



Football is the most commonly practised sport in France, ahead of tennis and horse-riding.

It is also the most mediatised sport. Broadcasts of football matches in which the French team plays often attract record numbers of TV viewers.

Amateur football

More than two million French people play football at regular intervals in one of the country's 18,000 clubs.

Invented by the English, football first of all gained a foothold in the Parisian region and north of France. In the south of France, it competes with another team sport: rugby.

Professional football

The French football team brings together the best French players. It regularly takes part in the Champion's League and the World Cup. "Les Bleus" won the World Cup in 1998 by beating Brazil.

Every year, the French professional clubs play against each other in **le championnat** and **la coupe de France**. The top-performing clubs are: Association sportive de Saint-Etienne (ASSE), Olympique de Marseille (OM), Olympique Lyonnais (OL), Football club de Nantes (FCNA) and Paris Saint-Germain (PSG).

The OM and PSG are bitter rivals!

The best football players in France's history are **Raymond Kopa**, **Michel Platini** and **Zinedine Zidane**.

Did you know?

The expression **Black-Blanc-Beur** was adopted to talk about the diversity of the players' backgrounds in the winning French team in the 1998 World Cup. They came from a variety of countries: Algeria, Senegal, the Basque country, the French West Indies and New Caledonia.

And elsewhere?

Each country has its own coloured **shirt**: the Brazilians' is yellow and green, the Spaniards' red and the Italians' blue. **The number of stars** on the shirt shows the number of **World Cup wins**. With 5 wins, Brazil is in the lead. Who will get the next star?