Find a footballer

Create a profile of a First World War footballer and present your research as a poster. This could be someone from your area, someone from a local team or someone whose story inspires your pupils. This activity gives students a human connection with football in the First World War through an individual player's story, professional or amateur, man or woman.

Ask students to work independently or in pairs to research a footballer, record their findings and present them to the class. They could use a wide range of sources. Online research, libraries and football club historians are a good place to start. Remind them to record the sources they use. They could use the following guidance and template to help them.

Make a display in your school of all the footballers your pupils find, swap stories with your partner school, and upload what the students find to the British Council Schools Online site.

Suggested sources include background reading and examples of footballers' stories to inspire pupils, as well as a photograph of British and Indian soldiers playing football behind the frontline, watched by local children.

38, 39, 46
### Find a footballer research worksheet

**NAME**

Deciding who to research can be one of the toughest decisions – here are a few options to help you get started:

- Do you play football in a team today? Did your team exist at the outbreak of the First World War? If so, can you find out what happened to the people who played in your team during the war?
- Do you support a football team today? Did your football team exist during the First World War? Can you find out who played for them, and what the team did during the war? (This is a good place to start whether you support a small local club or one of the Premier League’s top four teams.)
- During the war, did women play football in your area? What can you find out about them?
- Are there any stories in your family or community about football in the First World War? There may be a very special story on your doorstep. Perhaps a great-great-uncle who loved to play football before the war signed up. Ask your parents, grandparents and other relatives or people from your local area. This could include sheltered housing for older people, as their parents might have been involved in the war, and local history groups.

**DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH**

**BACKGROUND**

Where did he (or she) grow up, what was their family like, what was their job before, or as well as, playing football?

**WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM IN THE WAR?**

When did they join up to fight, and which regiment or battalion did they join?

If you are finding out about a female footballer, what did she do during the war? Why did she start playing football?

**WHAT HAPPENED AFTERWARDS?**

If they survived, what did they do after the war? If they died, are they remembered somewhere? For example, on a war memorial or at their football club.

Remember that most people who took part in the war came home – 88 per cent of soldiers returned.

**A PHOTOGRAPH**

If you can find one that is free of copyright restrictions.

**A DRAWING**

Be an artist! From what you have discovered, what do you think your footballer looked like?

**RESOURCES USED**

It’s always important to explain how you got your information and where you got it from.
# Find a footballer research worksheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>What happened to them in the war?</th>
<th>An image</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date and place of birth</td>
<td>What happened afterwards?</td>
<td>Resources used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Football was a very popular sport in Britain and Germany in the years before 1914. In January 1900, representatives from 86 football clubs founded the German Football Association (Deutscher Fußball-Bund – DFB) and the German national football team has represented Germany in international football competitions since 1908.

While Britain and its allies were at war in 1914, football was still being played in the normal way at home. A lot of people thought this was wrong. In England, there were Division 1 and Division 2 Championships and an FA Challenge Cup competition. The FA was in charge of football in England then, as it is now, and the Dean of Lincoln wrote scornfully to it of ‘onlookers who, while so many of their fellow men are giving themselves in their country’s peril, still go gazing at football’.

There was criticism of the players too. Some people thought that young men who played football professionally should be fighting for their country. The FA made ‘An Appeal to Good Sportsmen’ and a poster was issued in November 1914 imploring footballers (and others) to join the armed forces. ‘Every man must know his duty to himself and to his country’, it said on the poster. Arthur Conan Doyle, the author of the Sherlock Holmes books, also made an appeal. ‘There was a time for everything, but there is only time for one thing now, and that thing is war… If a footballer had strength of limb let them serve and march in the field of battle.’

Partly as a response to the criticism, a ‘Footballers’ Battalion’ was formed in December 1914. The 17th Battalion of the Middlesex Regiment, to give it its official name, had Frank Buckley, the Derby County and England centre-half, as its first member. The Football League instructed their clubs to release professional players who were not married to join the armed forces. The Footballers’ Battalion quickly grew with players from teams including Portsmouth, Crystal Palace, Millwall, Chelsea and the whole of the Clapton Orient (now Leyton Orient) team. The Footballers’ Battalion, consisting of professional and amateur players, plus some football supporters, left for the war in November 1915. By the following March, 122 professional footballers had signed up for the battalion, which led to press complaints, as there were some 1800 eligible footballers. By the end of the war they had lost more than 1,000 men and in the Battle of Arras alone, 462 were killed.

