
THE HOBBY

by Subbuteo.Online

#001

SPRING 2021



INTERVIEW WITH MARK ADOLPH | INSIDE THE MUNICH 74 SUBBUTEO WORLD CUP | ROY OF THE ROVERS | PAINTING MASTERCLASS | PEGASUS FIVE-A-SIDE REVIEW | SUBBUTEO STADIUMS



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With special thanks to Melissa Hurrell. It
can be tough being a Subbuteo widow.



Hello,

Welcome to the first edition of The Hobby by Subbuteo.Online.

Over six months ago I announced plans to launch this magazine and it is safe to say it is drastically behind schedule. It's taken a lot of hard work and a great deal of support from the Subbuteo community to get a finished publication - even if my self-taught design skills are a little rough around the edges.

In the meantime it's been quite a rollercoaster for everybody over the past few months. Lockdown restrictions and the wider coronavirus world we currently live in have been tough for everybody.

The decision to create this magazine is a distraction for me. It's a chance to switch off from the world for a short while and put something together that hopefully makes people smile.

But I am not the only one to have a creative idea during lockdown. As more of us spend time in our homes more of us are getting online and being creative. The Subbuteo groups, forums and social media accounts are thriving and there is a real sense of community appearing wherever you spot a little plastic man online.

I've particularly enjoyed Subbuteo Collector's short history of Zeugo and how it compares to modern day

Subbuteo. Check out his Youtube channel for more information on that one.

I've also enjoyed (and appeared in) Finger Flickin' Good, which is a slick podcast featuring many voices from the community with topics ranging from stadium builds to the awkward question of Subbuteo becoming an addiction. It's a great listen on whatever podcast provider you prefer.

And we even have some new Subbuteo! The new licensee holders Longshore have finally started to release new products. There is more information in the pages that follow but it is safe to say it is not the clever marketing and launch we were all hoping for.

So what is The Hobby? As a first issue I don't really know yet. I want your feedback on everything and hopefully in future issues we'll tweak it to make it bigger and better. I'll be seeking advertising in future issues to expand the number of pages, bring the cover price down and have some freebies to give away. Any profit from the magazine will be going back into the next issue to make it the best product possible.

I'd like to thank Mark Adolph, Barrie Tomlinson, Paul Darke, Michael Dent, Jason Christopher and many more who agreed to be interviewed, and for Stewart Grant, Gareth Christie, Calum Westwood and Keith

Littler for contributing articles.

The contributors in this issue have been fantastic and in future issues I want more. I want more big features, more personal stories about Subbuteo and more pictures of your collections and stadiums. No matter how small you think your contribution can be I want to hear from you so that we can expand the number of pages we offer and cover more areas of interest.

If you want to write for the magazine please get in touch. We also have a letters page if you just want to send us a short message to be included.

Contact me on subbuteoonline@gmail.com or on the Subbuteo.Online Facebook and Twitter pages.

Until then Keep On Flicking!

Subbuteo is made to be played



Stewart Grant - Subbuteo Collector

Shilton, Butcher, Walker, Parker, Pearce, Waddle, Platt, Gascoigne, Beardsley and Lineker. Those are the players in the team box. They are not just little plastic players. They could quite as easily be replaced by Seaman, Adams, Dixon, Winterburn, Keown, Parlour, Overmars, Petit, Vieira, Wright and Bergkamp or any other set of players from any other era in football, providing the kit matches.

Because when we pay Subbuteo we are reenacting association football. That's what Peter Adolf wanted from the game. Sadly the days are gone where kids and teenagers get behind a little plastic figure as a footballer. Now they can see them in their team on FIFA or on Football Manager (the latter being being one of the things that stopped me playing with Subbuteo just years after getting my first set). No imagination is needed.

As much as we want to, with the advent of technology and all modern distractions, Subbuteo is never going to be played in the way it was. We all want it to be and all have ideas on how to grow it, but for most it will always be a memory of great childhood, or something to spark a footballing memory.

When I started collecting it was to build the Subbuteo stadium I couldn't have as kid. But it was really me wanting to relive a childhood moment. As I started to then collect afterwards and get more teams I noticed player names written under the figures in the box. These names and teams turned up more and more and it occurred to me these teams and players have a history. Someone had loved this team so much that the players were named, I bet they weren't just names players in a box or on pitch. I bet they played home and away in leagues and cups up and down the local street. Peter Adolf had achieved that he set out to recreate; association football.

When I'm not collecting teams of players I'm collecting the memories and stories behind each player. Memories of goals scored, memories of player breaking ankles, memories of leagues run by friends and recorded in little notes and memories of arguments with friends family over offside. This is why I collect, I collect to preserve what was, t

preserve the memories and history.

Yes, teams, cups and accessories can be more expensive than others, but I do not collect for financial gain. There is nothing in the definition of 'collecting' that mentions money or gain. That's investing, and I've certainly never heard of a Subbuteo investor. If that is your bag, then maybe you should be buying, collecting and investing in gold coins as opposed to little plastic men, little plastic toys that are made to recreate association football. That's why it doesn't matter the condition of the box or the self painted number on the back of the shirt, because I'm collecting memories.

Toys are made to be played with, made to make memories, not to be stored to grow in value. That's why everything should be opened. Until around two years ago I thought I was alone in this but I've found a massive community out there doing opened expensive and rare sealed toys.

Some of you reading this may be aware of Matt Cardona, a professional wrestler who has a vlog similar to mine on YouTube, collecting wrestling figures. Big money is spent on collecting wrestling figures, more than on Subbuteo, and every figure he purchases is opened and played with. Why? Because they are toys.

At the end of the day none of us are going to live forever. So if you buy that sealed rare Go Ahead Eagles ref 086 lightweight team. Open it, flick it around, score a goal. Because one day you won't be here, but the memories will be and when that memory gets into the hands of someone else they can relive the memory along with the rest of any collection with names written under figures in boxes and leagues written in boxes. There will always be a someone collecting and storing the memories. Because memories never die. They live on though whoever is reading the hand-written names and tables that have been collected. They live on forever.

