

They called it Soccer football!

(a country bump'kin goes to a game)

by Don Conoly



One day my wife Fran came home from work and asked me if I wanted to go to a soccer football game. She works at a local bank and knowed some young men fur some distance, who were from Ireland. They were students at a local college, here to get an eddicate and depluma. Seems they came over on a ship named Scollar to play and study. They invited her to attend one of their games.

Fran said these men came all the way from Ireland just to go to school here and play soccer, and they were unwhapped. Neither she nor I have been to a soccer ball game before and hit ain't to my knowings.

That's the outdoin'est thing I ever heerd. I figured iffen some women were going to let these men beat them up playing football, it's a pussle might be right much goin' to see for myself. It was nearly 'bout the end of their season.

Fran had directions to the game. We had been layin' off goin'. 'Cidin' it weren't inconvenient we took off that Saturday afternoon to the college. We arrived at this great big green pasuture surrounded by a fence. Upon parkin' the car we couldn't find a door to the fence. We were told we couldn't get in from there, that we would have to drive 'round the pasture to the other side. I was sure chawed up, head to foot when I found that out. I got it in head to leave this place, but we 'cided to stay.

We drove 'round to the other side and parked where a right smart of other cars were. We went down some steps to the onliest opening in the fence. We stood there for a breath, awaitin' to pay someone. Nobody never said pea turkey or came to take our money so we walked along armed up and went on inside.

This pasture was about a purty one as I had ever laid eyes on. It was full of green grass that wasn't shoe-mouth deep all nicely cut. The grass had wite lines all straight and neet all over it. Yonder at each end was a big fish net strung up on post. 'Bout midway were rows of benches. On the other side was a nice brick house and two single benches.

I walked over to a drank trailer and asked about paying and was told there was no charge. The lady also gave me a paper, she said it was a program. I told her everwhat you say will be fair, thanked her and we went to set down on the benches. We gut up close to a wite line at the first bench. I fixed me a chaw and cut my eyes at the other people. Fran asked me what do you call yourself a-doin, but I paid no mind to her.

While we were awaitin' for things to began we took a do about the program so as not to give off our ignorance. Many of the people were from furrin places like, Finland, Germany, Ireland, South Africa, and other places I had never even herd tell of. It kinda gave me a case of the all overs as I don't confidance furriners much.

We soon found out sho'-nuff that it wernt going to be a contest of guys and girls, that they played separately. That didn't matter as we was here anyhow and this was goin' to be gooder than grits. I had no more idea than a snake has fleas about soccer and wanted to make a fancy.

On the other side of the pasture many young men came arunnin' ever-whichaways out of both ends of that brick house just a hoopin' and hollerin'. Some were big 'nough to crunch picawns 'tween their

bare toes. They were dressed in different color clothes. Most of them had on shorts with knee socks, but some had on long pants. I guess those with long pants were afraid to show there legs. They all had numbers on their shirts, kinda like prisoners. Several had stripped shirts. The people with stripped shirts had a whistle tied around their neck, and some toted flags in their hands. I reckon that string tied to the whistles was so as if they swallowed it they wouldn't loose'em.

The boss, the least one of all, in the stripped shirt blew his whistle and called a meetin' in the middle of that there pasture, some of the men in both color clothes went to talk to him. He had a face like a tow sack of turnips. Under the boss's arm he toted a black and wite poka dot ball that was about the size of a good size honeydo mellon. Seems that the different color clothes was soas they could tell friend from foe. The home team was dressed in green and the foes was dressed in black. Whilst the meetin' wasa goin' on the friends and fos were backin' and forthin', jumpin', and millin' all over that there pasture, as busy as a barefoot boy in an ant bed. Some spoke a furrin talk. I think they wasa talkin' furrin so as we wouldn't know what they wasa plannin'. The boss tossed somethin' in the air and lost it on the ground but the friends and foes were kind enough and helped him find it.

After a bit the meetin' was over. The boss musta bad mouthed his two foremen and sent them over to the wite lines near the benches. One ran like his feet was on fire and his butt was catchin'. They toted their flags in their hands and whistles in their mouths. The boss then gave that poka dot ball in the middle of that pasture to one of the friends dressed in green, and blew his whistle. Most the friends and foes wasa runnin' about tryin' to get out of each others way. Some wasa just spuddin' 'round. The man with the ball took a few steps and then kicked the devil out of that poka dot ball.

