Advertisement

The Economic History Review / Volume 35, Issue 4 / pp. 549-567

The Economics of a Sports Industry: Scottish Gate-Money Football, 1890–1914[1]

WRAY VAMPLEW

First published: November 1982

https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0289.1982.tb01215.x

[1] I am grateful to Flinders University and the A.R.G.C. for financial assistance, to the Scottish Football Association for access to their records, and to John Hutchinson for permission to use material from his unpublished work on the Heart of Midlothian F.C. I am especially grateful to Peter Bilsborough, Physical Recreation Department, University of Stirling for the unselfish provision of data from his graduate research. Useful comments came from Owen Covick, Charles Korr, and the discussants at the 1980 Conference of the Australian and New Zealand Economic History Association, Canberra. All references to Club prospectuses, financial statements, and shareholders are based on information filed at the Companies Registry, Edinburgh for live companies and the Scottish Record Office, Edinburgh for defunct enterprises.

PDF

This website utilizes technologies such as cookies to enable essential site functionality, as well as for analytics, personalization, and targeted advertising. You may change your settings at any time or accept the default settings. You may close this banner to continue with only essential cookies. Privacy Policy

Manage Preferences

Accept All

Reject Non-Essential

The Economics of a Sports Industry: Scottish Gate-Money Football, 1890-1914[1]

By WRAY VAMPLEW

In 1708 the "common people of Scotland" were described as being "addicted" to the game of football.[2] Two centuries did little to change their attitude, and a knowledgeable commentator, writing in 1906, maintained that "the enthusiasm of the Scot for the Association game is without parallel in any race for any particular sport or pastime".[3] Football itself, however, had changed. The earlier game had been unorganized, violent, wide-ranging in time and space, and held irregularly. By the late nineteenth century two authorities, the Scottish Football Association (S.F.A.) and the Scottish Football League (S.F.L.), were organizing the game and setting rules as to its conduct, and matches were being played regularly on defined pitches with a prescribed time limit. The main difference, though, was that the earlier folk-football had been essentially for the participants whereas the new football was, at its highest level, geared towards the paying spectator: only 22 were allowed to play, but there could be thousands watching them. Football had become part of the mass-entertainment industry. As one sports journal put it: "Scottish football cannot be described as anything else than a big business".[4]

A study of Scottish football in this later period can contribute to two major debates. One is the controversy over the standard of entrepreneurship in late nineteenth-century Britain. Although British entrepreneurs have been criticized for failing to develop new industries sufficiently, the critical literature rarely mentions the emergence of the leisure industries.[5] Yet the post-1870 years witnessed a significant increase in sports spectatorship. A substantial rise in working-class spending power, growing urbanization, and a concentration of free-time into Saturday afternoons all encouraged the marketing of gate-money sport. Indeed commercialized sport for the masses was one of the

[1] I am grateful to Flinders University and the A.R.G.C. for financial assistance, to the Scottish Football Association for access to their records, and to John Hutchinson for permission to use material from his unpublished work on the Heart of Midlothian F.C. I am especially grateful to Peter Bilsborough, Physical Recreation Department, University of Stirling for the unselfish provision of data from his graduate research. Useful comments came from Owen Covick, Charles Korr, and the discussants at the 1980 Conference of the Australian and New Zealand Economic History Association, Canberra. All references to Club prospectuses, financial statements, and shareholders are based on information filed at the Companies Registry, Edinburgh for live companies and the Scottish Record Office, Edinburgh for defunct enterprises.

This website utilizes technologies such as cookies to enable essential site functionality, as well as for analytics, personalization, and targeted advertising. You may change your settings at any time or accept the default settings. You may close this banner to continue with only essential cookies. Privacy Policy

Manage Preferences

Accept All

Reject Non-Essential

Download PDF

ABOUT WILEY ONLINE LIBRARY

Privacy Policy
Terms of Use
About Cookies
Manage Cookies
Accessibility
Wiley Research DE&I Statement and Publishing Policies

HELP & SUPPORT

Contact Us
Training and Support
DMCA & Reporting Piracy
Sitemap

OPPORTUNITIES

Subscription Agents
Advertisers & Corporate Partners

CONNECT WITH WILEY

The Wiley Network
Wiley Press Room

Copyright © 1999-2026 John Wiley & Sons, Inc or related companies. All rights reserved, including rights for text and data mining and training of artificial intelligence technologies or similar technologies.

WILEY

This website utilizes technologies such as cookies to enable essential site functionality, as well as for analytics, personalization, and targeted advertising. You may change your settings at any time or accept the default settings. You may close this banner to continue with only essential cookies. Privacy Policy

Manage Preferences
Accept All
Reject Non-Essential