The joy of 5-a-side Subbuteo



Gareth Christie - Flick for Kicks

Gareth Christie is the man behind Flick for Kicks, the makers of beautiful bespoke Subbuteo tables.

He builds full size and small size Subbuteo pitches and during lockdown he joined the Subbuteo Cup - a tournament played across living rooms across the country in April. He used a small-sided pitch to play his game and filmed a wonderful video showing the joy of small-sided Subbuteo.

As we are reviewing the Pegasus 5-a-side pitch in this issue we asked Gareth to describe his love of smaller pitches and his contribution to the Subbuteo Cup competition.

Over the 73 years of Subbuteo history the makers of the game have tried a number of times to create small-sided versions of the game and many are widely available now.

But what is it about small-sided Subbuteo that people love?

He says:

Frustrations playing Subbuteo on the familiar full-size pitch, is where most of us started, but if you're short of space and a large table to play on, frustration gets in the way of fun. Who wants to spend as much time trying to get the pitch to lay flat, as they do playing the game? Not me. And then you need to get a hang of the flicking technique and learn the rules too. There are lots of barriers for entry for Subbuteo, especially for kids when there are so many other options with a gentler learning curve. Introducing small-sided games are a great way to bridge the gap. Smaller pitches and smaller versions of Subbuteo are easier to set up and they have simpler rules. They also have more chances to smash the ball in the net. Shorter flicks are easier for new players and a basic set of rules covering how to flick, attacking, defending, and change of possession are enough to get started.

In 2013, my Dad and I made our first 5-a-side mini-table for my son and I wrote our own simplified rules to suit. You can bounce the ball and players off the walls, play slowly, or play fast and furious. We used short games

and it was end-to-end stuff without throw-ins or offsides to complicate the match. We also love a penalty shoot-out!

Now I've discovered the beauty of 7-a-sides for myself too. During lockdown amongst the Covid-19 pandemic, I was living alone and working from home. Separated from family and my son for three months, there was every chance my workaholic tendencies would take over and have my mental health suffer because of it. You might think that running a business around Subbuteo is all fun and games, but that's far from the truth at the best of times.

There's rarely time to actually play the game itself, so when the fantastic Subbuteo Online Cup was proposed, this was the push I needed to get my Pegasus half-size AstroTurf stuck down, and to get flicking. As a tournament player since 1989, it was all new to play 7-a-sides and against myself! I decided on my own solo rules, with regular block flicks, and to flick one team with each hand, then switch at half-time.

Unsurprisingly, this was confusing and led to all sorts of mistakes including playing the wrong way at times and also scoring an own goal! Brilliant fun though and it ended with a video uploaded for everyone to laugh at my efforts. There were also rules changes for future games.

Stepping up I can't wait to see how my boy will enjoy the stepping stone from 5-a-side to 7-a-side, but the mini-table will always be a blast as a game in it's own right, that's always set up ready to play. And I believe small-sided games like this, just like in real football, are key to bringing the game to the next generation.



Pic: The Subbuteo VAR set. The box is nice, I suppose.

WHAT A VAR-CE

Subbuteo's new global license holder, Longshore of Hong Kong, has launched the first two Subbuteo accessories since it became custodian of the brand.

The Subbuteo VAR set and new fencing sets are on sale now after the brand launched them via cryptic social media posts in January 2021.

However, the launches have caused a backlash after it was revealed some sets were on sale before Christmas, while others have complained of ordering the sets on Amazon and receiving older sets without the VAR unit. The shambolic launch was exacerbated by the poor communication from Longshore on when and where you can buy the new sets. Others questioned the launch of a VAR set when we are still lacking new, quality teams in the Subbuteo stable.

In response Subbuteo did launch four new teams - AC Milan, Inter Milan, Juventus and a side wearing a green kit. Unfortunately for UK buyers they are currently only on sale via the Italian distributor.

The teams themselves are similar to the Paul Lamond teams and do not come with reference numbers, meaning many serious collectors will likely shun the new Subbuteo range. It is a disappointing start to life under Longshore after a mixed reaction to the England box set and standard red and blue box set that were launched last year.

Even more baffling is the large amount of money spent on a major marketing campaign in the UK. Subbuteo pitchside advertising was spotted at the England international matches late last year, while John Motson has been brought in to provide the voice of an advert shown on TV throughout the second half of 2020.

It seems Subbuteo has been serious about advertising but the new products are not up to standard for the modern market.

It remains to be seen if the new license holders can salvage a rocky beginning and bring about a Subbuteo revival in the UK market.

SUBBUTEO FAIRS AND CLUBS UPDATE

Is anybody else missing the Renishaw Subbuteo Fair? The twice-yearly meet-up where collectors can buy, sell and socialise. As we get to a year of lockdown (on and off) in the UK it feels like the Subbuteo hiatus still has a long way to go for many.

Subbuteo World says the next fair is scheduled for May 2021, although a definite date has not been given yet. Here's hoping we are allowed to travel and catch up with Subbuteo buyers and sellers from across the country once again. Keep your diaries open.

Luckily plans are afoot for new developments in the English game courtesy of the English Subbuteo Association. It is planning a new National Club League, the English GP, Champions League Qualification and the 2021 World Cup Qualifiers. All of the events are due to take place this year as long as coronavirus restrictions are lifted.

Alan Lee has been the driving force behind many of the ESA's new ventures and he took to Facebook to share his joy at the advancement of the game in the country. He said: "Unbelievable what we've all achieved in the last year, all things considered. Five new clubs established in England; Stanway Flickers, Surrey Saracens, Solent Subbuteo Club, Haverhill Rovers and East Lancashire Subbuteo Club."

