

# Play Soccer with Pelé

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## Introduction



Now and then I stop to think. I think of people, the world which surrounds us and God. Are we what people say we are? I sometimes think that I am not the man that people say I am. I am sure of one thing - I am not alone. I owe what I am today to many people. They all, in their different ways, taught me something.

I only became what I am today because I was helped, encouraged, advised, taught, stimulated and criticized.

With this book, in which the subjects are by no means fully dealt with, I hope repay a little of that which others have given me.

I hope that this answers the question which has been asked by so many people - "Pelé, why are you writing a book?" I have accepted the ball that was passed to me and I have taken it a little bit further through my personal experience which has lasted seventeen years. In this way I am trying to give the future generations, especially the young who are just starting to love life and sports, a sort of inheritance of soccer technique. This will include basic moves in soccer such as passing, kicking, 'killing the ball', heading, etc.

I don't believe there is such a thing as a 'born' soccer player. Perhaps you are born with certain skills and talents, but quite frankly it seems impossible to me that one is actually born to be an ace soccer player. Success is no accident. It is hard work, perseverance, learning, studying, sacrifice and most of all, love of what you are doing or learning to do. It is because of this that I decided to help youngsters with my experience. That's why this book exists.

To help me pass on my experience to you I have received a great deal of assistance from photographers, designers, editors, experts in lay-out and production, colleagues, distributors and others. But the most important person is

you, for whom this book has been created. In life none of us is alone. We are always part of a team and each one has his own special function. Every individual is important.

Perhaps some of you will be disappointed not to find many new ideas in this manual. Soccer is a sport which consists of simple ingredients. We often forget this simplicity. This book is about the fundamental components of the game. This simplicity helped me to understand soccer.

Although we do not know the actual origin of soccer, we do know certain things about its history. The game as it is today evolved very gradually and a form of soccer is said to have been played many centuries before Christ. In China a game resembling soccer existed as long as 2500 B.C.. Egyptian pictures show people playing a game like soccer. But it was actually in Greece that a definite game began which eventually had a name - Spiskiros.

Soccer officially arrived in Brazil in 1894. It was introduced by Charles Miller, a Brazilian of English parentage. There is no need to tell you that soccer spread in Brazil and throughout the rest of the world. Neither I who was playing, nor those original founders of soccer, could have imagined that 800 million would see the memorable game between Brazil and Italy in the 1970 World Cup Final! More people today play this universal game than any other sport. It is because of this that I have been given the opportunity of traveling to every corner of the world.

I now want to share with you the experience I have gained from these marvelous seventeen years. The most important thing I have learned is that essentially sport is the best medium through which we can communicate. I saw the world because of soccer and got to know things and, more important, I got to know people. All these people that I have met have made me have faith in the future of mankind. I believe that one day we will be able to unite in a team, a greater team called humanity.

It seems that the Romans, when conquering Greece, learned the game and brought it back to Rome and called it Harpastum. In the Middle Ages the game appeared in France in the provinces of Brittany and Normandy under the name of Soule, in which they used a ball stuffed with bran or hay. It was an extremely violent game which allowed kicking, tripping up and even punching. Even today there are a lot of players who think they are playing Soule! A little later in the Middle Ages a game called Calcio began in Italy and this name is still used for soccer by many Italians. The skillful sport which we know today really began in the 19th century.

It was in England that modern soccer originated. At the beginning there was rather a lot of confusion and much discussion between those in favor of soccer played with the hands - rugby - and soccer played with the feet. The issue was settled in 1863, when those supporting the game played with the feet founded The Football Association to standardize the rules which have been followed ever since. The other group created Rugby Union, thereby finally separating the two games in 1871. From then on both sports began to develop and attract more supporters.

The Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) was founded in 1904. FIFA had the task of supervising the structure and administration of a sport which was beginning to spread throughout the world. The International Board set the rules of the game which cannot be changed without the approval of all the countries belonging to FIFA. In 1920 soccer was included in the Olympic games in Antwerp, Belgium and in 1930 the first World Cup was won by Uruguay.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jason Stale". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, stylized initial 'J'.

1974

## Presentation

We expect you already know that Pelé was born on the 23rd of October, 1940 in Tres Coracoes, Minas Gérias. He spent his childhood in the city of Bauru, the state of Sao Paulo. In 1956 he came to Santos where his trainer was Waldemar de Brito. Two years later, when he was only seventeen years old, he was



awarded the World Cup winner's medal. And you all know what happened after that. Pelé became the greatest athlete in the world and most talented of all soccer players. Up until now he has broken all the records in soccer and if all his successes were written down they would fill an encyclopedia.

In spite of all this, Pelé himself hasn't changed. He is the same simple and unaffected boy that he was the day he arrived at Santos.

"If you weren't Pelé, King of Soccer, what great man would you like to be?" a reporter once asked him.

"Dondinho, my father" Pelé replied.

That's the way Pelé is, and that is why he is the man most admired and liked in Brazil. He has also said: "Everything that I have seen and learned in my life has convinced me that we are equal and all brothers."

Will there ever be another Pelé? We believe that is almost impossible because Pelé is a marvelous combination of man, athlete and genius.

So we are inviting you to come with us into the wonderful world of Pelé. Come and play with him.

# 1 - Controlling the Ball

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I'm going to tell you how I learned to control the ball. It took me some time to understand that the ball has a profound relationship with the man. Because it is round the ball is the most simple and perfect shape, not only geometrically, but also it feels perfect. When we hold a ball we can move our hands over its surface without finding any resistance or surprises. There are no angles and because it is round one's hands are always the same distance from its center of gravity. I hope you won't ignore this fact, because the more we understand what things are, the more we will realize how they work. The same relationship exists between the hand and the ball as between the foot and the ball. Though of course the relationship between your feet and the ball is more complicated because they cannot actually grasp it. So you must use the top, the inside, outside and even the underneath of your foot to control the ball. We can also use the heel, knee, thigh, chest, shoulder and head to dominate this round object which seems to defy and even play tricks on us.

You've probably already noticed that when someone sees a ball rolling towards them their immediate reaction is to give it a great kick to send it as far off as possible. Then they start running after the ball as if they wanted to apologize to it! Before I learned how to control the ball, I remember that I too wanted to kick it as far as possible without bothering to think how or where. We only have to see it rolling, flying or bouncing and we want to play with it. If we want to play soccer, then it's obvious that the first thing to learn is how to control the ball and thereby control the direction in which we kick it.

It's essential to treat the ball as if it were your friend. To learn to control it, put it on the ground, look straight at it and it seems to ask you to come and play. Your

body must be well balanced and your muscles relaxed. Then gently place your foot on top of the ball and roll it back, trying to lift the ball from the ground and putting your toe under it. The longer you keep the ball under your control, the better. In order to keep your balance, bend forward and keep your arms up, slightly bent and relaxed, just a little below the line of your shoulders.