Most of the players then tried to hit the ball with their head. Well, butter my butt and call me a biscuit. I was tie-tongued, and finally told Fran, don't that take the rag off the bush. When the ball landed on the ground they wasa pawin' at the ball with their feet, tryin' to get it from each other. Seamed kinda strange that they weren't using their hands, but I guess the boss told them in the meetin' that they were to keep their hands off his poka dot ball 'less he blew his whistle.

The friends wasa tryin' to joe that thair ball down that meadow by kickin' and pokin' it with their head to the big fishin' net that was guarded by one foe in long pants all hunkerer down. What a site it was to see them jumpin' in the air to poke that ball with their heads. Sometimes that ball was kicked at the foreman on the sides of the meadow. I recon it made him mad as fire, cause when it crossed that there wite line he would blow his whistle and hold up his flag. That would stop the game and he would fotch that ball, give it to the other side and let them hold it with their hands and kick that ball back to their friends. Whilst all this wasa goin' on the headmen of both friends and foes benches wasa shoutin' and pointin' at his people.

This chasin', kickin' and pokin' that poka dot ball went back and forth to the friends and foes fishin' nets. Sometimes whilst pawin' at that ball on the ground someone would get tripped or pushed down. That would make the boss mad 'nuff to bite a spike-nail in two, he would blow his whistle and pick up his ball. He would then take out a pad and write down the name of the person at fault. Sometimes he would take out his pad and go get into a upscuttle with the headman at the benches on the sides of the meadow. When he calmed down he would give his ball back to the other side. Sometimes they would get a chance to try and kick that ball by the guard in long pants into the fishin' net all by themselves.

When the friends did kick that ball into the fishin' net by the guard in long pants the crowd and players comest to hoopin' and hollerin'. Fran would gooch me in the ribs and holler. There was a big sign board on the corner of the meadow that had a big clock in the middle. They put a number 1 under home when the friends got that ball in the fishin' net of the foes. It did not seem fair to just to get a 1 for all the fun they had gettin' that ball in the fishin' net. They ran, fell, and jumped for a long time, 'til the boss thought they needed a rest and he blew his whistle. The friends and foes then ran back in each end of that brick house for a rest.

The people milled about, talkin', and getting drinks from the drank trailer while the rest wasa goin' on. Some was as hongry as a li'l ol' bug in a tater patch. Most was a kindly bunch as some spoke as they passed us by. Some was up-in-g, and threw off on us, but that didn't upsot us as I didn't want to pick a crow with'm. But, I was thinkin' don't you be makin' me open a can o' woop-ass on ya. 'Bout that time I was honin' for a drank too. I asked Fran iffen she was in the notion, I would fetch us one, as the bench sorta makes a feller feel uncomfot. Ahm fixin' ta do dat. Whil'st the rest agoin' on some kids played in the meadow. One boy, as cute as a sack full of puppies, happen to a right bad hurt on his knee and come cryin' to his ma. We had taken a favor to this ixperance and intentioned to come back again. I was thinkin' if things get any better, I might have to hire somebody to help me enjoy it.

15 minutes in and about, the players left out that brick house to light a rag fer the meadow. The foes wasa losin' the game and told each other to keep your dabbers up, as some was in low cotton with a low-rate of themselves. They learned off the happenin', tried to misremember and just as good get jestic. Some foes had the mulligrubs and kicked the ground tryin' to make-do, while others was full of turkey dreams. One was uglier than a lard bucket full of arm pits, bless his heart.

Wunst things take in, the boss blew his whistle again. They had another meetin'. He musta told them we'll get along fine if they will tote fair this part of the game. I figured they got their which-a-ways mixed up, cause they was on the 'rong sides of the pasture. They started all over again, runnin', jumpin', and tryin' to get that poka dot ball into that fishin' net. Fran would call out when she saw her friends come runnin' close by. They was runnin' 'round like a junebug on a hot grittle with grins like a baked 'possum.

After about the boss musta thought they had 'nough and he blew his whistle to stop the game. The local college had beatin' the foes and were still unwhupped. We sure did take a likin' to Soccer and 'cided to come back again. All the people were cutin' the mud fer home.