He has also made a call for more new clubs to be formed and is asking those who are interested to contact him for help setting up.

Meanwhile Manchester Table Football club has been busy recruiting new members, launching a beautiful club shirt (given free to new members) and launching a Discord for UK table football. Check out their Facebook page for more details on one of the few clubs operating in the North of England.



Pic: Manchester Table Football club's new kit. A fitting colour scheme given the city's ties to the humble bee.



What is wrong with new Subbuteo? By James Gordon

Subbuteo is back (again).

Every few years, some disconnected company somewhere manages to get licence to the name, and each time seemingly makes an absolute pigs ear in trying to re-launch the Subbuteo brand in a modern era.

The Subbuteo community is bustling. It's better than it's ever been in my lifetime. Yet this community finds itself stuck in a glass box, unheard and unseen. While a "table football" fan and collector, my Subbuteo collection is limited to official, Subbuteo branded products. That is largely the La Leggenda series (just seven teams to go until I have the full set!), Premier League branded Hasbro teams and as many of the modern Paul Lamond Games/Netcam teams as possible. Plus a handful of Leggenda Vintage.

Unfortunately, the attitude and ignorance of the official Subbuteo brand makes it painful to be a collector. Here are so many people in the community doing much better things than this. There was no information on where we could buy the "new" sets, and if you go on the official Subbuteo website, it's a drab site with barely any information listed.

That was followed up with a video detailing "new" teams. The trouble is, these look exactly like teams that were released since 2012. I've already got virtually identical versions of these times.

Such has been the disjointed efforts of Subbuteo, particularly to the UK audience, there is just no real catalogue or logical way of monitoring just what is released. Would it have been so hard to use reference numbers?

The La Leggenda and other collections in Italy have been superb. 150 teams, all clearly marked and labelled. I know exactly where I am. Yet with the modern day Subbuteo, I've got multiple licensed teams (which I can semi-understand due to sponsorship and kit changes), but I don't want another bloody green and white team.

Give me something different. A Croatia. A Motherwell. A Boca Juniors. Anything. Something. My excitement at seeing a Subbuteo set on sale in Tesco was dampened by the fact it looked so boring – a relatively plain green box, with a small window to show a few players. That's not going to engage my son.

Make it attractive. Get a photo on the front of people playing and enjoying the game. Get individual team sets released in the pocket money section – heck, you could even start doing 5-a-side teams in "blind bags" to make them cheap and then people might combine two 5-a-side teams to make a full one.

With the latest "re-launch", now is the time for someone to get a grip of it. People WILL buy them if they are done right. Give proper reference numbers to released items. And stop embarrassing stuff like this happening – where people order VAR sets and don't get them!

The way Subbuteo currently operates is like a football club that completely ignores its fans – and then wonders why no one buys a ticket.



NEWS: SUBBUTEO WORLD CUP

Well, sort of.

The FISTF World Cup, the table football tournament that brings together players from around the world, has announced it will be embracing traditional Subbuteo in future editions.

Modern World Cup tournaments use non-Subbuteo players with flatter bases. Astrobase and Extreme Works are just two of the brands that supply equipment for the popular biennial tournament.

The Rome World Cup was due to take place in 2020 but has now been pushed back to 2022 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In a recent announcement the governing body of FISTF announced plans are in place to bring a traditional Subbuteo section back to the World Cup.

After voting a new board in, it says: "A significant decision was the vote to include a 'traditional Subbuteo' category at the FISTF World Cup. A working group will be put together to decide on which rules to be used. This is a major development to encourage more players to participate at FISTF events. This will be a new 'code' for world sports table football. Many other codes exist too, such as Sector ball, 12 Touch, chapas and other codes."

The FISTF World Cup includes categories for young players, the main single player tournament, the team World Cup and veteran tournaments. The event is the biggest table football tournament in the calendar and most recently took place in a well-attended event in Gibraltar.

Teams and players from across the world gather for the tournament every two years and the new category could reignite interest in the tournament with more casual players.

COVER STAR



Reference 001 is the first Subbuteo team the brand ever produced. Usually accompanied by Reference 002 in box sets, it is one of the most recognisable Subbuteo colours of all time.

The white shorts and white socks with red trim mean it can represent many different teams that wear red. While originally designed to be used as both Manchester United and Liverpool, the two English heavyweights quickly got their own references with colours closer to their actual kits.

Instead Ref 001 can cover the likes of Barnsley, Charlton, Lincoln, Middlesbrough and Aberdeen. It was also used as Benfica when the Portuguese giants were added to the range.

In France the team was simply labelled as Equipe Rouge.

The team also comes with a white base and red insert, although this is rarer than the standard red base set.

A strange feature of one of possibly the least rare Subbuteo team of all time is that it is actually difficult to find a team box with a reference 001 team inside. As they were usually sold as part of box sets there was no real need for people to buy the team separately.

As such a team box is probably one of the rarest around - a strange twist on a heavy-weight figure every Subbuteo fan will own.

DI-WOW

Sean Molloy has been very busy during lockdown. The Subbuteo fan is in the process of building what is one of the most ambitious and spectacular Subbuteo cabinets we have seen here at The Hobby.

The lockdown project is not only a cabinet to store nearly 100 Subbuteo teams but also makes great use of the Subbuteo lamps to create a team box set effect.

We caught up with Sean to explain how he built the amazing project.

“The storage box for my teams was just a boring old plastic box and of course we all want to show off our teams as best we can. I got inspiration from a fella on Facebook, that made small shelving units for wrestling figures, based on the old Hasbro boxes.

