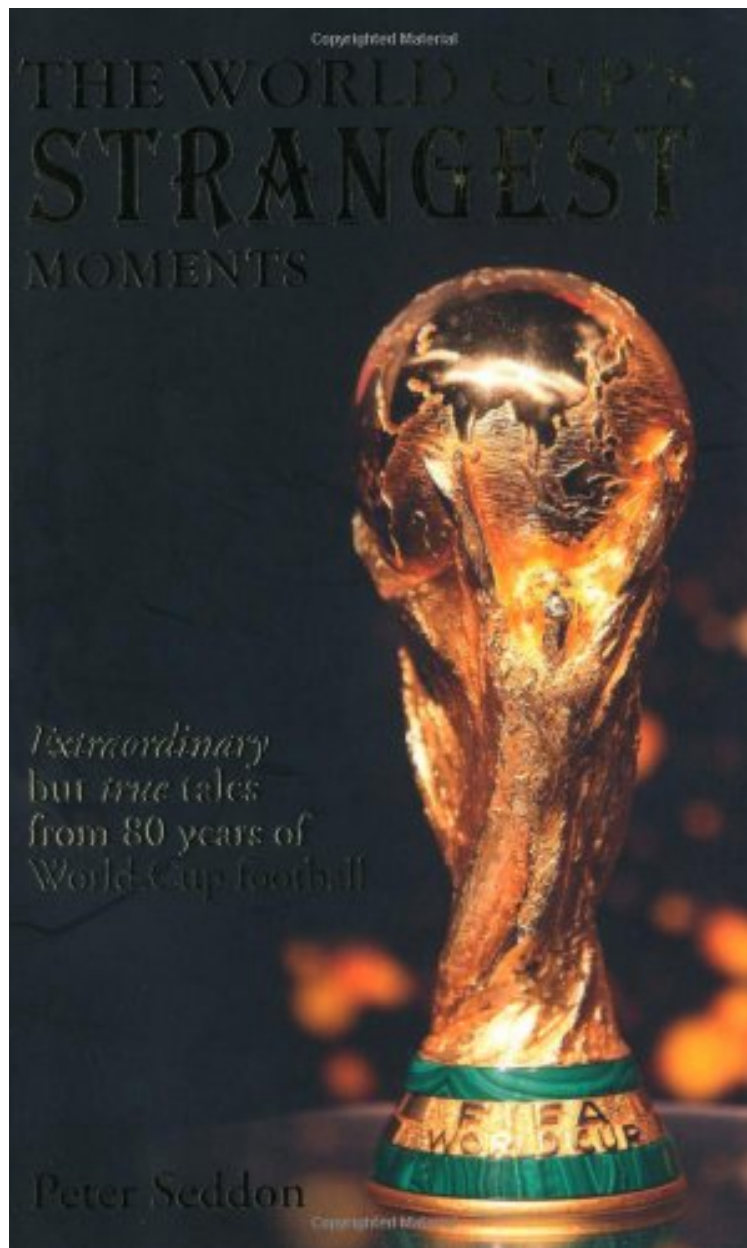


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## The World Cup's Strangest Moments: Extraordinary But True Tales from 80 Years of World Cup Football (Strangest series)

*Peter Seddon*

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all praised *The World Cup's Strangest Moments: Extraordinary But True Tales from 80 Years of World Cup Football* (Strangest series):

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Proof that Scotland is the world's greatest team? Maybe not. By Peter Durward Harris

The first essential thing to point out is that this book is not, and was not meant to be, a definitive history of the World Cup. As the author points out, that story has been told elsewhere. Nevertheless, this book will remind you of a lot of that history, very likely including some episodes that you won't find in those other books, especially if the first event they cover is Uruguay 1930. The first official World Cup, as any football (soccer) fan knows, began in 1930, but this book begins in 1888 with Renton FC. After beating West Bromwich Albion at Hampden Park, Renton (a club that went out of business in 1922) claimed to be champions of the UK and the world, and a trophy supporting their claim can still be seen at the Scottish Football Museum. Renton FC certainly secured their place in history before their long decline into ultimate oblivion. From such strange beginnings, this book covers so many strange episodes in World Cup history, ending (in this edition) with the dubious goal that enabled France to reach the 2010 finals at the expense of Ireland. In between, the book covers the tragedies that ended in death and does them justice, but mostly covers the amusing and/or controversial episodes, covering the qualifying events as well as the finals, and also covering the off-field episodes such as Bobby Moore and the jewellery that he was alleged to have stolen. That episode was never fully explained but was very likely a set-up. Inevitably, matches involving England or Scotland are well represented, including some that fans of those teams wish they could forget, such as the infamous Hand of God in 1986 and the famous Norwegian commentary from 1981 after Norway beat England for the first time ever. David James will never be allowed to forget Mavis the donkey, nor will Graham Poll be allowed to forget his failure to send a player off after issuing two yellow cards. Scotland's humiliations in the 1974 and 1978 finals when they were expected to put up good shows. At least Scotland qualified for them, but England's failure to qualify in the infamous 1973 Wembley match against Poland is covered here too. Much more entertaining for Scotland fans is their claim to be 1967 world champions, based on them being the first team to beat England after 1966. It is used here as a basis for explaining the unofficial football world championship, in which somebody took the Scotland-England match of 1872 as a starting point and used the 1967 idea to trace the holder all the way through to the modern era. Counting points for each victory as title holder, it seems that Scotland have a comfortable lead in the standings, so proving that Scotland are the great team in football history. Well, it shows that you can prove anything if you set your mind to it. Of course there is plenty of coverage of other countries across the world, both big names and less successful football nations - the unexpected triumphs and defeats, the gallant losers, the bad decisions and anything else that helped to make the World Cup the major international event that it has become. The book pours much scorn on the early events from the thirties and their difficulty in attracting teams, but there were good reasons for that. First, it was a fledgling event trying to establish a reputation. Second, the thirties were a bad decade in which to set up such an event because the world's economies were in bad shape. Third, long distance travel was very different then, being mostly limited to ships and trains. Some of the early stories are hilarious, but it is easy to forget the context. I've read several books in the series covering various sports and some other themes, and this one is well up to the standard I have come to expect. Occasionally tragic but mostly amusing, it provides great reading for anybody who has even a passing interest in football.

Find out how a dog called Pickles helped the Football Association, why an England captain was arrested by Colombian police, where the Mexican wave really started, why the German fans taunted the Dutch with cheesy insults, and which defender was shot for scoring an own goal. With stories from every single tournament since the inaugural contest for the Jules Rimet trophy in 1930 right up to the present day, this end-to-end collection of amusing, bizarre, and shocking true stories is filled with dodgy refs, eccentric mascots, and manic managers.

About the Author Peter Seddon is also the author of *A Football Compendium*, *The Law's Strangest Cases*, and *Tennis's Strangest Matches*.