

= United Kingdom national football team =

No United Kingdom national football team currently exists , as there currently are separate teams representing each of the nations of the United Kingdom (England , Scotland , Wales and Northern Ireland) in international football .

These national teams compete in the FIFA World Cup and UEFA European Championships and other internationals . A United Kingdom team has played in friendly matches , though never in a full FIFA international and not since 1955 . However , the United Kingdom has competed in the association football tournament at the Olympic Games , where it is represented by the Great Britain Olympic football team .

= = Background = =

When the world 's first football association , The Football Association (FA) , was formed in 1863 , its geographical remit was not clear : there was no specification of whether it covered just England , all of the United Kingdom , the British Empire or even the entire world . The question was answered when the Scottish Football Association (SFA) was founded in 1873 .

The third national football association , the Football Association of Wales (FAW) was founded in 1876 and a fourth , the Irish Football Association (IFA) , was founded in 1880 . Football therefore developed with separate associations and national teams for each of the countries of the United Kingdom or " Home Nations " .

Representative international matches between England and Scotland were played as far back as 1872 , and the Home Nations formed the International Football Association Board (IFAB) in 1886 to co -o- ordinate matches between their teams . FIFA was formed by non -o- British associations in 1904 , and by 1913 the Home Nations were in FIFA and FIFA was on the IFAB . In 1921 , around the time of the partition of Ireland , the Football Association of Ireland (FAI) split from the IFA and disputed its authority .

In 1923 , an agreement between the IFAB and FIFA meant the FAI would represent the Irish Free State and the IFA Northern Ireland ; also , FIFA agreed that relationships between the Home Nations would be outside its remit . England and Scotland separately played internationals against various European teams , but the Home Nations withdrew from FIFA in 1928 , in an dispute over amateurism , and did not rejoin till 1946 , missing the first three World Cups .

England have been the only Home Nation to have any major success internationally , winning the 1966 World Cup . Scotland have qualified for the final tournaments of eight World Cups and two European Championships , but have never progressed beyond the group stage of any international tournament . Northern Ireland have not qualified for a World Cup finals tournament since 1986 , and Wales since 1958 .

This is sometimes raised as an argument in favour of a single United Kingdom national team : based on statistical analysis . In June 2006 , it was estimated that a United Kingdom national team would have had a one -o- third greater chance of winning the 2006 World Cup , than England did at the tournament 's outset . Opponents of the plan argue that the existing footballing identities of the fans of the Home Nations should not be sacrificed simply to stand a better chance of success .

There has been limited support for the creation of a permanent British national team . Although often hypothetical in nature , such a proposal has been put forward by prominent government ministers , including Jack Straw and Tony Banks . In July 2014 , after England performed poorly in the 2014 World Cup , Conservative MP Laurence Robertson submitted an early day motion , calling for a United Kingdom Football Team .

= = Matches = =

Despite this , the Home Nations have previously united to play two friendly internationals against ' Rest of Europe ' representative sides . On both occasions , they included all four Home Nations : England , Scotland , Wales and Northern Ireland . Despite Northern Ireland 's participation , both

matches were played under the name of ' Great Britain ' .

10 May 1947 ; Hampden Park , Glasgow : Great Britain 6 ? 1 Rest of Europe

13 August 1955 ; Windsor Park , Belfast : Great Britain 1 ? 4 Rest of Europe

= = = 1947 : the Match of the Century = = =

The 1947 game , dubbed the ' Match of the Century ' , was played to celebrate the return of the Home Nations to FIFA , which they had left in 1920 . For the match , played at Scotland 's Hampden Park in front of 135 @, @ 000 spectators , the Great Britain side wore a navy blue strip in honour of the host association . The gate receipts , totalling £ 35 @, @ 000 , helped boost the finances of FIFA , which had been damaged by the lack of competition during World War II . On that occasion , the Great Britain team consisted of :

Frank Swift (England) , George Hardwick (England) , Billy Hughes (Wales) , Archie Macaulay (Scotland) , Jackie Vernon (Ireland) , Ron Burgess (Wales) , Stanley Matthews (England) , Wilf Mannion (England) , Tommy Lawton (England) , Billy Steel (Scotland) , Billy Liddell (Scotland) .