England’s 1914–15 football season ended with the FA Cup Final between Chelsea and Sheffield United. The match was christened ‘The Khaki Cup Final’ due to the large number of uniformed soldiers present in the crowd at Old Trafford. The Earl of Derby presented the trophy to Sheffield United with the words: ‘It is now the duty of everyone to join with each other and play a sterner game for England.’ Everton won the First Division title and Derby County lifted the Second Division crown. After that, all competitive football was suspended.
In the early 20th century, women were thought too fragile to play football. It was considered inappropriate and degrading. Doctors declared that it was damaging to women’s health. The First World War changed that perception. ‘All the men went off to war and the women took their places in the factories,’ explained Sue Lopez, the former England international. ‘The women working at the munitions manufacturers would kick around a ball, and [...] they would play matches to raise funds for the wounded soldiers.’

In the absence of the men’s league, which had ceased at the end of the 1914-15 season, women’s tournaments flourished. In the north-west of England, where heavy industries were at their most dense, inter-district matches were played, and a Munition Girls Challenge Cup was established. Dick, Kerr’s Ladies from Preston were the most famous team and their match against St Helens in 1920, played at Everton’s ground, Goodison Park, attracted a crowd of 53,000.

There was a suspicion that some teams were not giving the money they raised from women’s football matches to charity and, in 1921, the FA banned women from playing at its affiliated grounds. ‘Football is quite unsuitable for females,’ said the FA. But those First World War factory workers, known as ‘The Munitionettes’, had kicked off a surge in women’s football that rocked the men’s game.
Alex ‘Sandy’ Turnbull played for Manchester United before the war and scored the first goal at Old Trafford. He was born near Kilmarnock and has been described as ‘the prototype for the lowland, working class Scottish player like Sir Alex Ferguson’ and as ‘an Edwardian version of Wayne Rooney’. He was involved in setting up what was to be the first players’ union, in May 1906 – later to be referred to as ‘The Outcasts’.

Sandy joined the Footballers’ Battalion in 1915 and then transferred to another regiment. It is believed that he was among the troops who dribbled footballs in to the battle of the Somme front lines on 1 July 1916. He died at Arras on 3 July 1917. He left a widow and four children.

Edwin Latheron, known as ‘Pinky’, played as a midfielder for England and Blackburn Rovers. He helped Blackburn win the league title twice and had dazzling footwork that created openings for the strikers. His career ended when he was killed while serving with the Royal Field Artillery at Passchendaele.
Florrie Redford grew up in Preston, Lancashire. She enjoyed sport and played football with her brothers. When war broke out, she was working at Dick, Kerr’s factory. The firm made war supplies, including shells for guns, producing up to 30,000 a week by 1917.

The workers often played football during their lunch breaks. Another player, Alice Norris, remembers that ‘we used to play at shooting at the cloakroom windows, they were little square windows, and if the boys beat us at putting a window through, we had to buy them a packet of Woodbines, but if we beat them, they had to buy us a bar of Five Boys chocolate’.

A member of staff at the factory organised a girls’ and women’s team to raise money for the war effort. At a match on Christmas Day 1917, Dick, Kerr’s Ladies beat Coulthard’s Foundry 4-0, with Florrie playing centre-forward. A match report said that the team’s ‘forward work, indeed, was often surprisingly good, one or two of the ladies showing quite admirable ball control’. She became one of the leading scorers for the team and was described by the papers as blonde and glamorous, and was often pictured in their pages.

Her football career continued when she became a nurse after the war, as did many of her teammates, looking after wounded soldiers. Florrie emigrated to Canada in 1930 but played again for the team in 1938. She then retired from football and later moved to Coventry, where she spent the rest of her life.

