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**Finland: Civic activities, growing participation, diversification, and professionalisation**

**Hannu Itkonen, University of Jyväskylä, Finland; Arto Nevala, University of Eastern Finland; Mihaly Szerovay, University of Jyväskylä**

Football arrived in Finland with English seamen in the late nineteenth century. Although Finland engaged in international football as early as the 1912 Olympic Games in Stockholm, football did not become a popular national game. The Football Association of Finland (FAF) emphasised that football should be developed according to amateur principles. Between the World Wars, football had to fight with the Finnish version of baseball (pesäpallo) for living space. Football has been a sport of the cities and urban areas and spread to the countryside slowly. Nevertheless, unlike in other sport domains with a split between non-socialist and workers' sport movements until the 1990s, the FAF united the political sides from the 1940s. The well-functioning civic sector, the agricultural economic structure, the slow urbanisation, and the lack of facilities prevented the emergence of market-oriented professional football. While football is the largest sport as measured by the number of players, this has not been transformed into international success or growth in attendance. Consequently, Finland has undergone modernisation and nation-building processes without any significant addition from football. In the 1970s, the commercial sector began to gain relevance in the sport environment. The men's league was set up in 1989 and the women's league was established in 2006. While these point to the differentiation in the sports landscape, no considerable football business has evolved; even today, elite football is characterised by various levels of semi-professionalism. International games at all levels as well as increasing player migration have bound Finland more closely to the global football system.

**Keywords:** football, Finland, Nordic country, civic society, professionalisation