Use the knee of your support leg as a spring. The controlling foot should always aim at the center of the ball. Keep the ball bouncing by using the flexibility of your ankle. Look straight at the ball as if you were hypnotizing it. Your movements and balance should vary according to the position of the ball. Look away only for a moment and you will lose it, because you haven't paid it enough attention. Always stay together. Mark out a circle with a radius of two meters and then try to practice without allowing the ball to leave the circle. If you can keep it bouncing twenty times without it touching the ground, you're off to a great start. Don't forget to repeat the whole thing with your other foot. A good player must know how to control the ball with both feet.

Next you should try to control the ball with your thigh, then your head and even with your shoulders. With a lot of practice you can develop various combinations, such as flicking the ball from your foot to the knee up to your head and from there back to your foot, etc. You will soon discover that the more you practice the more you will be able to do. Another bit of advice: you will only learn what you have practiced because practicing is the only way of learning. If you make a mistake, don't be discouraged. Think about why it went wrong; work out how to correct the fault and then try again. The more you do it the quicker and better you'll become.

You'll also be learning other things at the same time, such as your own limitations. Never think that you know everything—we are always finding out something new. If you haven't got a ball, it's possible to learn even with an orange, or a ball made of rolled up stockings or newspaper. I've even seen people practicing their control of the ball with a box of matches! This first lesson is very important because controlling the ball is the basis of what comes next.



## 2 - The Pass

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It's very likely that you've learned at school about the different ways of communicating. The radio, telephone, newspapers, magazines, books, cinema, television, road, rail and river are means which men use to communicate with each other. In soccer the pass is a form of communication, transmission, participation, a link or contact. By passing, the players communicate with each other, bringing the ball from their defense area up into attack. The better the communication, the better are the chances of a successful team. Do you know why? Soccer is a team game. There are eleven players working together and that's why the original name of this sport is association soccer. The eleven players are like partners; they help each other with the aim of scoring more goals than the other team and, therefore, winning the game.

As there is only one ball on the pitch and only the person who is in possession of it can score a goal, the pass is a method of keeping the ball with your team. I hope you've already realized that the pass is the most simple and safe way of your whole side working towards a common end, and this is the case with all team ball games.



There are many ways of passing the ball. The simplest is the pass with the inside of the foot. This is also the most efficient because the area of contact between the foot and the ball is larger, which enables one to be more precise. For a longer pass you should use the top of the foot because the impact is stronger. The outside of the foot can be used for passes and diagonal kicks, especially when

you are in possession of the ball with an opponent right in front of you and your team-mate to your side. It is possible to pass with your heel, knee, head or even your shoulder. But some of these should only be used in an emergency. There is also what we call an overhead pass. This should be done when your team-mate is well behind the opponent. To execute this pass you should stab at the ball with the toe striking underneath the stationary or rolling ball in front of you, so it rises sharply and sails over your opponent's head and lands in front of your colleague. Passing with the shoulder is a neat trick. Use the shoulder opposite to the side on which your team-mate is running. Turn your body briskly and keep your arms down.

About now you're probably asking-and what about the wall pass? I'll try to explain it. The wall pass is one of the quickest and most perfect tactics in soccer. The player who is running with the ball avoids a tackle from an opponent by passing to a stationary or running team-mate, who acts as a wall by bouncing the ball back to the player who has now run clear. The second player has to calculate, in a split-second, the weight and direction to give the ball and anticipate exactly where his teammate will end his run. If we had to make a geometric drawing of the wall pass it would form a perfect triangle.



Another important tactic is the curved pass, which is used to get the ball to a team-mate when the way is blocked by members of the other side. To curve the ball, use either the inside or outside of the foot, depending on whether you want the ball to curl round to the left or right. Kick the side of the ball to make it spin like a top, thereby achieving the desired curve. Have you ever heard of the 'radar' pass? In this one you pass the ball without even seeing your team-mate as you have your back to him. You judge his position only by the sound of his voice. For

a successful radar pass you really must know your team and the size of the pitch extremely well. This may seem very difficult to you, as it did to me when I started, but with constant practice you'll eventually find that it's not too complicated. You can practice some of the passes against a wall. And don't forget to practice each pass with your left foot as much as with your right.

Now do the same again, but this time with a few friends, always trying to do better. It's also important to notice the position of your support foot (that's the one that isn't kicking the ball). For a low pass, the support foot should be parallel to the ball, right next to it. For a high or long pass, place your foot by the side of the ball but a little further back. Another detail which you shouldn't forget: it is the foot and knee of the supporting leg which give the ball direction. The toe and knee of your support leg must be pointing directly at your target, that is the friend to whom you are passing. This really works and after training it becomes absolutely automatic. Before ending this lesson, there are one or two important things I'd like to tell you about. Firstly, look for the position of your team-mates *before* passing.

Secondly, the pass is not only made by the player with the ball, but also by the one who is going to receive it. Do you understand? I'll explain. The ball cannot be passed while the other player is being marked. Only he can dodge his opponents and get into a free space. So it is the player to whom the pass is made who makes it possible. The pass, like the whole game, is team work. Thirdly, and this is my last piece of advice on this subject, when your team-mate is running into a free space, don't pass directly to him, because when the ball arrives he won't be there any more. You have to work out the speed and direction of the other player and of the ball so they will both arrive at the same place at the same time, without him having to slow down. If a rocket was pointed directly at the moon at the time of launching it would miss its target completely after it had traveled that distance! A moon shot has to be calculated with absolute precision. Such precision and training are also essential in soccer.



### **3 - The Header**

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In this third lesson I'm going to try and explain how I headed the ball that scored the first goal for Brazil in the World Cup Final in Mexico. I expect you remember that goal and how thrilled I was when I saw the ball in the Italian net. All that joy wouldn't have been possible if I hadn't been prepared by constant training and if I hadn't learned some of the finer points of heading. I have already explained that you should ask 'why' something is before 'how' to do it. The first thing I tried to do was to understand the fundamental laws of heading. I expect you've heard of the law of gravity. I hope you also know about the force of inertia.



The two forces of gravity and inertia are combined in the leap for the header. The force of inertia is utilized by the leap upwards and gravity prevents the body from rising too high. The more powerful the leap, the higher you'll go. So the force of inertia helps you rise to the ball and, having headed the ball, the force of gravity pulls you back to the ground again. In time you will be able to judge just how high and at what moment you should jump for the ball. So practice leaping in the air and if you thrust down one or both arms quickly you'll gain just a bit more height, which might make all the difference when defending or trying to score a goal. The header must be taken on the fore head and never with the top of your head. Never shut your eyes when heading. By keeping them open you are able to see

the ball coming and where you want to send it. So head with your forehead, keeping your eyes open and your mouth shut in case of any accident like biting your tongue.