Goals : UK 1 ? 0 ROE , Mannion 22nd minute ; 1 ? 1 Nordahl 24 ; 2 ? 1 Mannion 33 pen . ; 3 ? 1 Steel 35 ; 4 ? 1 Lawton 37 ; 5 ? 1 Parola 74 o.g. ; 6 ? 1 Lawton 82 .

= = = 1955 : Irish FA 's anniversary = = =

The 1955 game was played to celebrate the Irish Football Association 's seventy @-@ fifth anniversary . For this reason , the match was held at Belfast 's Windsor Park , and the British team took to the field wearing Northern Ireland 's green strip . The Great Britain team fielded comprised :

Jack Kelsey (Wales) , Peter Sillett (England) , Joe McDonald (Scotland) , Danny Blanchflower (Northern Ireland) , John Charles (Wales) , Bertie Peacock (Northern Ireland) , Stanley Matthews (England) , Bobby Johnstone (Scotland) , Roy Bentley (England) , Jimmy McIlroy (Northern Ireland) , Billy Liddell (Scotland) .

= = = Other matches = = =

Two other games were played between Wales and a team representing the rest of the United Kingdom , with players from England , Scotland , and Northern Ireland . The first match , in 1951 , commemorated the seventy @-@ fifth anniversary of the Football Association of Wales . The second match , in 1969 , commemorated the investiture of the Prince of Wales . In both cases , the England , Scotland and Northern Ireland select team played under the name of ' Rest of the United Kingdom ' .

3 December 1951 ; Ninian Park , Cardiff : Wales 3 ? 2 Rest of the United Kingdom

21 July 1969 ; Ninian Park , Cardiff : Wales 0 ? 1 Rest of the United Kingdom

There was also a match played at Wembley in 1973 to commemorate the entry of the United Kingdom , Ireland and Denmark into the European Economic Community . This match , called " The Three " v " The Six " , involved a select team from those three countries playing against a selection of players from the original six members of the EEC : West Germany , Belgium , Netherlands , Luxembourg , France and Italy .

Ten of the thirteen players used by " The Three " were from the United Kingdom , with only Johnny Giles and two Danish players representing the other two countries . Henning Jensen and Colin Stein scored as The Three won 2 ? 0 .

A Great British team lined up against another Rest of Europe XI in 1965 for Stanley Matthews ' testimonial . Europe won 6 ? 4 . A Scotland XI team played a Rest of Great Britain team in a testimonial match for Alan Mullery . Scotland were defeated 3 ? 2 at Craven Cottage on 22 March 1976 .

= = Olympic team = =

From the 1904 Summer Olympics to the 1972 Summer Olympics , and again for the 2012 Summer Olympics , the UK has competed in either the Olympic football tournament or its qualifying competition . During the first tournament , played as a demonstration sport at the 1900 Summer Olympics but retrospectively accredited by the IOC , Upton Park F.C. represented the UK and won gold . Following this Great Britain won gold medals at the 1908 and 1912 Games .

All ' Great Britain ' Olympic football teams were organised by The Football Association (FA) with the acquiescence of the other Home Nations ' football associations , and after the FA scrapped the distinction between professional and amateur players in 1974 , no more British Olympic teams were entered .

Although professional players were allowed into the Olympics from 1992 , no British teams were entered because the individual home nations , rather than a unified team , participated in the qualifying competition .

The 2012 Summer Olympics were hosted by London , which meant that Great Britain qualified as right of being host nation . After much discussion between the Home Nations and opposition from the Northern Irish , Scottish and Welsh associations , men 's and women 's teams organised by the (English) FA were entered to the 2012 Olympics .

= = Universiade team = =

At the Universiade , the United Kingdom team won three medals : two silver medals in 2011 and 2013 and a bronze medal in 1991 .