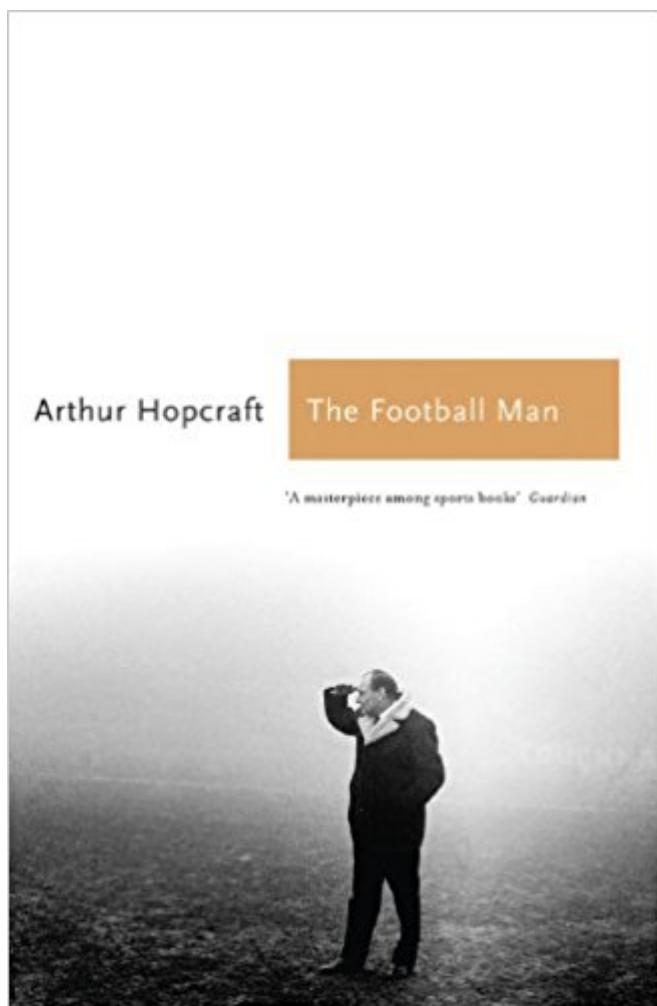


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# The Football Man: People & Passions In Soccer (Sports Classics)



## Synopsis

‘Football matters, as poetry does to some people and alcohol does to others. Football is inherent in the people. There is more eccentricity in deliberately disregarding it than in devoting a life to it. The way we play the game, organize it and reward it reflects the kind of community we are’ Written just two years after England’s ’66 triumph when the national game was at its zenith, Arthur Hopcraft’s *The Football Man* is repeatedly quoted as the best book ever written about the sport. This definitive, magisterial study of football and society profiles includes interviews with all-time greats like Bobby Charlton, George Best, Alf Ramsay, Stanley Matthews, Matt Busby and Nat Lofthouse. It is a snapshot of a pivotal era in sporting history; changes and decisions were made in the sixties that would create the game we know today. For many who are disenchanted with the modern game - the grip of businesses and corporations, the dominance of advertising, the extortionate ticket prices and inaccessible matches, the fickleness of teenage millionaires - *The Football Man* takes the reader back to the heart and soul of the national game when pitches were muddy and the players were footballers not brands. Voted in May 2005 as one of *Observer*’s top sports books of all time, this is a long-awaited reissue of the classic football ‘bible’.’ Masterpiece among sports books’ *Guardian* ‘It remains one of my favourite football reads’ Graham Taylor

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

\*Starred Review\* This was first published in England in 1968, and its title refers to the kind of football played there, with a ball you can’t throw unless it goes out of bounds or you are a

goalkeeper. Widely recognized as a classic, it is composed primarily of thoughtful, essayistic profiles of the different kinds of men—players, managers, team directors, referees, fans, amateurs, and journalists—who then populated the sport. Readers will know from the very first pages that they are in the hands of a deep thinker and a gifted stylist, careful to turn a phrase only where it will glitter most. Hopcraft, who wrote not for tabloids but the *Guardian*, *Observer*, and the *Sunday Times* (and who went on to become a successful TV scriptwriter, with the adaptation of John le Carré's *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy* to his credit), is that rarest of birds, an intellectual who understands fans' feelings, and when he calls their chants a "plaintain song of the terraces," the language isn't merely ornamental, it's meaningful. Admittedly, this reprint will be of limited interest to younger fans choosing among the teams they watch on TV; while some of the figures and teams Hopcraft writes about are still well-remembered or well-known, others have passed into the pages of history (Sam Ellis) or the depths of the lower divisions (Oldham Athletic). But it's a fascinating portrait of a historic moment in a nation that continues to export its sport to an eager world. Players were making the transition from working-class heroes to highly paid superstars, England was celebrating its first (and still only) World Cup victory, and the first spasms of hooliganism were in worrying evidence. An influential and still highly absorbing exploration, this deserves its place on a very short list of the best soccer books of all time. --Keir Graff

"Brilliant portrayal. One of the classics of the genre." "A masterpiece among sports books" "It remains one of my favourite football reads." "A masterpiece among sports books" "The best book on the game." "It remains one of my favourite football reads." "Brilliant portrayal. One of the classics of the genre."

Pretty good, very interesting but at times a little tedious.

This book as been reviewed by many a more skilful footballer than me, that said it was easy to understand the greatness and understanding put into it. Also the era was mine and I have read a few football books but this was more well written than most and that was good and bad some footballers can't read that well and I know I can't spell but I enjoyed it a lot. one last thing why was it so expensive if it could have been half the price I would have been even more pleased.

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