To increase the power of your header, you should lean backwards and then thrust your body forward very quickly and vigorously at the moment of impact so the work isn't only done by your neck muscles. The movement of the body backwards is slower than the explosive thrust forward. This can be practiced at first without a ball and later on with one. First practice the header while standing and then jumping.



Don't forget that heading is as important as passing when it comes to defending or scoring. Unfortunately there are many Brazilian footballers who just do not know how to head the ball. Perhaps it's because of inadequate training or maybe they do not realize how important heading is in football. For this reason start practicing and trying to understand the basic principles of heading as soon as you possibly can.

A good header can get your attack going. Heading really does speed up the game. By using your head you don't have to waste precious seconds for the ball to reach the ground so you can kick it. During a game the opportunity of heading occurs very frequently. You can head the ball while you're standing, running or jumping. The ball can be headed forwards, sideways or backwards; at different heights -upwards, level or down. You can also try a diving header. Don't be frightened of this one because if you do it correctly you can't get hurt. Use your forehead because the ball doesn't hurt the front of your head. In a diving header you must know how to protect yourself with your arms when you fall to prevent a nasty accident. You'll be able to do this with practice, training with and without the ball, alone or with friends.

At first you should learn how to head the ball forwards while standing still, running and lumping. Having mastered this technique, it's time to learn others. It's essential to keep practicing because the act of heading is a coordinated movement which uses nearly every muscle in your body. If you are learning how to jump and head the ball, don't forget that you shouldn't only use your stronger leg to push you off the ground but the other one as well. Learn to push with the left foot and the right. If you push with the right leg, bend your left knee to increase your thrust upwards. Sometimes you'll have to use both feet to push off with for the jump, whether standing or running. When you push off with both feet the arms help to achieve the whole movement by adding to the lift of the body. Just before your feet leave the ground extend your relaxed arms behind you. Then, at the moment you leap, thrust your arms forward and upwards. This will add momentum to your jump. Practice these tactics and you'll be able to reach that high ball. I expect you now know how I managed to head that goal against Italy. If it hadn't been for my training and all the tips I picked up through observation, study and advice from experts and more experienced players, I am sure I'd never have been able to head that ball into goal.

## 4 - The Kick

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The basic principles of kicking are similar to those of passing, except that the player must be even more in control of the power he puts behind it and, when shooting, the angle of the ball's flight and the direction in which it goes. There are many styles of kicking, but basically they are the same and very simple. The leg that does the kicking is less important than your supporting leg which allows the other one to swing at the right angle. For example, if the foot of your support leg is behind the ball, the ball will tend to rise. On the contrary, when the support foot is next to the ball, the ball will stay low or at knee level. When, by mistake, the support foot is in front of the ball, the power of the shot will be reduced and the ball will probably hit the ground and ricochet. So the angle of the flight of the ball is determined by the position of the support foot in relation to the line of the ball, that is an imaginary line running through the center of the ball, whether it is in motion or not.



The direction of the kick is also determined by the position of the foot and knee of the support leg at the moment your boot hits the ball.

When you are kicking the ball to another player, the foot and knee of the support leg must point towards your target. Practice these two basic principles until they become automatic. The position of your

body is also important. For a medium height or low kick your shoulder should be directly above your supporting foot and knee with your body leaning slightly forward. For a high ball, especially a goal kick, your body should be lightly leaning backwards with your

shoulder behind the supporting foot and knee. One uses different parts of the foot when kicking. The top of the foot, the inside and outside of the top, the inside and outside of the boot and even the heel and the toe. The toe should be used when scoring a great 'bicicleta' goal. So many matches are decided by a good

hard shot with the front of the foot. Use the top of the foot when you want to put power behind a long kick because the area of impact is larger, right in the middle.

Use the inside or outside of the top of the boot for curving shots. To make the ball curve to the left, kick it on its right side with the inside of the top of your foot. Do the opposite if you want to kick the ball with your left foot. If you want to take the ball curve to the right with your right foot, use the outside of the top of your boot to kick the left side of the ball. The inside and outside of the foot are usually used near goal, often when the goalkeeper comes forward towards the attacker who is running in, thereby trying to narrow the angle and block the shot for goal. By running forwards it's as if the goalie were actually offering us a corner of the net to shoot at! When you are near the goal it is essential to place the ball carefully, taking the goalkeeper's position into account, rather than attempt a real pile driver. Do you know why? It is much easier for the goalkeeper to save a powerful shot than a weak, but better - placed kick.

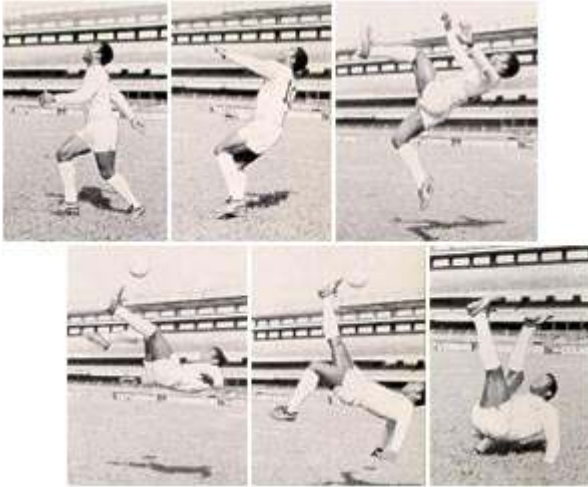
In a powerful shot the ball certainly moves faster, but it does not alter its course much, whereas a gentle, well directed shot goes the way decided by how you kick the ball. You can place the ball more precisely when using the inside of the foot because the area of impact is larger. For a long distance shot you should follow the following three hints on how to swing your kicking leg: (1) your leg should not be stiff, but swung right back; (2) the forward swing to kick the ball should be really explosive; (3) after you've kicked the ball your foot should carry on forwards and upwards completing a kind of semi - circle. For the half - volley and a volley, swing the knee and foot right up behind you so the pointed toe and knee are equidistant from the ground to give you a low or knee - high kick.



Another basic rule of shooting is to keep your eyes on the ball at the moment of impact. You should have already assessed the positions of the defending players, the goalkeeper and the goal itself a fraction of a second before your shot. By the time your eyes have returned to the ball you should have decided the exact direction and force of your shot. The actual shot is more or less automatic because of your previous training. The arms are essential in balancing the body for a kick. The arm above your kicking leg should be by your side, while the other one should be lifted more or less as high as your shoulder. There shouldn't be any unnecessary contraction of your muscles when you are kicking. By keeping the rest of yourself relaxed, all your energy will be centered on the vigorous and rapid motion of your kicking leg. When your foot hits the ball it's like an explosion! You need to be in excellent condition, so don't waste your energy unnecessarily. There is no point in using the muscles which are not needed for each particular action.