“I’ve seen lots of collections on here with the obligatory LED lamp, but always thought they looked a bit lost and could be made into more of a feature. After finally getting one and measuring it, it turns out the scale is 6/1 against a normal Subbuteo lightweight

“Suffice to say, it made me grin like a little kid, every time I stepped back to check progress. I figured I could get maybe 80 team boxes inside once finished

“Using the one lamp I had (whilst hunting down seven more...) and some old left over underlay boards, I made the ‘tray’ to hold the

player lamps

“Whilst waiting for further lamps to become available and arrive, I bought the paint. Like a donut, I didn’t take a box with me to compare shades, but luckily, I wasn’t too far off. After a good few coats on the outside, the inside was painted white and the outside then masked up and lines painted. Took all of my will power to let it dry before I peeled the tape off. Really happy with the result!

“So this is how things stand now; I was originally going to try and source 8 of the different giant team players, but then thought the colour change lamps allowed a lot more variety and made a nice feature in the dark. I’ve almost finished the ‘Subbuteo’ logos that go on the front of the box. With a re-jig of the inside, I’ve managed to fit 93 teams in there so far.”

What next for the cabinet? Sean says he has found the player image for the front but needs to place it onto vinyl to attach it.

He says: “Once I’ve got a satisfactory resolution to the Jensen/Giannini conundrum, I’ll have a go at a Hasbro box (just the 2 lamps needed). It’s near as damn it 6:1 scale, but by no means am I a furniture maker, nor graphic designer - so excuse it being a bit rough around the edges.”

We can’t wait to see the finished cabinet.



AN ATTRACTIVE IDEA

Dale Griffin has developed a clever advertising idea and we can certainly see the positives.

He has used two magnetic strips to create changeable advertising hoardings. The strips attach to the standard green advertising hoardings and means you can switch things up when you want a change of scenery.

Dale is selling the hoardings on the various Subbuteo Facebook groups.

He says: "Set of 18 interchangeable magnetic advertising boards to fit vintage Subbuteo fencing panels. £15 delivered UK only. Delivery charge will apply outside of UK.

"Each set includes 18 printed magnets & 18 self adhesive magnetic strips for fixing to your fences. Custom boards featuring personal business ads or special messages can also be produced."



SINGLE FIGURE DISPLAY

If you have collected Subbuteo at any age you will be aware of the famous colour charts included in the catalogues. These were minimalistic charts featuring the different team colours and the associated reference numbers.

It is safe to say the charts have inspired many great Subbuteo displays and Gary Wilson is no different. He has revealed a wonderful lockdown project featured single players in the colours of the first 165 Subbuteo reference numbers.

Gary says: "In the 1970s we would spend hours enviously poring over the original HW 1 to 165 team chart and I never forgot that feeling. My joy of Subbuteo was rekindled last year and I wanted to get that feeling back by collecting single HW figures to replicate the poster.

"It a fifty fifty split between original HWs and painted Santiago Table Soccer figures displayed in a thimble showcase. I enjoyed the painting and found it quite relaxing having been inspired by others such as Calum Westwood, Allan Athorn and Alan Rennie."

Self-painting such a beautiful display is a cheap and fun way to fill a single player display without having to break up (and buy!) often expensive and rare reference numbers.

The Santiago Table Soccer figures look and feel a lot like standard heavyweight players and make a perfect stand in for the old Subbuteo style teams.

Thanks to Gary for sharing his single player display, which features smart wooden shelves to house the players. If you are looking to create this feel at home take a look for thimble displays or model car cases for shelves that are the perfect size for your average Subbuteo player.

FIELD OF DREAMS



Scott Brownlee posted this incredible image on his Twitter account. He says: "Field of dreams. OO scale dreams, but dreams nevertheless."

MARK ADOLPH

Mark Adolph is the son of Subbuteo founder Peter Adolph. As detailed in his tell-all book: Growing up with Subbuteo, he was surrounded by box sets, teams and accessories from an early age. he also tells of his intense games with his father and his often complicated relationship with the founder of the hobby. Here he talks to us about his collection, what he thinks of the modern game and what he has in his attic.

“Believe it or not I never ever owned a Subbuteo boxed set in any shape or form.”

Mark Adolph, son of Subbuteo founder Peter Adolph, has a few surprises up his sleeve even after years of answering questions about the table top game that his Dad turned into a global sensation decades ago.

The interview did not start particularly well. What do you ask a man who grew up with Subbuteo? A lot has already been said. His excellent book, *Growing Up With Subbuteo*, is an open and honest account of his childhood and his relationship with his father, while years of media interviews have added new layers to his experiences.

In fact, my list of initial questions was useless from the moment Mark reminded me he was just 13 when Subbuteo was sold by Peter to Waddingtons, meaning questions about kit colours, the ins and outs of the factory and rare references were not his particular area of expertise.

“As for the true enthusiasts they know far more about Subbuteo than I ever could with regards to product details, base combos, team references and all that sort of thing. I know nothing compared to the keen collectors and enthusiasts!”

Never mind that, then. I was much more interested in his personal experiences of Subbuteo and, given the exponential growth of the community in recent years, the future of the game.

But let's get back to box sets. How has the son of the Subbuteo founder, a boy who practised for eight hours a day to the point he was banned from his own school's Subbuteo tournaments, never owned a Subbuteo box set?

He says: “The reason being that in effect I was in a position to make up my own sets. I was able - within reason - to go to the factory in Langton Green and help myself to whatever I wanted. I cannot stress enough that it was within reason...there was more often than not a bargain to be struck with Dad, tidy your room, clean a car, that sort of thing, but when in the factory I had a free choice really, teams, accessories, anything really. So you see I never had need to own an actual set.”

For Mark, his first choice was always a reference 11 side, QPR. Peter had grown up supporting rivals Brentford but after an unsuccessful trial at the club a friend convinced him to visit Loftus Road and his loyalties were soon switched to the famous blue and whi-

te hoops. It meant that Mark often needed a plan B.

He says: “My favourite team as a child was QPR, Dad was a massive QPR fan and when we played Subbuteo together he always managed to get to play with reference 11, which was QPR. I never got a look in with the choice of teams. My second favourite team at the time was Manchester City. It was the Colin Bell, Frannie Lee, Mike Summerbee era, so my Subbuteo team of choice was Manchester City.”

