

## Study Shows Football Held Sway Twenty-Five Centuries

### EDITOR'S NOTE

This history of football was given as a part of the broadcasting program of the University Studio November 18. It was written and delivered by J. W. Searson, of the extension department.

According to Park H. Davis, former Princeton star and member of the national football rules committee, football was played at Sparta, in Greece over 2,500 years ago. The game, as then played, was called in Greek "harpaston" meaning to hurl forward. It was played on a rectangular field with goal lines, similar to our present-day gridiron. The ball was put in play by a long forward pass from a player at the center of the field. Any number of players could take part just so the sides had equal numbers of players. The players could kick, pass, or carry the ball. The opponents could block, tackle, trip or hold. The game usually resolved itself into a rough and tumble scrimmage.

When the Romans conquered Greece, they adopted the Spartan form of football as a sport to make their soldiers bold and hardy. This game was carried into England by the invading Roman armies, where it was

adopted by Britons and Gaels, and where it has flourished for almost twenty centuries.

### English Called Balls "Pigskins"

In England, the first footballs were made from pig's bladders. The ball was oval in shape and called a "pigskin," a name still clinging to our present day manufactured product.

In the poems of Alexander Barclay written four hundred years ago, there is a football poem in which all lovers of the game will be interested. It reads:

"And now in winter when men kill the fat swine,  
They get the bladder and blow it great and thine,  
With many beans and peasen put therein,  
It rattled, soundeth and slimeth, cleere and fayre,  
While it is thrown and caste up in the ayre;  
Each one contendeth and hath a great delight  
With foote and with hande the bladder for to smite;  
And if they fall to the ground they leap up again,  
And this way to labor they count it no payne."

Shakespeare, Chaucer, Isaak Walton, Sir Walter Raleigh and many other noted English writers have given us many clever allusions to this

sport, for many decades a favorite in "Merrie England".

In the quaint old days of football, one town would challenge another which was often miles away. Every citizen was expected to play. The ball was put into play at a mid-way point between the two cities, and the fierce contest would continue often a whole day or until either side landed the ball in the market-place of its opponents.

**Whole Parishes Joined in Sport**  
Similarly, whole parishes joined in the sport and the victors were those who could finally drive the ball against the side of their opponent's church.

Often, ferocious contests were waged between the Scots and the English along the border. In the famous contest in 1515, at Caterhugh, the Earl of Horn led the Men of Yarrow against the Men of Ettrick, who were captained by their Sheriff, Sir Walter Scott who was an ardent lover of the game. Football captain, Sir Walter Scott summoned his men to the contest in the following rhyme:  
"From the brown crest of Newark  
Its summons extending,  
Our signal is waving in smoke  
And in flame,  
And each forester blithe from his

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