Woodbines: a brand of cigarettes
Source: D Footballers who fought in the war
L Find a footballer
Leigh Richmond Roose was born in 1877 in Holt, near Wrexham. He became a goalkeeper for Aberystwyth Town while at college. He was described as being ideally suited to the position, being tall and well built. He became the Welsh national goalkeeper in 1900 and held that position for many years. Leigh moved to study medicine in London and continued to play amateur football, before joining Stoke City for ‘expenses’. He was popular with football crowds as he loved to talk to spectators, tell jokes during the game, and make a dramatic arrival at matches. He also led a celebrity lifestyle, becoming famous for his active social life in clubs and restaurants. Before the outbreak of war he had a very successful career. Leigh volunteered to join up almost immediately after the war broke out. He was in Gallipoli by April 1915 and France from 1916. According to accounts from fellow soldiers, Leigh fought bravely in a failed attack on the Somme, and was presumed dead in October 1917. He is commemorated at the Theipval memorial in France, although his family did not discover this until many years later, as his name had been misspelled as ‘Rouse’.

Donald Simpson Bell was born in 1890 in Harrogate, one of seven children. He was strong and tall and good at lots of different sports. Donald started to train as a teacher in London, while playing football as an amateur for teams including Crystal Palace. He also played as an amateur for Newcastle United, before turning professional and moving to Bradford Park Avenue, where he was very successful and widely admired. One report said: ‘Bell is one of the best types of the professional footballer, broadminded in outlook and scrupulously fair in his play.’

Donald was the first professional footballer to enlist, joining the 9th Battalion, West Yorkshire Regiment in October 1914. He fought initially at Armentieres, then moved to the Somme. He was cited for ‘most conspicuous bravery’ during an attack on 5 July 1916. His medal was presented to his wife of one month, Rhoda. There is a permanent memorial to Donald at ‘Bell’s Redoubt’ at the Somme, and the Victoria Cross is on display in the National Football Museum, Manchester.

**Scrupulous**: wants to avoid doing anything dishonest

**Victoria Cross**: the highest honour a British soldier can receive for bravery. The medal is usually presented by the King or Queen.
Walter Tull was born in Kent in 1888. His mother was from Kent and his father was a carpenter from Barbados. They both died before Walter was ten and he was then brought up in an orphanage in London. Walter became an apprentice printer, but his football skills led him to play first for Clapton and then Tottenham Hotspur in 1909, making him the first mixed race professional outfield player (the first black professional player was the goalkeeper, Arthur Wharton, in 1885).

He was subjected to racist abuse from some fans, despite his popularity with home crowds and the press. Walter transferred to Northampton Town in 1911 and played over 100 games for them.

In December 1914, he volunteered for the Footballers’ Battalion, 17th Middlesex regiment. He was promoted to sergeant in 1916 while serving in France. Walter got trench fever (and probably shell shock) and was treated in England after the battle of the Somme. While in the UK, he trained as an officer, and returned to France, becoming the British Army’s first mixed race officer.

After a period of fighting in Italy, he was posted back to France and was killed on 25 March 1918 at Arras. His men tried to rescue him after seeing him shot but his body was never found. He is commemorated on the Arras memorial. Another Spurs player, Alan Haig-Brown, who was the Commander of Walter’s battalion, also died in the same attack.

**Shell shock**: an illness caused by the trauma of fighting. It is also known as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Symptoms range from tiredness and panic attacks to mental and physical breakdown. The British Army recorded 80,000 men as suffering from the condition, but it is thought that many more were affected but not diagnosed.

**Commander**: soldier in charge of a battalion of several hundred men.

**Trench fever**: a common illness on the Western Front. Symptoms include headache, fever, sore joints, bones and muscles, swollen eyes, as well as a skin rash. It is passed on by lice. Most people recover in around five days but more serious cases can require a few weeks in hospital.
The Hawkshaw village team were the champions of Division Two of the Bury and District Amateur League. Hawkshaw is a village in Greater Manchester and all the players in the team came from there. Lots of men from the village and football team enlisted and fought in the war. Many from the football team were injured or killed. The fighting had a profound effect on the community as the whole village had a connection with the war’s tragic events. The team did not reform after the war.

Of the men in the picture (from left to right, back row to front row):

- Albert Sanderson served in the army and was wounded three times
- Richard Snape served in the army and lost his brother-in-law at Vimy Ridge
- William Howarth served in the army and lost his brother-in-law at Passchendaele
- William Longworth served with the artillery and died of the effects of a gas attack in 1920
- Richard Smith served in the army in the Middle East and survived a torpedo attack
- William H Longworth served in the army and came home disabled
- Ernest Howarth’s history is unknown
- John Dickson served in the artillery and was wounded
- Tom Smithie died of wounds at the Somme
- John Horrocks was wounded and disabled, and his brother was killed
- Fred Whowell died in 1927
- Phillip McGregor served in the army
- Edward Chadwick served with the artillery and was wounded and gassed
- Charles Sims served in army and died after the war of a fever contracted overseas
- George Horrocks was wounded and his brother was killed
- James E. Johnson was killed at Gallipoli.