But it wasn't all the glitz and glamour of Maine Road and West London. The joy of early Subbuteo days was the large range of teams and the fact many reference numbers could double up to represent more than one side.

Mark says: “As for unusual teams I played with...well for some reason, and I have no idea to this day why, I always favoured to play with any Scottish team, the lower their league status the better, Alloa, Dumbarton, Forfar East Fife... those type of clubs.”

Mark's book chronicles his games against Peter, with the elder player regularly coming out on top in the early years. Those games would have been high quality affairs - Mark was so talented at the game honed through years of practice that he was banned from his own school league because he was unbeatable.

When Mark played Subbuteo against his Dad it was played a certain way, and he is a big proponent of playing the game in the way it was intended.

“Dad did believe that Subbuteo should be played like a chess match...on that score I am firmly stuck in the dark ages, and believe that the new ways of playing with bases that don't spin, but only slide is not “proper” Subbuteo.

“It has lost its integrity in that way, but that is just me. As long as people still want to play the game in any way shape or form is fine by me. If Subbuteo ever got forgotten and never evolved it would be a tragedy.”

It is no surprise that the son of the founder of Subbuteo is something of a purist when it comes to the game, but what about the modern game? Much has been said of absentee owners of the brand and less-than-stellar new products. Mark, however, is stoic about the current state of the game.

“When I see or hear it mentioned on TV it never fails to excite me. I am more grateful than surprised that the brand is still going. I love to see Subbuteo as brand being portrayed

on totally non Subbuteo items, like t-shirts, socks, M&S Xmas range of men's body wash, that kind of thing.”

It may be a surprising response to some but Mark has had a number of decades where the very existence of Subbuteo has been questioned under an onslaught of new games set to distract the attention of young football fans.

It is ironic that a love of Subbuteo inspired Jon Hare to create a computer game representing the sport. He went on to create Sensible Soccer, one of the best-loved football games of all time. At the time the question of Subbuteo's future was already being asked of Peter Adolph.

Mark explains: “Dad was often asked in the 1980s with the advent of computer games if Subbuteo could remain a viable option. He always answered that computer games were no competition at all and that Subbuteo could easily run side by side with these new electronic computer games, citing that computer games lacked the hands on feeling players got with Subbuteo.”

However, privately Mark says there may have been a more pessimistic view of the future of the game as computer games began to dominate.

“I believe the feeling at the time amongst the Subbuteo hierarchy and most certainly my Dad was that it would eventually have its day.”

How do you keep a brand alive after so long? Through getting people playing, according to Mark.

“I did attend a local financial firms Christmas Subbuteo Tournament a few years ago, which rekindled my Subbuteo competitiveness and really enjoyed meeting many Subbuteo fans. It was also fun to win the tournament but it was a tight game in final, 1-0- just!

“I would love to see big Subbuteo events return, it can only be good to keep the brand going.”

And what about that attic setup? Does Mark still have a flickabout when time permits?

“Up until very recently,” he says I had a Subbuteo table and teams set up permanently in my loft conversion and more often than not would pop up for flick around to keep my hand in I suppose. That space is now taken up with a large Scalextric set up and I feel I have turned to the “dark side”!

INSIDE REF 116: SOUTHERN SUBURBS



There is a strange collection of Subbuteo teams in the reference number lists. Tucked away at reference 115 to 120 are six teams from the apartheid-era National Football League of South Africa.

Between the Swiss national team (ref 114) and Austria Vienna, the first of the Austrian sides at reference 121, sit six relatively unknown teams.

The reason for their inclusion in the range is simple. Peter Upton had many ties to South Africa due to his love of Ornithology and it would have been during one of many trips that he would have pushed to include the country's top sides in the Subbuteo catalogue.

Cape Town, Durban City and Hellenic all won the league at different times, while Durban United were one of the bigger teams from the city. The Jewish Guild was a more unusual choice of team but it is not the most unusual. That honour lies with Southern Suburbs.

Google the team and you will not find much information. A similarly-named team in Sydney, Australia is the top result and even on the NFL Wikipedia page Southern Suburbs links to the incorrect Australian side.

In fact so low profile is reference 116, with its unusual yellow shirt, black shorts and red socks combination, that anybody who stumbled upon the side in a job lot would probably guess it was a Cambridge or Luton reference number and move on. In fact, it is one of the rarest Subbuteo teams around and a mint heavyweight version is likely to fetch triple figures on the market today.

But who were Southern Suburbs and what happened to the club?

It turns out there was some pedigree there. Playing in the top division for 11 years in the 1960s and early 1970s, Suburbs

boasted Berry Niewenhuis, former Liverpool FC captain, as manager and finished runner up in the league in the early 1960s. They also won a National Shield - their only honour - in a period of success that coincided with the six South African teams being added to the Subbuteo range.

Eventually the league folded in 1977 and was replaced with a league that allowed white and black players to play together. The major restructure of South African football appears to be the last time Suburbs played at the top level, instead becoming an amateur side with a distinct community feel. .

We tracked down some of the last remaining players of the club, who told us: "the club (sadly) no longer exists but holds great memories for all who proudly wore the badge! I last played for the club in 1988/89. The club used to be a pro club in the earlier days but ever since I can remember 1970's or so, we were amateur. We had a clubhouse that I remember my father building with other volunteers, with a small concession stand and a pub for after the senior games."

While the members said they cannot find information on the origin of the kit colours, they did confirm the colours were correct for the kit they used, right down to the red socks.

The team itself came with a bit of a reputation. A former player told us: "We were hard

blue collar people with reputations of being a bit like Millwall or the old Wimbledon teams. We had great players with excellent skills, all learned in the streets and pick up games. We had very few coaches with any great experience except a man named Jon Cox. Jon had represented Portsmouth and England U23 I believe and he was a great coach with so much experience. But elsewhere there was not much expertise across the club."

