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Honorable Mention

The World's Favorite Sport

It was 2014 and Brazil was hosting the World Cup. Brazil and Germany were playing against each other in the semifinals. In the first six minutes Brazil gave up four goals. Brazil tried to fight back against Germany but they couldn't score. The first half ended and the Brazilian team strategized at halftime. The game started again and Brazil fought to put the ball in the goal but they failed miserably. There were less than 30 minutes left and Germany scored another goal. Brazil started to lose their confidence and let Germany score two more goals. The score was seven to zero. Brazil prayed that they would be able to score. While they gave all the energy they had left, they were able to score only one goal which wasn't enough to win the game. The buzzer blew and Brazil suffered a major defeat against Germany on their home field. One reporter who attended the game stated, "It's a bizarre experience, watching as an entire nation have a collective breakdown before your eyes" (Brassleay).

The modern game of soccer originated in Britain in the 18th and 19th centuries. Although many different forms of soccer have been here since 2500 B.C., the Greeks, Egyptians, and Chinese all had their own version of this game. Some versions allowed the use of hands or sticks to move the ball. In England soccer started as a game called folk football. Two very large teams would play against each other. This game soon became too violent because it was unstructured without many rules. Folk football turned into the modern game of soccer we know today. By the 1800's the rules of soccer were established and soccer clubs at schools started to form. It was in 1848 that the Cambridge Rules were written at Cambridge University. These new rules combined all the different variations of soccer into one set of rules everyone could follow. This defined what the world know as modern soccer.

The World Cup is hosted every four years in a different country. It is similar to the Olympics but only for soccer. The first World Cup started on July 18th 1930 and was hosted by Uruguay. There have been 21 tournaments in the past 88 years. Sixteen countries have hosted the World Cup since 1930. Germany, Italy, France and Mexico have all hosted the World Cup more than once. Only eight countries have won the world cup, Brazil has won five times.

Soccer has become very popular all around the world because of the World Cup. According to fifa.com, "Over the past 25 years football has enhanced its status as the world's leading game, reaching into other branches of society, commerce and politics. Football, more than any other factor, has enveloped whole regions, people and nations." ("History"). The world cup has helped connect many different people. Watching the World Cup has helped bring friends and family together. This sporting event has helped bring nations together and increased their sense of national pride and unity as they cheer for their country's team. The popularity increase

has created a higher interest in playing soccer. About 270 million people around the world play soccer. In the U.S. alone over three million youth are registered to play soccer. This number has increased by 89% since 1990.

Soccer and the World Cup has had a big influence on the world. World Cup games have historical significance for some countries and has brought nations closer together. The next world will be in 2022 and is hosted in Qatar. Who will you be rooting for?