between sport and education was one of the issues examined by the Clarendon Commission. Set up in 1861 to investigate the education at the nine leading public schools in England, the Commission was particularly interested in discovering whether the curriculum, which was traditionally based on Greek and Latin, was suitable for the new scientific and industrial age that Britain was entering. 'The great difficulty of a public school, as any master knows, is simple idleness,' it acknowledged, underlining the centrality of physical activity to daily school life.[2]

The Commission was especially interested whether the vogue for sports was overshadowing scholarly pursuits. On the whole it thought not. The cricket and football fields, it observed, 'are not merely places of exercise and amusement, they help to form some of the most valuable social qualities and manly virtues, and they hold, like the classroom and the boarding house, a distinct and important place in public-school education'.[3] Football, a future headmaster of Eton (Edmond Warre) told the Commission, 'is a wonderful equaliser of boys' and compared it favourably to the elitism of his own sport, rowing.[4]

Despite this, the report did warn that 'it is possible to carry this too far, and at some schools we fear this is the case' and contrasted Harrow with

[2] *Clarendon*, 33.
[3] *Clarendon*, 40-2.
[4] *Clarendon*, 184.

Rugby. At the former, it found 'the importance assigned to games in the estimation of the boys is somewhat greater than it should'. In contrast, at Rugby it believed that sport 'distinguishes the strong, strengthens the studious, and spares the weak'.[5]

No other school emerged with quite the same credit from the Clarendon report as Rugby. Combined with the reputation it gained after the publication in 1857 of *Tom Brown's School Days*, Thomas Hughes's bestselling fictionalised memoir of his time there, Rugby became the model for many Victorian public schools. This meant that its code of football gained adherents far beyond the school's old boys. New schools such as Haileybury and Clifton, two of the expanding number of institutions established in the mid-century, adopted Rugby's educational and sporting philosophy. But even beyond those schools directly influenced by Rugby or *Tom Brown*, football, whatever the rules, soon occupied a central place in the educational and recreational life of all public schools.

However or wherever it was played, the game came to be seen, in the words of Hughes, as 'the whole sum of school-boy existence'.[6] Its importance can be gauged by it being a compulsory activity in many institutions. The Clarendon Commission noted the game was mandatory at Shrewsbury and Harrow and highlighted that it was the pupils themselves who had made this rule.[7] As Malcolm Tozer notes, boys at Uppingham were compelled to play at least once a week, and those who did not play had to assist in the rolling of the school's pitches. For younger boys at Tonbridge and Winchester, fagging duties also included goalkeeping during matches.[8] Such compulsion may not have been universally appealing: Shrewsbury football was known as 'douling', derived from the Greek word for slave, seemingly because all pupils were forced to play the game during the winter months.

The 1850s and 1860s saw the blossoming of football inventiveness in the public schools and beyond. With the exception of Eton and Rugby, which codified and printed their rules in 1847 and 1845 respectively, the majority of public schools drew up written rules for the game between the mid-1850s and the end of the 1860s. This did not differ significantly from the Sheffield FC, which published its rules in 1858, or the adult football clubs that either accepted the FA's 1863 rules or sought to develop their own code.

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[5] *Clarendon*, 298.
[6] Hughes, *Tom Brown,* 123.
[7] *Clarendon*, 336.
[8] *Clarendon*, 358.

In practice, the similarities between the different types of public-school football were much greater than their differences. The clear lines that today separate football codes did not exist in the mid-nineteenth century. A form of scrum was common to almost every school code of football. It was known as a 'hot' at Winchester, a 'pudding' at Radley, a 'grovel' at Sherborne and a 'bully' at Eton, Uppingham and Westminster. That the scrum is today seen as an exclusive feature of the rugby codes is a warning against trying to identify a single point of origin for modern football games. Handling the ball in some fashion was almost universally accepted, and dribbling it was prized at Rugby School as it was in any school that gravitated to a game ultimately closer to the association brand.

The sheer range and diversity of rules followed by schools means that it is easy for modern readers to find features that appear to foreshadow modern football codes. Eton's 11-a-side field game is often pointed to as the precursor of association football, yet the prevalence of the scrum-like 'bully' and the importance of the touchdown 'rouge' in the scoring system make the drawing of such a line of succession highly problematic. To take another example, Harrow and King's Canterbury sometimes played 13-a-side matches, but this did not make them the forerunners of rugby league.

To some extent, these similarities highlight how there are only a limited number of ways in which the rules of organised football can evolve. Some schools anticipated aspects of the later development of rugby football as they sought to make the game more interesting for its players and satisfying as a contest. Marlborough's rule that three touchdowns equalled one goal predates the Rugby Football Union's 1886 rule, while Cheltenham's points system, which awarded points for tries and defensive touchdowns as well as goals, anticipates American and Canadian football. Indeed, the 'rouge' of Eton and Cheltenham (and the Sheffield FA in the 1860s) survives today in the Canadian Football League.