So there you have it. A team that no longer exists outside of the old Subbuteo catalogues and the odd team in somebody's attic.

But what do the players think of the Subbuteo version of their team?

"That Subbuteo team is brilliant. I still have my original set but only British teams were available to buy..."



REF 86

GO AHEAD EAGLES

Dutch football is – potentially – the best place in the world for Subbuteo teams. The teams have some iconic kits and even the clubs' names are exotic and unusual.

Which brings us to the wonderful Go Ahead Eagles. The club probably has the best name in European football and a beautiful kit to match. It is this combination that makes Go Ahead Eagles a nostalgic name for football fans and collectors or kits, badges and of course Subbuteo.

Subbuteo reference numbers from 81 to about 90 are made up of Dutch teams and Go Ahead make the grade alongside some famous names with stunning kits. You will find Ajax, Feyenoord and Utrecht in the list but also the likes of Den Haag and the green and yellow shirt and NEC's minimalist white and green.

Number 86 is Go Ahead Eagles. It was perfect timing in the mid-1960s as Go Ahead qualified for Europe for the only time. They were beaten by Celtic but it was enough to get the club's name known.

It is now one of the rarer and more beloved Subbuteo teams and the most recent one up on eBay sold for a massive £90.

But does the club know about Subbuteo? We had to ask.

Club head of media Wouter Rutgers says: "Of course we know about Subbuteo! Nostalgia is one of the main parts of Go Ahead Eagles and Subbuteo is nostalgia!"

"We have heard about it in the past, that we have our own team. It's like a honour, especially if you tell us now it is so wanted by collectors. That fact fits in our club's character: we are not the biggest club, but we are quite unique in a lot of ways. We can add our Subbuteo team now as one of the unique parts of the club."

We wanted to know a little bit more about the club and the unique aspects Wouter mentioned. He put us in touch with club historian Niet de Kraken to find out a little more. He told us the club is about to embark on 100 years at the same stadium in the centre of

the city. He also told us about that unique shirt.

He says: "The Subbuteo's team name is Go Ahead, not Go Ahead Eagles. 'Eagles' was added in 1971. Till that year the club was built in two parts: the amateur part and the pro part. In 1971 both parts split. To make sure everyone knew the difference, the pro part continued as Go Ahead Eagles (the Eagles addition was figured out by our Welsh coach of that time: Barry Hughes), and the amateur part as Go Ahead. The pro part even changed their colours to purple-white for a few years!"

"Speaking about the colours: we were founded as Be Quick in 1902. In 1905 we entered the Dutch Football Association, but were told that there was already a club named Be Quick. So we had to change our name. Our founders came up with Go-Ahead as an alternative. To be completely unique the club colours were changed from red and white (other teams had red-white already) to red and yellow.

"The colour-change was an idea of the brothers Karel and Han Hollander, two of the founders of the club. Han Hollander became the most famous Post-World War II sports radio commentator of Holland later. He was sadly killed in extermination camp Sobibor in 1943..."

The club is proud of its heritage and the links with the game of Subbuteo but it is a more modern game that has helped to continue to generate interest from foreign fans.

"We have a fun fact: in 2013 we promoted to the Eredivisie for the first time in this century. So we made our 'debut' in the football game FIFA. Since then we have a number of English fans, because they came across our striking English club name. We get dozens of fanshop orders each year from the UK.

"But not only our name is English. We are being called 'an English football club' quite regularly, because our stadium has an English atmosphere with four individual stands and the fans very close to the pitch. Also the location of our stadium is English, in the centre of a living area with a lot of terraced

houses.W

"So to all English football fans: if you are in the area, don't hesitate to visit Go Ahead Eagles, because you will feel at home instantly!"

Go Ahead Eagles have all the makings of a classic Subbuteo team. A great name, a beautiful kit and above all else a pride in the fact the miniature game saw fit to create a replica.



GO AHEAD EAGLES FACTFILE

REFERENCE: 86

COLOURS: RED SHIRT WITH YELLOW TRIM, YELLOW SHORTS, YELLOW SOCKS WITH RED TRIM (HEAVYWEIGHT)

MOST RECENT EBAY SOLD PRICE: £89.47 (COMPLETE AND BOXED), NOV 2020.

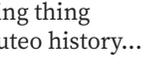
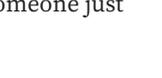
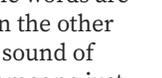
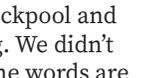
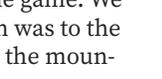
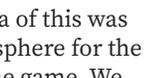
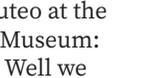
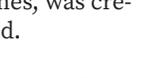
OTHER INFO:

LIGHTWEIGHT REFERENCES INCLUDE REF 250 (ALSO LENS) AND REF 632 (ALSO LECCE). THESE WERE NOT SPECIFICALLY MARKED AS GO AHEAD BUT MATCH THE TEAM COLOURS OF THE TIME.

MUNCH

WORLD SERIES EDITION

BY SUBBUTEO®



NEW!



TOP TRAY : MATCH SCOREBOARD : 2 FLOODLIGHTS : HALF-TIME SCOREBOARD : 6 LINE/CORNER FLAGS : 2 CONTINENTAL BALLS : 2 WORLD CUP GOALS : 2 INTERNATIONAL TEAMS : TV TOWER : TV CAMERA/CAMERAMAN : TV MONITOR/COMMENTATOR : REFEREE & LINESMEN : 3 CORNER KICK FIGURES : 3 THROW-IN FIGURES : 3 LEAGUE BALLS : 6 BALL BOYS.

BOTTOM TRAY : ENGLAND TEAM : FENCE SURROUND : CLUB FLAG : MANAGER & TRAINER : 4 PRESS PHOTOGRAPHERS : PLAYING CLOTH : REFEREE'S WHISTLE : NUMBER SHEETS : LOGBOOK & WALLET : AMBULANCE & POLICEMEN : MASCOT-COACH-RESERVES : 6 INTERCHANGEABLE GOALKEEPERS/RODS.

