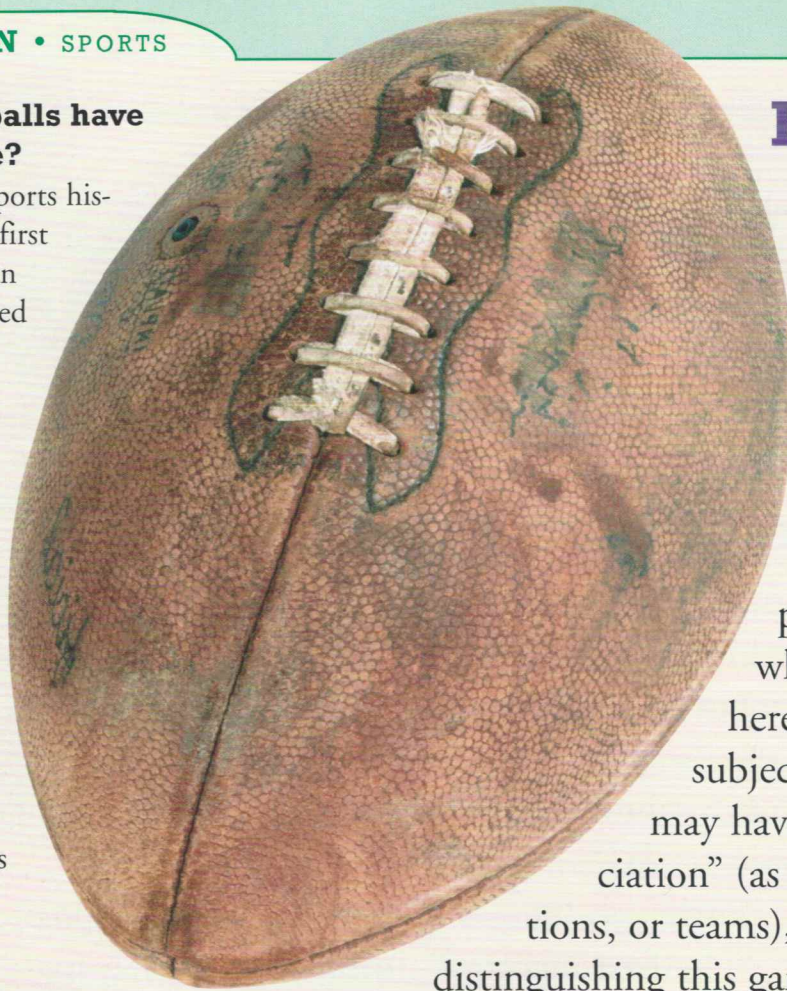


### WHY do footballs have an oval shape?

According to sports historians, the very first game of American football was played with a perfectly round ball. However, teams soon adopted the oval-shaped ball used in European rugby, because it was easier to hold onto while running and didn't squirt away from the action as easily as a round ball.

### WHY are football players called "quarterbacks" and "halfbacks?"

The quarterback-halfback-fullback system was invented by Walter Camp, the "father of American football," in the late 19th century. Camp named players based on their positions behind the line of scrimmage: the fullback was all the way back, the halfback half as close as the fullback, and the quarterback half as close as the halfback. Today, you can find halfbacks, fullbacks, and quarterbacks all over the field, but the names have stuck.



### HOW was football invented?

American football evolved from the English game of rugby—a sport that itself evolved from plain old football, which we call soccer here. While we're on the subject, the word "soccer" may have evolved from "association" (as in football associations, or teams), as a way of distinguishing this game from American football. Confused yet? (Oddly enough, American football doesn't have all that much to do with feet, except during punts, field goals and kickoffs.)

The American version of football became popular as a collegiate sport in the mid-18th century. By 1873, four universities—Rutgers and Princeton in New Jersey, Columbia in New York, and Yale in Connecticut—met to standardize the rules, setting team size at 11 players and field length at 100 yards. Other innovations followed—for example, the "down" system wasn't adopted until 1882, and there was no such thing as fourth down until 1912!