If it was the excitement and physicality of football that thrilled schoolboys, their masters were enamoured of it because of its ability to develop character and create Christian gentlemen. That it was seen by muscular Christian educators as a way of imparting moral values to young men was crucial to its popularity. This was articulated sharply in an 1865 article in Forest School's magazine which declared 'football is like a bit of real life: it holds up a mirror to human character and the caprice of fortune. The perfect football-player is the type of moral excellence – τετραγωνος άνευ ψόγος – rectangular, without blame.'

It is important to note that this enthusiasm crossed religious boundaries. Catholic schools such as Stonyhurst and Downside were just as committed to football as their Anglican cousins. In Ireland, Jesuit colleges took up the

game with alacrity, with Clongowes Wood playing its own 'gravel game' before eventually becoming one of the powerhouses of Irish schools rugby.

The belief that football would engender higher moral standards did not necessarily come to pass. There were many opportunities on the pitch for what would be seen today as unacceptable violence, most obviously in the many different types of hacking or 'shinning' that almost all schools allowed. 'There were a good many broken shins for most of the fellows had iron tips to their very strong shoes, and some freely boasted of giving more than they took,' recalled the Rev T. Mozley about his days at Charterhouse in the 1820s, a memory that would have also been carried through life by alumni of many other schools. E. H. Dykes, who would become a clergyman in Leeds, took the precaution while at Durham School of 'solemnly hammering my shins with a poker to make them hard' to protect against hacks.[9]

There were also significant concerns about the behaviour of those watching matches. In its 1862 football rules, Repton warned spectators that 'shouts of disparagement, loud chaffing, and clapping or other expressions of satisfaction at the failure of antagonists, are entirely opposed to the spirit of the game' and made it the responsibility of team 'leaders' to 'put down such conduct on the part of their followers at all hazards'.

Such behaviour was especially liable to occur during matches between schools. When Marlborough met Clifton in 1864, the game became notorious for its rough play and partisan spectatorship. This caused so much controversy that Marlborough did not play another school until 1887 and only recommenced fixtures with Clifton four years after that. Such disquiet was often an inhibiting factor for inter-school contests. As Sherborne's school magazine wrote in 1877, 'we can only regret that we do not play any foreign matches with other public schools, owing, we understand, to the fear of such matches becoming dangerous'.

In reality, the passionate rivalry for which football provided an arena was as strong in the public schools as it was in the industrial inner cities, and the scenes witnessed on the touchlines of school football matches would be replicated countless times across Britain, and elsewhere, in the decades to come.

Ultimately, this inter-school rivalry and the expanding appeal of the game meant that the desire to test one's football mettle could not be resisted. But the diversity of different school football rules ensured that it was difficult to have truly competitive contests. When matches were arranged under the rules of the home side, the visitors were unnaturally disadvantaged,

[9] *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 9 February 1902.

while a set of compromise rules left both sides feeling dissatisfied with the result. As early as 1864 Uppingham had heard calls for matches against outside teams but Edward Thring, the school's headmaster, was opposed to the school joining the Football Association (FA), and it would not be until 1877, when common ground was found with Shrewsbury, that Uppingham played another school.

Some schools solved this problem by simply adopting another, more popular, set of rules. In 1869 Tonbridge abandoned its own game and took up Rugby School's rules: 'what benefit is there in continuing to play according to rules which may be good in themselves, but which are not used at any other school?' asked one correspondent to the school magazine. Christ's Hospital made a similar decision in 1874.

Shrewsbury also eventually opted for this route and played its first game under FA rules in 1873 against a local side but took four more years to fully adopt those rules for all matches outside the school. Repton embraced the FA rulebook in 1878 and in 1881 Radley decided 'to change our own rules for Association, on account of the awkwardness in playing matches. This we fear will be to our disadvantage.' It would not be until 1889 that Uppingham made a final choice and, despite taking part in the foundation of the FA in 1863, opted for the rugby union banner.

As these developments show, despite being part of the small world of elite education, public school football was also part of a sporting continuum that extended far beyond the classroom and into the rest of society. Schools were not sealed off from the emerging world of adult football. Tonbridge began playing matches against local teams from the late 1850s and Westminster played Dingley Dell in 1858, Crusaders in 1863 and Civil Service in 1865. Adult clubs such as Sheffield FC, formed in 1857, took inspiration from the football rules of prominent schools. Sheffield's 1858 rulebook took many aspects from that of Rugby School, despite the club being more aligned to the Eton game.

These links extended internationally too. After a spell as Bradfield's Second Master, George Ogilvie was appointed principal of Cape Town's Diocesan College in 1861. He took with him Bradfield's version of Winchester football, amended the rules, and organised a match against a team of army officers.

