

THE GREAT FIFA WORLD CUP ROBBERY

And other soccer scandals

Mike Holgate

Half a century ago in 1966, England won the World Cup for the only time in their history and the team were joined at a celebration dinner by canine hero Pickles who had found the trophy after it had been stolen from an exhibition. Team captain Bobby Moore, lifted the FA Cup, European Cup Winners Cup and Jules Rimet trophy for club and country in the mid 1960s, then, found himself at the centre of a diplomatic row prior to the 1970 World Cup finals when he was framed over the theft of a bracelet from a shop in Bogota.

The soccer-mad nation of Brazil was awarded the World Cup outright after winning it for the third time in 1970, then felt a sense of national disgrace when the trophy was stolen without trace in 1983. Mike Holgate recalls these unsavoury soccer incidents alongside a litany of illegal activities featuring murders, trophy thefts, match-fixing and the greatest scandal in the history of sport as Fifa stands accused of rigging votes to rob countries of the right to host the finals of the World Cup.



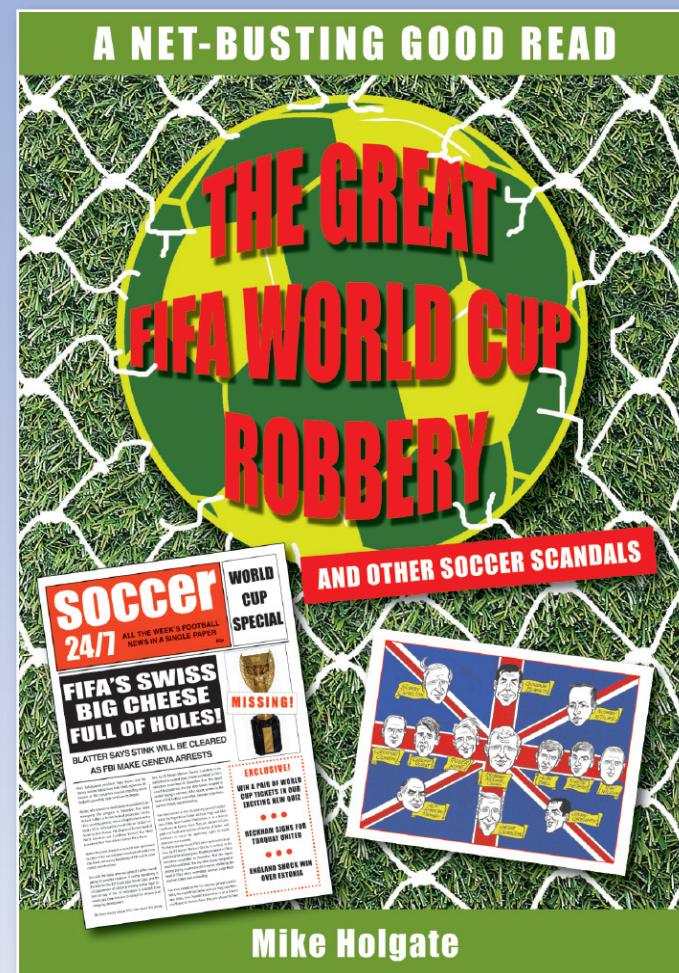
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mike Holgate lives in Devon and has combined three careers as a writer, musician and librarian since obtaining a honours degree from Plymouth University in 1988. The author of several soccer and true-life crime books, he has also contributed articles to newspapers and magazines and has acted as an advisor and researcher for programmes produced by BBC Radio Devon and Granada Television.

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In a sense the Stanley Matthews, Tom Finney and George Best of his day, Billy Meredith had a career as eventful off the field as on it [and] proved a frequent trial to officialdom.

Geoffrey Green, football correspondent of *The Times* (1985)

Manchester City won their first major trophy when they defeated Bolton Wanderers 1-0 in the first all Lancashire FA Cup final in 1904. City skipper Billy Meredith was the man of the match and earned this tribute from the *Manchester Evening Chronicle*: 'It was indeed appropriate that City's captain should score the goal which brought the cup to Manchester. He is the oldest playing member of the club, its most brilliant exponent, and, without doubt, the best outside-right in the kingdom'. Two days after the cup final, Manchester City lost their final league match of the season away at Everton which ended their hopes of accomplishing the 'double' as they finished runners-up in the championship to Sheffield Wednesday.

On the eve of the FA Cup final, Billy Meredith had been voted the Football League's most popular player, ahead of Steve Bloomer (Derby County)

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THE ILLEGAL PAYMENT SCANDAL



An artist's impression of Billy Meredith's winning goal in the 1904 FA Cup final.

and Bob Crompton (Blackburn Rovers), in a poll conducted amongst the readers of sports journal the *Umpire*. Dubbed 'The Welsh Wizard' and 'The Lloyd George of Soccer', Billy Meredith moved from Welsh league side Chirk and spent ten years with Manchester City before leading them to success in the FA Cup and their highest position in the First Division. However, the fortunes of Manchester City would suffer a dramatic reversal when they became embroiled in scandal the following season. The cup holders were eliminated at an early stage, but once again made a strong challenge for the league championship. With one game to play, City were level on points with Newcastle United at the top of the table, before slipping into third place after losing the last game of the season 2-3 away against Aston Villa. In an ill-tempered game, City striker Sandy Turnbull and Villa defender, Alex Leake, escaped censure from the referee when they traded punches in an off-the-ball incident. Fighting continued in the

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Above: Nobby Stiles performs a victory dance alongside captain Bobby Moore, hat-trick hero Geoff Hurst (holding the World Cup) and England's other final scorer Martin Peters.

Below: The 'Outcasts FC' who defied authority to form a players' trade union.

Example of a double-page spread.



"They think it's all over. It is now!" The game's up for Sepp Blatter (or is it?).



Far left: Aston Villa skipper Frank Moss shakes hands with Frank Hudspeth before the 1924 FA Cup final.

Left: Britain's first £100 a week footballer Johnny Haynes is chaired off the field by Jimmy Armfield and Peter Swan (left) following England's record 9-3 victory over Scotland at Wembley in 1961.