William Smith, who is not in the photo, was wounded on the Somme.
Patrick Crossan, known as ‘Paddy’, was born in 1894 in Addiewell, Midlothian. He was a Heart of Midlothian player who was known for his speed on the pitch. Paddy also competed as a sprinter in athletics meetings. He considered himself to be very good looking, and a teammate and friend once remarked that ‘Paddy could maybe pass the ball, but he couldn’t pass a mirror if he tried’.

When war broke out, football continued for a while, with Hearts the most successful team in Scotland. Public pressure grew for fit, healthy young men to join up. In response, Lieutenant-Colonel George Macrae formed a battalion of the 16th Royal Scots, in Edinburgh. The whole of the Hearts team joined.

During the 1914/15 season, they continued to play football matches, as well as doing their army training, which affected their results badly. A huge crowd saw them off from Edinburgh in late 1915. They then trained in England and went to France in January 1916.

While on the front line, Paddy was buried in an explosion. He suffered severe concussion and spent three days crawling to safety. By the time he reappeared, his fellow soldiers thought he had been killed. At the start of his fighting, he said: ‘I think that instead of fighting, we should take the Fritzes on at football. I am certain we would do it on them.’

In September 1916, Paddy’s foot and leg were badly injured. He woke up in hospital with a label on his foot marking it for amputation, but persuaded a captured German surgeon in the hospital that this must not happen, as he was a professional footballer. His foot was saved. Once recovered, he was posted to Palestine, then back to France, where he was the victim of a gas attack in August 1918.

After the war, Paddy was not able to resume a full playing career. He opened a pub in Edinburgh and was the landlord there until his death in 1933.

He is commemorated in the Hearts war memorials at Tynecastle and in Edinburgh’s Haymarket.
First World War footballers’ case studies (continued)

Jimmy (James Marshall) Seed was born in 1895 in Blackhill, near Consett, Northumberland. He grew up near the Northumberland coast. He worked as a miner, playing football part-time with Whitburn F.C. His brother Angus also played professionally.

Jimmy’s goal-scoring abilities impressed Sunderland, and he signed with them as a professional in April 1914. He continued playing for them until the end of the 1914/15 season, when football was officially suspended because of the war. Jimmy was then 20-years-old.

He joined the 8th Battalion of the West Yorkshire regiment and was sent to France. Here he was in the Cyclist Corps, whose members took essential information through the lines on their bikes. His brother Angus was also in France and was awarded the Military Medal for his courage after being wounded.

Jimmy was gassed towards the end of the war and was sent home. Once football resumed, he returned to playing for Sunderland, but appeared not to be fit enough and he was released on a free transfer. He got another chance to play with the Welsh side Mid-Rhondda, however, and from there joined Tottenham Hotspur. With Spurs, he had a successful career in the first team, appearing in the FA Cup Final, and then played for England. His playing career continued at Sheffield Wednesday, but ended when he got a knee injury at the age of 35.

Jimmy continued as a manager, at Clapton Orient (many of whose players had fought in the war), then Charlton Athletic (where there is a stand named after him), Bristol City and Millwall. Jimmy died in 1966, at the age of 71, just before England won the World Cup.

Bernard ‘Barney’ Donaghey was born in Derry in 1882. He began his career playing for Derry Celtic, the main football club in the city, which competed in the Irish League. He later played for Belfast Celtic, the leading team in Ireland at that time, and signed for Manchester United in the 1905/1906 season. He played one international game for Ireland, against Scotland on 9 August 1902.

He fought with the First Battalion of the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers during the First World War. He was wounded in the head by shrapnel and spent time recovering in a hospital in Tanta, Egypt. He wrote a letter home saying that he was recovering and added, ‘The other four soldiers that were beside me were killed. It was an awful sight. I am sure it was the prayers that saved me.’ He was killed on the opening day of the Battle of the Somme, 1 July 1916. His body was never recovered.