REPRODUCING ALL THE SKILLS AND THRILLS OF REAL WORLD CUP FOOTBALL...

SUBBUTEO SPORTS GAMES LTD., TUNBRIDGE WELLS, KENT, ENGLAND

The Munich World Series Edition is one of the most beloved Subbuteo box sets of all time.

The dramatic cover art, gothic fonts in the title and array of European flags was a departure for Subbuteo at the time. Following the success of the 1970 World Cup box set this was set to be jewel in the crown of Subbuteo's range.

The Munich 1973 World Series set is one of the most sought-after in the Subbuteo world and a similar example sold for £450 on eBay recently.

In the box you get a fence surround, a German flag and interchangeable goalkeepers. Other items include a manger, trainer and bench set, ambulance set, a baize pitch, two floodlights, referees and linesmen, TV tower, balls and teams.

Corner figures, a Ken Bailey mascot with rattle and a scoreboard are also included in the vast collectable set.

For many Subbuteo collectors and fans of

a certain age the box set still stirs nostalgic memories. It is often described as the Holy Grail of box sets and reserves a special place in the heart of Subbuteo fans everywhere.

The above picture is of the English version of the box set but did you know a German version is also available? It fetches upwards of £500 when it does go on sale and is one of the rarest and most in-demand sets of all time.

But what is it about the Munich 74 box set that captures the imagination? And why did Subbuteo launch the set in 1973?

In our big feature we take a look at the box set in detail and the run up to both the launch and the Subbuteo World Cup that accompanied the release of the range.

Keith Littler of Table Football Monthly has kindly written a superb article on the conundrum facing Subbuteo when England did not qualify for the German World Cup in 1974, while we catch up with players from the tournament itself.

Interestingly, one of Subbuteo's most bizarre

accessories was launched in direct response to the marketing around Munich 74.

The Subbuteo Sound, a record designed to provide atmosphere during games, was created with the World Cup in mind.

Alan Ellis, who worked at Subbuteo at the time, told the Tunbridge Wells Museum: "Subbuteo Sounds - the record? Well we made this at Wadhurst. The idea of this was to give some background atmosphere for the boys while they were playing the game. We sang the World Cup song, which was to the tune of 'She'll be coming round the mountains'."

"One of our agents was a chap called Frank Burton and he was based in Blackpool and he wrote the lyrics for this song. We didn't employ professional singers. The words are on one side of the record and on the other side are the crowd sounds. The sound of the football being kicked was someone just flicking the microphone."

But that is not the only interesting thing about a fascinating era in Subbuteo history...



Keith Littler of Table Football Monthly takes a look at the big problem facing Subbuteo in the months running up to the launch of its new Munich box set.

Following the technicolour, high scoring and drama filled World Cup of 1970 expectations for Munich 74 were high. Global television had come of age in Mexico. The spike in uptake of colour television rentals suggested most UK households would be ready and eager to greet Europe's biggest Finals tournament yet.

The role of football pundits became clearly defined during Mexico '70. These footballing 'characters' were no longer merely a back-up plan 'B' should the satellite link go down but a key part of match coverage. TV legends such as Brian Moore, Jimmy Hill and David Coleman had the stature and craft to manage the tempestuous egos of Clough, Allison, Dougan, Crerand and McNab...most of the time.

For Subbuteo Sports Games 1970 had also been a triumph. The company had not been in a position to fully maximise the marketing benefits of the '66 tournament to the point where the Qualifying National Teams were only available by special Mail Order – but the massive impact on International Sales after the Tournament ensured they wouldn't make the same mistake again. For 1970, now owned by giant games publisher Waddingtons (Monopoly and Cluedo), Subbuteo launched what would become the first of their iconic "Big" box sets; The World Cup Edition. A treasure chest of goodies beyond the reach of many of us but I did have a picture of the set taped to the inside front cover of my school work-book – between a navy blue Hawker Hunter and the Lunar Module.

Subbuteo were not alone in wishing to generate sales from the forthcoming tournament. New kids on the block, Striker, had been well received on launch. A large 5-a-side boxed

set with "real kicking" players and a Keeper that could swivel and throw the ball out had caught the imagination of young lads everywhere. The game required less skill and tactical thought than Subbuteo and could be enjoyed straight from the box. Manufacturer, Parker Games, had decided to launch their own World Cup Edition. Game on!

If I may digress for a moment. World Cups are traditionally known by the year of the tournament and the host Nation – Mexico '70, Argentina '78, Spain '82, Italia 90, USA '94, France 98 etc. How strange that West Germany '74 never existed – it simply became Munich. Maybe the fact that the Munich Olympics happened just two years earlier had an influence?

With the benefit of experience gained producing their initial two-tier World Cup Edition, and an ever-growing number of collectible accessories to throw into the box, the set looked destined to be a commercial success.

So why I am tapping away on my keyboard under a heading of "Best Laid Plans"? I'll start with a little reminder. Back in '74 FIFA rules dictated that only sixteen Nations could qualify for the Finals.

It was decided that the Munich Edition would contain three teams. First, Tournament hosts, West Germany – a simple and obvious choice and, as an English manufacturer, a wise move as the team had played a major part in England's World Cup story in '66 and '70 and had unceremoniously dumped Ramsay's team out of the 72 Euros – winning 3-1 at Wembley. Ouch!

Then came risk number one. Holland. A

risk I hear you say? Feyenoord had won the European Cup in '70 beating Celtic 2-1 and between '71 and '73 Ajax had ensured the stunning trophy remained in Holland. Why wouldn't the national team be included in the box?

