1 It’s my club

Background

The first unit covers the basic language students need to talk about football. A teacher may find that the class becomes a little rowdy when the inevitable first question is asked – Which team do you support? – but it’s important to overlook this momentary disorder and instead channel this burst of interest into getting all of the students speaking!

Many students will be used to reading interviews with football players and discussing football with their friends. A conversation will often start with one student saying: “Do you know [name of player]?” What follows is normally a brief description from this student of the player in question, typically something like: He’s from Germany, he’s 22 years old, he’s left footed, he’s a striker. This unit covers some of this basic description, which is then expanded upon in Unit 6.

This unit lets teachers make their students feel like professional players. Just as football can be an excellent subject for engaging students to begin with, seeming to elevate your students to the level of professional football players can be really beneficial to their learning.

Jargon buster

bench n seat/s where substitutes sit during a match

by-line n line that extends to the corners from each goal post. When a defending player touches the ball last before it crosses this line, a corner is awarded to the attacking team

central defender n (also centre-back, centre-half) player whose primary function is to prevent opposition players from attacking, and especially from scoring a goal

centre circle n ensures that opposition players keep a distance of at least ten yards from the ball at kick-off and restarts

corner n way of restarting the game in favour of the attacking team when a defending player touches the ball last before it crosses the goal line anywhere outside the posts, or above the crossbar
corner flag n there are four corner flags, used to demarcate the corners of the (rectangular) pitch

foul n unfair act committed by one player against an opponent which results in the offending player’s team being penalised (also v).

gaffer n (also boss) term denoting respect that is used by players and staff when referring to or addressing the manager

goalkeeper n (also keeper or goalie) a player who represents the last line of defence between the opposing attacking players and his own team’s goal; his main responsibility is to prevent the opposition scoring a goal; he is the only player who is allowed to control the ball with his hands in open play

goal line n line between the posts of the goal; when the ball crosses the goal line a goal is awarded

halfway line n line which divides the pitch into two (equal) halves

head v to voluntarily make contact with the ball with the head

kick v to strike the ball with the foot

left-back / right-back n traditionally players in holding wide positions in defence, though they are also expected to be involved in attacking moves in modern football

left-footed adj describes a player who predominantly uses his left foot to kick the ball, as opposed to his right

linesman n one of the referee’s assistants in controlling a match; traditionally stands on the sideline

manager n person responsible for running a football club or a national team

Man on! instruction used to warn a player in possession of the ball that there is an approaching opposition player behind him

midfielder n playing position between a team’s defenders and attacking players

nil n score of zero goals in a match

pass v to give the ball to a team-mate (also n)

penalty area n (also eighteen-yard box) area extending between the goal line and the lines extending eighteen yards from it; its main function is to show the area in which a goalkeeper can handle the ball (with his hands), and the area in which a foul or handball by a defender usually results in a penalty kick

penalty spot n spot located 12 yards (10.97m) from the goal line; penalties are taken from here when the defending team are penalised for an infringement such as a physical foul or handball inside the penalty area

pitch n rectangular field on which football is played
referee *n* person responsible for presiding over a football match

shin pads *n* item of protective equipment worn on the front of the player’s shin, beneath the socks, to prevent injury to the player

shoot *v* to kick the ball in an attempt to score a goal

sideline *n* (also touchline) longer side of the rectangular pitch; when a player causes the ball to cross this line, a throw-in is awarded in favour of the opposing team

six-yard box *n* small box inside the penalty area from which goal kicks are taken

striker *n* attacking player whose main responsibility is to score goals. Most teams play with one, or two strikers; playing with three or more strikers is unusual

supporter *n* fan, or follower, of a team

tackle *v* means of dispossessing an opponent of the ball, or of preventing an opponent from gaining ground (also *n*)

Activity assistant

1. After the students have completed the table at the top of page 7, tell them to imagine that you are a journalist, they are professional footballers, and that you want to interview them. Use the categories from the table to form your questions. You can also add some more questions about the students’ likes and dislikes in order that everybody has a chance to introduce themselves to the group.

2. Then ask the students to interview you about your football “career.” This is a good opportunity for the students to open up and there is a good chance that the worse a footballer you tell them you are, the funnier the students will find this activity.

3. Explain the expression ’man on’ to the students (*Did you know?* page 7). Then ask two students to come to the front of the class and stand a few feet apart. Explain to them that you want them to close their eyes and that you will walk towards one of them only but that you will not tell them which one. If one of the students senses that you are approaching him/her, he/she must shout “man on!” If the student is right, he/she can sit down again, and you can invite another student up. If the student guesses wrong, he/she must stay standing while the other student takes their seat again. Don’t actually go any closer than a couple of feet to any of the students. It is a light-hearted game but students tend not to forget the term ’man on!’ after this game.

4. Write a series of football scores on the board in the classroom. Ask the students to take turns reading the football results. Make sure that they pay attention to the information in the *Did you know?* box on page 8.

5. With reference to the image of Cristiano Ronaldo on page 11, ask the students to make two lists: one of the parts of the body they use when they play football, the other of parts they don’t use when they play
football. Use follow-up questions to find out when they use each part of the body during the game, or why they don’t use other parts.