Now let's see how to do the *bicicleta*. It is a spectacular shot which needs a lot of practice and caution. It's best to learn how to do it on soft ground, preferably in long grass, on springy turf or on sand etc. at the beginning. The movement must be exceptionally well coordinated and it requires great agility. Firstly fling your legs forwards and upwards which propels your body backwards in the air. Keep one leg higher, thereby giving the other time to be swung up to kick the ball. Then comes the fall which should be broken by your hands, with the fingers well spread out, the forearms and then your back. That sounds easy enough, doesn't it? But seriously, you do need a lot of patience to learn how to do a good

*bicicleta*. Don't give up if you can't do it at first. Keep trying. And don't get depressed if you find you really cannot do it the way you want to. There are many professional footballers who also cannot do it. It certainly took me a long time to learn how to do it. I treated the difficulty as a challenge, without getting discouraged and then, one day, it just came to me.



Kicking is vital in football because it scores the goals. So keep practicing and don't forget to use both feet. A player has to be able to shoot well with either foot. You also must have an idea of angles, so you can place the ball right in the net and score a goal. Another bit of advice is if you have the chance of shooting for goal, don't try to dribble any more. It's more important to take the opportunity of shooting than to carry on dribbling unnecessarily at the risk of losing the ball. A mid - field player, as well as a striker, should try at least five shots at goal per game. You can try to score from anywhere within 30 meters (35 yards) of the goal, so don't just wait until you are in the penalty area. It is also essential to remember that if a team-mate is in a better position to shoot you should pass the ball to him rather than try to score yourself. The player who passes the ball is as important as the one who actually kicks or heads it into goal!

## **5 - The Feint and the Dribble**

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The feint and the dribble are tactics which every player must be able to do. The difference between the two is that the feint is a movement executed without the ball and the dribble is with the ball.

For example: when a defender is retreating in the face of an advancing attacker with the ball suddenly makes a lunge, thus forcing his opponent to change direction; or when an attacker who is being marked pretends to run towards the goal and then turns suddenly to receive the ball, completely free. These are both ways of feinting and are executed without the ball. You should never feint or dribble just to show the spectators or the other players how good you are at football. Your real talent is shown by keeping possession of the ball longer than your opponent. It is also important to remember that dribbling is never justified if there is an unmarked team-mate waiting for a pass. Never forget that a safe pass is always better than unnecessary dribbling.

You can feint with your foot, leg, body, arms, head and even your eyes!

Another piece of advice: the movements of the player without the ball are just as important as those of the player in possession of the ball. This may seem incredible, but playing without the ball is an art! In the defense a feint or tackle can enable you to gain possession of the ball and while attacking you can ensure your team keeps possession of the ball. Nearly all the players have to feint during a game. As you learned in the chapter on kicking, even the goalkeeper uses this tactic when trying to mislead the attacker. It is a method of deceiving your opponent, thereby diverting his attention from the move you are really going to make. This applies to both feinting and dribbling.

Dribbling is altering the speed and direction of the ball by sudden movements in various directions with the right or left foot. First a tap . . . then stop . . . balance .

. . turn . . . a lightning swing and . . . an explosive spurt - these are some of the ingredients of dribbling. In a dribble you have an advantage over your opponent - he doesn't know what you are going to do next! You always have the initiative. Your opponent is always kept guessing which way you intend to go. Your main objective is to try and make him lose his balance while he is trying to get the ball, at the same time, of course, maintaining your own balance! Many soccer players just 'play' with the ball and therefore fail to make ground. The player who tries to dribble must be sure that it is he who must always take the initiative. Sometimes the opponent will offer you a way out - watch out for this as it might be his way of taking the ball from you. To be good at dribbling you need to have a lot of confidence in yourself, a great deal of practice and a good sense of balance. Keeping your balance will become easier if you are able to understand the basic laws of equilibrium. I'll try to explain to you very simply what I have learned. Every solid body has a center of gravity. In the human body it is situated in the middle of your torso at about your navel. Whenever an imaginary line from the center of gravity falls in the middle of the support area it is said that the body is in equilibrium. In the human body the support area is the space between the two feet.

If your feet are together your equilibrium will be less because the center of gravity can 'fall' outside the area made by your feet. If you stand with your feet apart the support area will be larger. Try a simple experiment. Stand with your feet together and ask someone to give you a little push. You'll discover that you will fall over much more easily than you would if you had your feet apart, because you maintain your balance when the imaginary line from the center of gravity does not fall outside the larger space between your feet.

If you squat down with your feet well apart, leaning forward a little and lightly flexing your legs, you'll feel that it is even easier to keep your balance. You have now learned something else about the law of equilibrium: the nearer the center of

gravity is, in relation to the ground, the more stable you are. So it is easier to lose your balance when you are standing than when you are sitting or lying down.

So to begin dribbling keep your feet apart, your body leaning forward a little, your legs flexed, your haunches down and your arms relaxed and hardly moving by your side. You are now learning something else important about balance. Every movement, no matter how small, changes the center of gravity - up and down, to either side and even forwards and backwards. You can prove this yourself by getting on a large weighing machine like they have in a chemist's shop. Wait until the indicator stops and then start moving your arms. You will see that the indicator swings up or down. The quicker you move your arms the faster the indicator will swing. So we have discovered another important aspect of dribbling: RHYTHM! You have to make rapid decisions and reactions when dribbling, but the movement must have a certain rhythm.

Every opponent has a weaker side. This is usually the side of what is called the weak leg. If he is left handed, his right leg will be the weak one, and vice versa. He will have more difficulty in intercepting the ball with what is called his weak leg, but even more if that is his support leg.



It would be impossible to give you a list of all the different ways of feinting, tackling and dribbling because the possibilities are endless. But there are still a few more rules to observe. For example, when you are dribbling your opponent

may be in front of you, behind you or by your side. Whatever his position, you always have to protect the ball, keeping it close to you. When your opponent is by your side, whether you're running or standing still, keep your body between him and the ball. Thus it will be more difficult for him to get the ball without fouling you. Mostly use the outside or inside of the foot, just behind the ankle bone and your tap on the ball must be smooth and gentle. For this, the ankle should be flexible.

