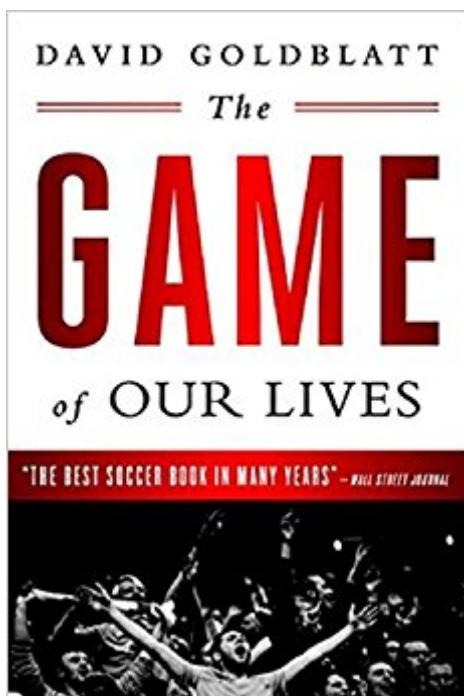


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# The Game Of Our Lives: The English Premier League And The Making Of Modern Britain



## Synopsis

Winner of the 2015 William Hill Sports Book of the Year Award The Game of Our Lives is a masterly portrait of soccer and contemporary Britain. Soccer in the United Kingdom has evolved from a jaded, working-class tradition to a sport at the heart of popular culture, from an economic mess to a booming entertainment industry that has conquered the world. The changes in the game, David Goldblatt shows, uncannily mirror the evolution of British society. In the 1980s, soccer was described as a slum game played by slum people in slum stadiums. Such was the transformation over the following twenty-five years that novelists, politicians, poets, and bankers were all declaring their footballing loyalties. At one point, the Palace let it be known that the queen<sup>1</sup>;like her mother, Prince Harry, the chief rabbi, and the archbishop of Canterbury<sup>1</sup>;was an Arsenal fan. Soccer permeated the national life like little else, an atavistic survivor decked out in New Britain flash, a social democratic game in a cutthroat, profit-driven world. From the goals, to the players, to the managers, to the money, Goldblatt describes how the English Premier League (EPL) was forged in Margaret Thatcher's<sup>39</sup> Britain by an alliance of the big clubs<sup>1</sup>;Arsenal, Liverpool, Manchester United, Chelsea, Tottenham Hotspur<sup>1</sup>;the Football Association, and Rupert Murdoch's<sup>39</sup> Sky TV. Goldblatt argues that no social phenomenon traces the momentous economic, social, and political changes of post-Thatcherite Britain in a more illuminating manner than soccer, and The Game of Our Lives provides the definitive social history of the EPL<sup>1</sup>;the most popular soccer league in the world.

## Book Information

Paperback: 368 pages

Publisher: Nation Books; Reprint edition (November 24, 2015)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1568585160

ISBN-13: 978-1568585161

Product Dimensions: 5.9 x 1 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 12.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.8 out of 5 stars 18 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #37,409 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #14 in Books > Sports & Outdoors > Soccer #15 in Books > Business & Money > Industries > Sports & Entertainment > Sports #34 in Books > Sports & Outdoors > Miscellaneous > History of Sports

## Customer Reviews

Winner of the 2015 William Hill Sports Book of the Year Award; This is a serious, insightful yet compellingly readable book on a subject that affects the lives of everyone in the country, be they football fans or not. • John Gaustad, chairman of the William Hill Sports Book of the Year; Readers curious about why people around the world care so deeply about teams made up of mercenary, millionaire strangers and owned by billionaire businessmen will find some answers in Goldblatt's analysis. • Bill Littlefield, *The Boston Globe* "[Goldblatt] writes about soccer with the expansive eye of a social and cultural critic....[He] has written not just the best soccer book in many years but an exemplary account of the changing character of British society in the post-Thatcher era. • David Runciman, *The Wall Street Journal*; [D]eeply researched and worth the read for anyone who wants to deepen their understanding of both English football, and English society in general. • Men In Blazers, newsletter recommendation

David Goldblatt was born in London in 1965 and lives in Bristol. He shares his affections between Tottenham Hotspur and Bristol Rovers. He is the author of *The Ball is Round: A Global History of Football* and *Futebol Nation: The Story of Brazil Through Soccer*. Since then he has made sport documentaries for BBC Radio, reviewed sports books for the TLS and the Guardian, taught the sociology of sport at Bristol University, the International Centre for Sports History and Culture, De Montfort University, Leicester and Pitzer College, Los Angeles.

I found this very unevenly written, lurching from slangy references ("blokes", "dolly birds", "the never-never") to some paragraphs that seem to require a doctorate in socio-economic theory to make any sense. I think you need to be REALLY interested in the history of English football to wade through it. The chapter dealing with the origins of the clubs in the Premier League was very interesting (although slang-ridden); the other chapters very dry. A better editorial pencil would help (there is no such team as the "Tampa Bay Bucks" in the NFL) and a more consistent stylistic tone to even out the narrative would be welcome. I think Stefan Szymanski's "Soccernomics" (cited in this book) does a much better job of explaining the financial implications of the football world, the Premier League included.

While directed at fans of soccer, it is really probing analysis of English society since the 1990s. I follow soccer because its broadcast in the US the Premier League, but even if you don't care about the sport, or the English version of it, the soccer-related material isn't so dense as to make Goldblatt's commentary inaccessible.

A wonderful introspective look into the relationship behind football and British culture during the modern, so-called "Premier League" era. Goldblatt conveys a thorough understanding of business, fan culture, and on-the-field performance of British teams and how they have been shaped by the post-imperial, globalized Britain of today.

I was a little disappointed in this book. I really enjoyed his hefty global history of soccer, but as others have likely pointed out this one veered to far into the graduate seminar analysis of race/gender/class and has very little fun in it. I am perfectly fine with spending time pondering those questions, but Goldblatt does it here... ponderously... and doesn't offset it with enough enthusiasm for other aspects of the 21st century game. If you want to spend a few hundred pages getting depressed about English football, this is the book.

Informative, structured well, and reflective. All rounder!

Good book at good price

Wonderful.

Interesting perspective on English football, with historical details that made me view the game in a new light. Worth reading, for sure.

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