Moreover, when young men left school they often sought to continue playing football and so formed adult clubs. Much of the credit for the formation of clubs in the 1850s and 1860s must go to former pupils of football-playing schools. Indeed many of them were old boys' clubs, with Old Harrovians probably being the first to be formed in 1859.

This desire to play the game into adulthood faced an obvious problem: what rules should be played? The issue first became apparent at Cambridge University, when students who sought to form a football club in the 1840s had to decide on a set of rules that were acceptable to all regardless of the schools they had attended. Over the next two decades, discussions about the efficacy of the various school rules took place in the sporting and the national press, and school rulebooks were at the centre of the wider discussions about the desirability of creating a 'universal' code of football.

In October 1863, an Eton pupil wrote to *The Times* to urge 'the framing of set rules for the game of football to be played everywhere' and that the captains of the football teams of the public schools, universities and 'one or two London clubs' should 'frame rules for one universal game'.[10] Replies came in from Harrow, Charterhouse, Winchester and Rugby schools, each agreeing with the sentiment but suggesting that its school's rules offered the best basis for a universal code.[11]

Nevertheless, on 26 October 1863 representatives of eleven clubs and schools in London answered an advertisement in the weekly *Bell's Life in London* and attended a meeting arranged 'for the purpose of promoting the adoption of a general code of rules for football' at the Freemasons' Tavern in Great Queen Street to begin the process of forming an association of football clubs committed to playing a single code. As might have been expected, this process did not go smoothly and it was only after six controversial meetings that the new Football Association adopted a code of rules, based on those of the Cambridge University football club.

Of the schools that had been examined by the Clarendon Commission, only Charterhouse attended any of the founding FA meetings. However, they did not join, leaving seven schools – Blackheath Proprietary, Perceval House, Wimbledon, Kensington, Royal Naval at New Cross, Forest and Uppingham – among the 19 founding members of the FA. By January 1864, *Bell's Life* noted that the FA had just nine members, of whom only two, Forest and Uppingham, were schools.[12]

But it would be misleading to imagine that the absence of public schools from FA membership diminished their influence over the game. All its officials and those of member clubs were educated either at public schools or at those grammar schools that sought to emulate them. It was an Old Harrovian, Charles Alcock, appointed secretary of the FA in 1870, who organised the first FA Cup tournament in 1871, and the cup was won by

[10] 'Etonensis', *The Times*, 5 October 1863.
[11] *The Times*, 6, 7, 9 and 10 October 1863.
[12] *Bell's Life*, 23 January 1864. See also Brown, *Laws.*

clubs comprising former public schoolboys for the first thirteen years of its existence.

The FA Cup reinvigorated the nascent governing body and provided the impetus for it to become the leading code of football. But in the 1860s the FA struggled because those clubs favouring a Rugby School style of football abandoned it immediately after its formation. These clubs would eventually form the Rugby Football Union in 1871, where the public-school influence would persist long after association football had become dominated by professional players.

Privately-educated players in the England XI became very much a rarity after the Great War but the England rugby union XV continued to show the strong influence of the public schools in rugby's amateur age before 1995. Between the first international in 1871 and the start of the new era in 1995, almost three-quarters of all England players for whom their schools are known were privately educated. Moreover, the schools from which they came were generally either Rugby or those which modelled themselves on Rugby, such as Marlborough, Wellington, Clifton and Haileybury. The other Clarendon schools tended to favour the round ball.[13]

In Scotland the role of the schools was perhaps even more advanced than in England. Edinburgh Academicals drew up a comprehensive set of rules in 1858 – famously known as 'the Green Book' and drawn largely but not entirely from Rugby School's rulebook – and a universal code for schools and adult clubs based on the Green Book was agreed by Scottish sides in 1868. Until the emergence of association football in Scotland in the 1870s, football in Scotland was much more unified than in England, as schools and clubs could meet each other without having to discuss the rules under which they would play. The bond between Scottish public schools and rugby remains as strong in the twenty-first century as it was in Victorian times.

And so, despite the tumultuous changes that have taken place in football and society since the game became an integral part of school life almost two hundred years ago, the public-school model has continued to shape the sport. Whether it is the survival of the rouge in Canadian football, the veneration of Old Rugbeian Tom Wills by Australian Rules football, the fair catch rule of American football, the residual genuflection of soccer to 'gentlemanly' behaviour, or even the very name of the rugby code, the influence of those public school masters and boys who drew up the rules for how to chase a ball around a field or a yard, or even a tightly enclosed space, all those years ago remains fundamental to our understanding and, just as importantly, our enjoyment of the world's favourite sport.

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[13] Collins, *Rugby,* 98-99.