During my many years playing soccer I have seen countless styles of dribbling. I'll give you a few examples'. There is one called 'the hat': with a light tap you send the ball over your opponent's head and run round to collect the ball on the other side without letting it touch the ground. There is one which in Brazil we call 'the cow'. You run with the ball straight at your opponent without slowing down and then quickly knock the ball to one side, run round the other and collect the ball behind him. Or there is the 'through - the - legs' dribble: you have to be quick, looking for the right moment when the opponent in front of you has his legs apart. Then you can gently knock the ball between his legs and run round to receive it when it comes clear the other side. The last example is the 'off-the-legs' dribble: with a bit of luck you can tap the ball onto your opponent's legs and then receive it on the rebound! Attackers can feint and dribble many times in a match, the mid-field players a little less and the defenders should only try these tactics in exceptional cases. I've seen many players in defense prejudice the safety of their goal by trying to dribble from a defensive position. Finally, don't forget, to make a good pass to an unmarked team-mate is much more efficient than unnecessary dribbling.

## **6 - Stopping or 'Killing the Ball**

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Stopping or 'killing' the ball is the art of receiving it and keeping it 'captured' under your control. Obviously you don't always receive the ball at the same height or at the same speed. It can arrive high, medium height, low, rolling, bouncing, quickly or slowly. You should be able to control it immediately and not let it get away from you. To do this you can use the sole, top, inside or outside of your foot, your heel, shin, thigh, stomach, chest, shoulder and head, whether you are running at the time or stationary. The first secret of a successful killing is to relax the part of your body which is going to stop the ball, moving backwards in the same direction as the ball is traveling. When you are stopping the ball on your foot, keep your weight on your support leg. When the ball reaches your boot, move your foot gently back, thereby absorbing the impact. You must learn to stop the ball with the inside of both your feet. Your toe should be pointing upwards, making the area of impact as large as possible. Your weight should be on your support leg, your arms moving freely to maintain your balance and keep looking at the ball until you've caught it. Point your toe inwards when you are stopping the ball with the outside of your foot.



To stop the ball with your thigh, make sure your support foot is firmly on the ground and the leg is loosely flexed. It depends on the trajectory of the ball, but you usually have to lift your other leg so your thigh is at waist height. If it is a low ball, you should not lift your thigh so high. It is a question of coordination. When you have mastered this, you should be able to make the ball do what you want,

when you want. There is a little trick which will help you stop the ball with your chest. Just before the ball hits you, fill your lungs with air and breathe out on impact, at the same time bringing your arms and shoulders forward. This co-ordinated movement makes your body form a sort of shell into which the ball can fall. If the ball descends almost vertically on top of you, lean your body and head right back, keeping your balance by distributing your weight on both feet and the ball will 'stick' to you. If you stop the ball with your shoulder you can also pass it from there to a teammate or drop it to your own feet and have a quick shot at goal. The opportunity for this particular tactic usually occurs when you are jumping. Whether you are able to stop the ball on your shoulder and then follow through with a pass depends a lot on constant training. As the ball hits your retreating shoulder you have to turn suddenly, thereby propelling the ball to a team-mate.

Get yourself right under the descending ball when you want to stop it with your head. Keep your eyes open all the time. As it hits your forehead, flex your legs, with your feet apart, pushing your hips forward and keeping your body straight and your arms open. Move your head down towards your shoulders as the ball hits it, thereby taking the speed out of the ball. The whole secret is to position yourself right under the ball and let your legs give at the moment of impact. You can begin to learn this skill by practicing alone. When you have begun to master it, ask someone to throw the ball for you to stop. Don't forget that you won't achieve anything without working at it.

When the ball bounces off the ground at you from a little further away, you can kill it with your stomach. You have to place yourself in the path of the oncoming ball with your feet well apart with the weight of your body divided between them and keep your legs flexed. Keep your arms by your side and don't take your eyes off the ball. When the ball hits your stomach, lean back to absorb the force and move one foot well back so your leg in front is almost straight. At the same time

bend the upper part of your body forward, thus forming a concave shape into which the ball will fit.

Another very effective way of stopping the ball is killing it with your heel and ankle on the outside of your foot. This maneuver not only puts you in control of the ball, but also enables you to bring the ball round in front of you for a pass, or a shot at goal. The weight of your body should be borne by your flexed support leg. Your body should be bent forward and leaning slightly to the same side as your free leg. To help you maintain your balance keep the arm that is on the side of your support leg forward and hold the other arm lightly back. The foot of your free leg should be parallel to the ground and held so that the outside is facing the oncoming ball. When the ball hits the outside of your foot, lift your leg a little higher and lean a bit further forward. If you flick the ball from there it will curl in a semi-circle and land in front of you. During all these maneuvers you must look fixedly at the ball as if you were hypnotizing it. This way of stopping the ball can be practiced with a ball hanging in a doorway on a piece of string or elastic. If you are practicing on a football pitch, you can hang the ball from the crossbar of a goal. It's a great one to learn because it looks good and is very quick.



Finally I will tell you how to stop the ball with the top of the foot, which resembles a movement in ballet. You can practice this one on your own as well. This 'killer' is a real beauty, but it requires speed, precision and an excellent sense of timing. As usual your support leg should bear your weight. The other leg must be lifted as high as possible, but keep it slightly bent - the higher the better. When your

leg is well up in the air, lift yourself up onto the toe of your support foot. The ball lands in the cup formed between the shin and toes of your lifted leg. At that moment bring your leg down, at the same speed as the descending ball at first and then slower and slower, deadening the speed of the ball. When you lift and lower your leg, the center of gravity moves back a little. The fact that your body is leaning forward and your arms are open ensures that your body is correctly balanced. Special attention must be paid to your eyes, which should follow the ball during the entire action. Of course the height you lift your leg depends on the height at which the ball is coming. The higher the ball, the higher the leg must be raised.

All these ways of killing the ball must be practiced while running and standing still. The better you become at controlling the ball, the more it will be your friend. The more ways you learn of getting and controlling the ball, the better the chances of your team.

## 7 - Steering the Ball

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Which is faster? The ball that is kicked or passed twenty meters, or the ball which covers the same distance being steered by you? Obviously the ball which is kicked or passed travels that distance much faster.

It has been proved that a powerfully kicked ball can travel at 116 kilometers an hour (over 70 miles per hour). So it covers that 20 meters (65 feet) in half a second! In a free kick the ball takes one-fifth of a second to reach the defensive wall and when it has passed the wall, it arrives at the goal in three-tenths of a second!\* No athlete, not even an Olympic champion, could possibly achieve this speed. Therefore it is always better to pass than steer the ball unnecessarily. But in football there are times when you must steer the ball. Again I will try to give you a few tips. Steering the ball is, as you know, that action which takes the ball out of one area into another, especially the 'break' which takes the ball right up to the other goal. You should use the top as often as the inside and outside of your foot. When you are running with the ball, turn your steering toe outwards Just before tapping the ball if you want to use the inside of your foot. Your ankle must not be taut. Your body should be leaning forward and your arms relaxed and only slightly bent.



