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## Why did FIFA lag behind the Olympic movement?

*Ben Oakley and Steph Doehler*

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*Whilst the first international football match was in 1872 (England vs Scotland) it was almost 60 years before the first World Cup in Uruguay. Why the wait?*

Whilst the British developed a number of sports in their early histories it was the French who became experts in creating international tournaments. A Frenchman stimulated the first modern Olympics in 1896 and eventually another Frenchman, Jules Rimet, helped create the FIFA World Cup, first staged in 1932. You may recognise how the famous trophy is named after him.

Football tournaments were held at the Olympic Games from 1900, and in the 1920s the Olympic rules at the time about amateur-only athletes led to the top teams, such as Uruguay, often being increasingly shamateur (i.e. a sham, faking to be amateur). Uruguay won the 1924 and 1928 Olympic titles. They were, therefore, credible hosts for the first FIFA World Cup tournament, although some claim it was made in Los Angeles. The 1932 Olympic hosts' decision to drop football, for fear of limited crowds in the middle of an economic depression, perhaps helped create the World Cup.

The British clubs and associations were quite sniffy about the World Cup in the early days. They were fairly insular and not that interested. In 1938, after the Austria dropped out as World Cup hosts and Spain had a civil war, the England Football Association were asked if they would like to participate, but they refused. It was not until 1950 that they joined the World Cup party.