Your eyes should stay on the ball at the moment you tap it. Following the ball with your eyes, lift your head in readiness to take a quick look round the pitch. Between each tap of the ball, look up at the pitch. You should always keep up

with the ball when you're steering it, as if you were tied together. By keeping close to the ball and shielding it with your body, you will make it difficult for an opponent to intercept it. When steering the ball with the outside of your foot, the toe of your boot must be pointing inwards. Your ankle needs to be really flexible in order to steer the ball with the outside of your foot, thus utilizing the largest area of contact and making it easier and safer to steer the ball. Guiding the ball with the top of your foot is more difficult. Your toe should be pointing downwards, tapping the ball with the part of your boot above the toe. The knee is therefore slightly higher than usual and in an almost straight line above the toe. The advantage of steering the ball with the top of your foot lies in the fact that your body is in a more natural running position and so you can move faster. But because the area of contact is smaller, guiding the ball is not quite so easy.

The method of steering to use really depends on the position of your opponents. If an opposing defender is running by your side, it's better to use the inside or outside of the foot further away from him. If the opponent is running in front of you, it's advisable to use the outside of your foot because that makes it easier to avoid him or change the direction of your run. It is essential to keep your balance while steering the ball. To help you do this you can stop for a moment and try a dribble if necessary, blocking the tackle with your shoulder, or you can slow down, speed up, pass or shoot. As always, all this depends on intensive training. You can learn a lot by reading about, or watching soccer, but you can only really learn how to do it by practicing.

*\* These figures were provided by Prof. Julio Mazzei who timed Pelé at Santos F.C..*

## **8 - The Free Kick and the Penalty**

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As with the other tactics, the free kick and penalty need methodical and constant training, perhaps even more than the rest if we take into consideration the fact that a penalty kick is often the crucial shot which decides a game. A free kick, whether direct or indirect, is taken in front of the penalty area as often as it is taken from the left or right side, with or without the defensive wall. As you are kicking a stationary ball, the amount of improvisation is lessened.

With a penalty kick it is just you against the goalkeeper and you stand every chance of success. You are not marked and no-one is allowed to tackle you, so all your attention can be concentrated on the shot. More than ever before, I felt that climax of expectation when I was hoping to score my thousandth goal from a penalty when we were playing at Maracana. Even with all my experience, I must admit that I didn't find it easy. To have confidence in yourself is absolutely essential. This self-confidence can only be acquired by training and, as a result, knowing exactly what you are going to do. So a successful free kick near the opponents' goal, whether it is direct or indirect, depends on training and more training. I'd like to tell you something that I have learned.

Taking a free kick needs a certain cunning. If, for example, the free kick is taken on the left-hand side of the box, it is better to take it with your right foot, and vice versa. Just before kicking the ball, have a careful look at the position of the goalkeeper and the wall. Check if there are any 'holes' in the wall, or whether perhaps one of the players in the wall is shorter than the others, thus enabling you to send the ball over his head, etc. If there is a wind, check in which direction it is blowing. To ascertain the direction of the wind, just look to see which way any flags or banners are blowing. You should also know if the referee is going to blow his whistle before you take your free kick, or whether, as in Europe, he

merely waves you on with his arm. If the latter is the case, you can take the kick quickly, before the goalkeeper has really had time to position himself properly.

Take into account the distance and position of the wall, the height of the players in the wall and the height of the net (2-44 meters). Also watch for how difficult the angle will be if you decide to take a free kick straight over the top of the wall and make sure it doesn't go over the crossbar as well. There is not much space for the ball to travel over the wall, through the defenders, past the goalkeeper and into the net. A curving shot is preferable because even though it hasn't so much force, it has more of a chance of getting round the defense. You have already learned how to do a curving shot in the chapter on kicking. You should practice curving shots so you can be calm and almost sure of a successful free kick.

You need to train even more for an indirect free kick because it involves at least one other player. You should rehearse various types of indirect free kicks with your team-mates, so you all know exactly what part you have to play in the action. Depending on what you have rehearsed and, of course, on the position of the defending players, you can use two, three, or more team-mates for an indirect free kick. Your team's success with indirect free kicks depends on how much time you devote to practicing various tactics together.

Now I'd like to tell you something about taking a penalty kick. The player who takes the penalty has all the advantages. The goalkeeper is not allowed to move his feet until the ball has been kicked; there are only eleven meters between the penalty spot and the goal; the shot is a direct one and the opponents must be 9.15 meters away from the ball. All these advantages put the goalkeeper in the position of a victim with scarcely any defense. This does not mean that you will definitely score. To increase your chances of scoring, you should observe the following basic rules:



*1. Make sure the ball is placed right on the penalty spot. Any hole or little obstacle, sometimes made by the goalkeeper, can cause the ball to go off course.*

*2. Leave the ball on the spot and concentrate on what you are going to do. Don't listen to any of the defenders' talk, or pay any attention to their movements, which could distract you. Forget everyone and everything except the penalty kick.*

*3. Run purposefully at the ball. By now you should have already decided which corner of the net you are going to aim at.*

*4. Your shot should be a decisive, 'clean' one. Don't change your mind about the direction of the ball at this stage. Take no notice of the movements of the goalkeeper's arms or body and ignore any shout from a defender. These are their ways of trying to distract you.*

*5. You must know your target, which is the area directly inside each post. The goalkeeper will be in the middle, ready to cover about 4 meters. That leaves about 1.5 meters on either side. The goalkeeper cannot defend these spaces. You only have to place the ball correctly in this zone and the goal is yours.*

This isn't really as easy as it seems. It all depends on the confidence you have gained from training. Don't forget that a miss (if it goes outside the net, or is saved) is the penalty taker's fault! When you practice your free kicks from various

angles in front of the area and your penalty kicks you are increasing your team's chances of victory.

## **9 - The Goalkeeper**

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I am not the best qualified person to give you advice on goalkeeping. Still, it is a position which has always interested me. I don't know whether it is because the glamour that surrounds the goalie, his cool composure, courage, responsibility, the terrible importance of even one mistake, his view of the gain or his different outfit. Quite frankly, I just don't know what attracts me about playing in this difficult position. Perhaps it's due to the fact that I have come to respect the goalkeeper during my efforts to score a thousand goals. Whenever I am given the chance, I like to play goalkeeper and I enjoy taking my turn in goal when training. I have even played goalkeeper officially four times. The first time was in a match against the Commercial Futebol Clube in Santos on 4th November 1959. I also played goalie for the first few minutes of game against Gremio Porto - Alegrense in the Brazilia Cup Final in Sao Paulo on 19th January 1964. The third time was for about a quarter of an hour in Joao Pessoa in a friendly match in 1969 and the fourth, in Baltimore, U.S.A., on June 19th, 1973, was against the Baltimore Bays. But what really enables me to say, something about goalkeeping are the many great goalies I have seen in action during my years of playing. I wouldn't like to give you a list of names in case I forgot a few, which would be very unfair.

In my opinion the goalkeeper has three main functions in a team: (1) to defend the goal; (2) reinstate the attack; (3) to help organize the position of the defending players. The function of No. 1 is obvious. The goalkeeper is the last man who can stop a goal, so he is the last one who should make a mistake! If a goalkeeper makes a mistake it is always considered unforgivable. The fighting spirit of a team depends on the security of its own goal. So the goalkeeper has to keep cool even when he does fail. This means that must have a great personality and be able to infect team-mates with his own confidence, even when he misses an apparently easy save. When a goalkeeper does miss one of these shots, I

always like to tell the other players and the spectators that those apparently easy shots are often the most difficult to save. The goalkeeper has to stand in the middle of his goal keeping an eye on both sides of the area. The areas that frighten him are those directly inside the posts. In front of him there are often as many as ten or twelve players - attackers and defenders!

The goalkeeper has to be aware of other factors well: the generally irregular surface of the pitch in the box and penalty area; the direction and force of wind; the poor floodlighting of many pitches during evening matches; the position of the sun on certain pitches at certain times of day; the emotional tension due to the importance of not making a mistake; a sudden shower; turning quickly on wet or muddy ground; etc. Think about all these points and then answer the question: is goalkeeping easy? How often has a goalkeeper been unjustly blamed for the defeat of his team? It is not easy to be a goalkeeper! Perhaps the only goal for which he cannot be blamed at all is one scored from a penalty kick. Everyone knows that his chances of saving that are minimal. If the opposing team manages to score, the goalie is no good. If he saves the ball, he becomes a hero.

The goalkeeper's position is so complicated that the grass won't grow on the ground on which he has trodden, as a Brazilian humorist once said. The goalkeeper has to be in constant contact with the ball during specialized and arduous training to develop his agility, reflexes and reactions. To become a goalkeeper you should learn all the angles of the goal and of the shots, the formation of defensive walls, the varying styles of the opposing forwards and of your own defenders. You should be constantly aware of the distance of the ball from your goal, the part of your goal which is being threatened, the trajectory of the ball, the maneuvers of your opponents, etc., etc. A great deal of physical training is essential, with dozens of exercises to get your stomach muscles, arms, legs, etc. in top condition. You should know about the laws of equilibrium and the exact position of the inside and outside of the posts, net and crossbar

and of the many ways of using your hands to hold, punch and throw the ball, etc., etc.



The goalkeeper has to work harder than any other player in the team. He must never allow himself to get out of condition. And, before blaming him, you should know that it is easier to save a powerful kick than a weaker, better placed shot at goal. From afar it might appear to you that the goalkeeper has made a bad mistake, but it may well have been caused by one of those points which I have listed above making a save impossible. Defending his goal well, the goalkeeper's main function depends on a long period of learning, hard training and a lot of experience. A young goalkeeper won't become successful overnight. It takes years to master all the finer points of goalkeeping.

The goalkeeper's second function - to reinstate the attack - is also very important. It isn't enough just to defend the goal. You have to get the ball back into the game, making sure you get it to one of your companions who is in a good position, thereby getting your team back on the attack. As you know, you can only attack if your team has the ball. There is not much point in just kicking the ball indiscriminately out of the goal, because it could easily find an opponent and then back it would come! Your goal kick must be aimed at a team-mate and the same goes for your volley, half volley or throw, so your team can keep in possession of the ball. In reinstating the attack the goalkeeper needs the assistance of the other members of his team, who should feint or quickly run into a free space so they can safely receive the ball.



To learn how to do this successfully, the goalie should follow certain principles. For example, you should never put the ball back into play in the area, with your hands or feet, unless your team-mate is completely unmarked and ready to receive it; don't pass the ball out to the same side from which it came, but out to the other side (which is called the 'dead' side) into more space, because there are less players there; never throw the ball to a team-mate who is well marked, but to a player who can control the ball and get it away from your area, or even better, get it to a team-mate who doesn't need to stop the ball and control it before getting it away. When you are taking a goal kick, don't forget to place the foot of your support leg behind the line of the ball to make it rise. Use the outside of the top of your foot when kicking on the volley or half-volley, which helps you direct the ball better.

When throwing the ball, the goalkeeper can send it low or rolling along the ground, or he can throw from above the shoulder like a serve in tennis, or he can do a 'baseball' throw. In all of these throws you must keep the ball well balanced in the palm of your hand, clasping it firmly with your fingers spread. You can hold the ball more securely by using the other hand until the very moment of throwing. You should practice all the different ways of throwing, so eventually you will be able to know automatically how hard you have to throw the ball in order for it to reach the exact desired spot. You will also discover which style of throwing suits you best and suits the circumstances you are in.

Do not hesitate when you come out of the goal to intercept a crossed ball or an opponent who is coming at the goal. You have to make up your mind quickly and there is no time to change it. Once you come out of the goal, go the whole way and your own conviction will help you. An attacker has a kind of dread of a goalkeeper coming at him determinedly. In my opinion, though, there is one exception - that is when there is still a defender between the goal and the oncoming attacker with the ball. Stay back, or you might get in the defender's way. Guard the goal, narrowing the angle which will depend on the direction in which the attacker and defender are running.



Another technique which I have seen perfected by some great goalkeepers is waiting for the split second in which the attacker in the box has to look at the ball before shooting. At this moment, the goalkeeper rushes forward and blocks the shot with his hands or body. Brazilian goalkeepers would make less mistakes if they studied and practiced the right ways and times to come out of their goals.

The third function of the goalkeeper - to help organize the position of the defending players - is also of great importance. As he is facing the whole pitch, the goalkeeper can see how the play is likely to develop. He can help his team-mates by alerting and correcting them and generally giving a running commentary on the positions and intentions of their opponents. A good goalie is the one who can encourage his team-mates to be ready to mark any opponent or intercept an unexpected pass or shot.

I hope that my advice will be of some use to all of you who have already started playing in this difficult, thankless, but thrilling position, I could have scored many more goals during my years of playing football if it hadn't been for those determined, calculating, brave men - the goalkeepers - who, one day, might be you!

## **10 - The Throw-in**

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The rules of football clearly define how a throw-in should be taken. The player should be facing the pitch, with both feet on or behind the sideline. He should use both hands to throw the ball from behind his head in any direction. Many players don't think it is worth learning how to throw-in properly, which is a great mistake. As you are using your hands, you can direct the ball more accurately. Don't forget that there is a rule that says the player who receives the ball from a throw-in cannot be considered off-side.

So, the better you throw a long, well aimed ball, the more dangerous it will be for your opponents. There are players who can actually throw the ball as far as 30 meters (nearly 100 feet)! When the throw-in is taken near the goal line, it can be as effective as a corner kick. I am telling you this so you can make the most of throw-ins.

You can take a throw-in from a standing position or running. When you take a throw-in from a standing position you should hold the ball in such a way that your two thumbs and index fingers are touching each other. The contact with the ball should be made with your fingertips rather than with the palm of your hand. Bend your arms right back behind your head. Keep your feet apart, with your weight evenly distributed on them. The ball is thrown well by co-coordinating the legs, body, shoulders, arms, wrists, hands and fingers. The action ends with the body bent forwards, arms totally straight and your fingers pointing downwards. The action is more or less the same when you take your throw-in after having run about six to eight steps. With a running throw, don't let either of your feet be off the ground at the moment you throw the ball. The ball will go further when you have the extra force of a run behind it. The following list is the order in which you should practice these two types of throw-in:



- 1. Practice the actions that make up a running and a stationary throw-in without a ball.*
- 2. Do the same again, this time with the ball, taking no notice of the actual distance of the throw.*
- 3. Now repeat the actions with the ball, gradually working up the power of the throw.*
- 4. Now try it with a heavier ball - a 'medicine ball' (that is one filled with sand).*
- 5. Practice what you have learned with a soccer ball, trying to improve your throw by paying special attention to your own particular faults.*
- 6. Practice throwing to your friends, in different directions and at different distances.*
- 7. To perfect your different techniques, practice with your team-mates and an opposing team.*
- 8. Learn to select which techniques to use in different circumstances.*  
*When you have discovered one or two methods of throwing-in which you are particularly good at, you are already a more valuable member of your team. Once again, success depends on the confidence you have acquired through methodical training and constant practice. If you want to become really good at throwing-in, the best thing is to develop a style of your own which will benefit your team. It's not enough just to read these little tips or*

*to remember how this or that particular player did it. You, yourself, should add to what you have learned.*

## **11 - General Hints**

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1. Always keep in the game. Move into spaces left by your team-mates.
2. When you are attacking and you lose possession of the ball, don't just wait to see what is going to happen. Fight to get your ball back from the opponent who tackled you, or at least harass him thus giving your side time to reorganize itself. The first line of a team's defense is its forward line.
3. Football is a team game. No one is playing alone. Success depends on your whole team being a single unit. There are eleven players and also the reserves helping each other to fight for the same objective.
4. Study the rules of the game. By being really familiar with the rules, you will get more out of a game, whether you are playing or watching it.
5. Always respect the officials - the referee and the linesmen. Referees, like all of us, do make mistakes sometimes and it is not easy to see the whole game. Accept his decisions. Don't waste time in useless arguments.
6. Always play fairly against your opponents. Never tackle with the intention of fouling someone. The tackle is for possession of the ball.
7. Smoking and drinking do not help an athlete, quite the opposite.
8. A player's great asset in football is his body. Look after it. Don't exert yourself unnecessarily until you are fully rested after the previous game. Get at least eight hours sleep a night. After training or playing go home and rest. Relax a little, with a good book.
9. Before you can become a good player, you must be an athlete. Being in top physical condition is vital in modern soccer. Do different kinds of physical

activities like walking, running and jumping and exercises for your arms, legs stomach muscles, etc. Consult your game master or your trainer about the best ways of keeping fit. There are so many different exercises that you can choose those which suit you in particular.

10. Keep a balanced, nourishing diet. I am not just suggesting that you eat the right amount, but the right sort of nutritive food,

11. Limber up before intensive training or a game by little runs and jumps and flexing your arms, legs and body muscles. The colder it is, the more you need to limber up. The human machine is like a car. It needs to heat up before it can function properly. By getting warm before exerting yourself, you will avoid the possibility of cramp. After limbering up you are physically and mentally prepared for a good game.

12. Get the doctor to examine you before you embark on any intensive physical activity.

13. If you hurt yourself, tell your trainer and your parents. Don't hide any injuries, however small they may seem.\*

14. Put on warm clothing after a match. If you are still cold, do a few more exercises.

15. Soak in a hot bath after a game and rub yourself down with a rough towel, especially round your feet and hair. Treat your feet in the same way as a professional pianist looks after his hands.

16. I have hardly said a word about defenders in this book. The omission was intentional. In the next book, which I have already planned out, I will cover the subjects which are not dealt with in this one. By playing against defenders I have learned as much as any defender needs to know. I have been studying them for seventeen years!

17. Don't forget the one basic point which I have stressed throughout this book: a team is not made up of isolated individuals. Nearly always we are attackers and defenders at the same time!

*\* There are 3 basic rules for treating strains, sprains, dislocations, cuts and bruises: 1. Put ice on the injured area immediately; 2. Don't aggravate the injury by moving; 3. Find a doctor.*

## **12 - Conclusions**

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What I am today is a result of all the advice I have received right from the beginning, before I had even played in a proper game. I have been helped by my trainers, the older players and my parents. Listen to the advice of your elders; they are always more experienced than we are. Also listen to any tips from your friends. I'd like to tell you something which I have learned from people: you don't learn faults by looking or listening, they come from you, yourself.

If you become great, do your best to show why you are considered to be so good; if you only reach the level of a reserve player, then show that you are the best in that category.

Be a man, in failure and success. Only this way can you achieve personal dignity and earn the respect of your fellow men.

Never think that you know everything. There is always more to learn and every day we get to know something new.

Before becoming a soccer player, you should be an athlete; and before becoming an athlete, you should be a man.

Always be yourself! Don't try to imitate anyone or to be like someone. Create your own individual style. Don't try and make yourself a 'Pelé'. It is much more important to be yourself than Pelé.

Never neglect your studies because of soccer or any other sport. You should organize your life so that you can satisfactorily spend enough time on both activities, or more.\*

If you find that you cannot become a reasonably good soccer player, don't be discouraged. Face life optimistically, because even if soccer has lost a good

player, society might have gained a great man who can help his country in other ways if he is disciplined, confident and works hard.

No matter where he is, in the country or in the city, a man who really cares about the future of humanity and believes in Sport, Communication and Love must help to unite everyone in the world!

Dear friends, I hope that the advice I have given you will be as useful to you, in soccer and in life, as it has been to me.

*May God be with you!*

*From your friend,*

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Pelé". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned to the left of the main body of text.

Santos, Brazil.

*\* You have probably heard that I stopped studying to play soccer. Well, it's true. At that time of my life I had no idea how important education was; I even thought soccer was everything! Now I completely understand why my mother, Celeste, always used to say: "Pelé, leave that ball alone for a while. Come and do your homework." You know that, in spite of this advice, I spent all my time and life on soccer. Many years later I realized how right my mother had been! I had to study. Soccer was not enough. I completed my schooling and then took a higher course in Physical Education. So I'm telling you once again: education and soccer are compatible. You can study and play at the same time and be a success in both fields. I'll go even further - not you can - you **must!***