Holland had failed to reach the European Championships of 1972 and the nation's last World Cup Finals had been in 1938. Their qualification for '74 was by no means certain. Group 3 included Norway and Iceland which, with respect, at this time in history were clearly makeweights. However the final team in the Group, which allowed for only the winners to qualify, was Belgium. A team with pedigree and a major force in Europe at the time having finished 3rd in the Euros of '72.

Finally, naturally enough, England. As an English manufacturer SSG "had" to include the national side. Winners in '66 and Quarter Finalists in 70 (with what many experts considered to be a better squad than that of '66) and regular qualifiers since the war.

The selection made sense as Brazil and Italy had appeared in the previous World Cup Edition and the likes of Spain, France and Portugal were not the strong contenders they have become in recent years. Equally the South American giants Argentina, Uruguay, Peru and Chile had struggled in previous European tournaments.

Risk number two: When Carlos Alberto ran onto Pele's beautifully weighted pass to fire home Brazil's fourth goal in the 1970 final he not only rounded off a perfect tournament for himself as team captain but he raised the Jules Rimet Trophy for Brazil's third World Cup win allowing this magical footballing country would retain the trophy for all time.

As '74 approached Subbuteo had not acquired the Rights to create a model of the new trophy. How would a World Cup Edition fair with no trophy and if neither England nor Holland were to qualify?

You may be shrugging your shoulders at this point and thinking it wouldn't have been of any consequence. After all it would still sell simply because it was a Subbuteo set. Perhaps. Let's return to Striker's World Cup Edition. The grand and large box was certainly going to attract attention, but the contents fell short. The ubiquitous red and blue teams of the period hardly captured the flavour of a global footie tournament, admittedly the gloriously designed "diving" Keepers were worth the box price alone. The box also included a scoreboard containing World Cup team tabs and 4 floodlights (which, despite their squat design, shone brighter than the Subbuteo version). This boxed set did not fly off the shelves and certainly doesn't compete

with collectible Subbuteo products of the period today. Had it included West Germany and Brazil who knows what the difference may have been?

Fortunately for us all and the game of football itself, Holland did qualify but only just and in controversial circumstances. The final game of the Group was to be played on Nov 18th 1973 and fittingly was between Holland and Belgium - almost a year to the day since the opening game played in Antwerp which finished goalless. All Holland needed to do was draw (their Goal Difference was +21 to Belgium's +10) and were doing so until the 89th minute when Belgium won a free kick just outside Holland's eighteen-yard box. Van Himst floated the ball in with the outside of his right foot, though softly hit and a perfect height for the Dutch Keeper, Schrivers flapped at it and the ball fell perfectly for Belgium's Verheyen to prod into the empty net. Belgium were one up with no time left for Holland to equalise. Controversially the goal was ruled off-side despite it being clear from the TV coverage that three Dutch players were between Verheyen and the goal-line. The decision stood and the World, fortuitously, would get to witness one of the greatest and most innovative teams of modern times.

A month earlier at Wembley England played their final Qualifier against Poland. Group 5 was a three team group, the final team being Wales. Qualification for England was considered a formality by many. Like Holland, Poland hadn't qualified for a Finals tournament since before the war and many experts dismissed their '72 Olympic Gold medal winning performance as an irrelevance. However, England had managed to make hard work of their qualifying games, drawing with Wales at Wembley after beating the Welsh at Ninian Park and losing 2-0 to Poland in Katowice. The final game at Wembley had to be won. A month earlier Ramsay's team had knocked seven past Austria and though there was a tension around the ground and in the

ITV Studios it was unthinkable that England could fail. Two England stalwarts were missing from game. Keeper Gordon Banks had suffered horrific damage to his eye in a car accident and would never play for England again and Bobby Moore, the golden haired World Cup winning captain, had suffered a major loss of form. They were replaced by Shilton in goal and Norman Hunter of Leeds United - both accomplished and experienced players.

However in the 57th minute Poland cleared the ball to the half-way line - just inside the touchline on England's right. Hunter, one of the county's leading centre backs, decided to try and win possession and maintain England pressure rather than clear the danger. Lato knocked the ball from beneath Hunter's studs and raced down the wing. Lato cut inside and played a cross-field pass to Damski, on his own at the edge of the area. Damski fired low and the ball squirmed beneath Shilton's body into the net. Poland's first shot on goal changed the whole game. Ramsay, a man who never quite grasped the use of substitutes, did nothing on the bench, claiming later his watch had stopped. Allan Clarke of Leeds United pulled back a penalty for one-all on 63 minutes. Another goal was needed. Wave after wave of England attacks followed but were frantically repelled by the Polish defence. With a couple of minutes left Ramsay finally made a change and Derby County's Kevin Hector was brought on and nearly scored in the final minute but the whistle blew to the delight of the Poles who had taken three points out of a possible four against England.

In Tunbridge Wells there was disbelief. Outworkers had been painting England teams by the hundreds for the new Edition. With no England team at the Tournament would youngsters still watch it? England team merchandise and petrol station give-aways would be pulled from the shelves, magazines such as Shoot, Striker and Goal would not be

covering the build-up and enthusing Kid's to replicate England games on the table-top. This one result could have a major negative impact on sales.

There was a glimmer of hope however. On September 26th Scotland, against all the odds, had beaten the highly fancied Czechoslovakia at Hamden Park to qualify for the World Cup for the first time in 16 years. What's more they had a very strong team featuring the likes of Billy Bremner, Peter Lorimer, Joe Jordan, David Harvey and Eddie Gray from Leeds United, Jimmy Johnstone and David Hay of Celtic, Willie Morgan and Jim Holton from Manchester United and the evergreen Denis Law (by then a City blue). They could do well and should progress through the Group phase.

Sadly the Scots' immense achievement came too late to make it into the Munich Edition Boxed Set. This most famous of Subbuteo products hit the shelves with Munich '74 finalists W. Germany and Holland in place, no World Cup Trophy and an England side of no relevance whatsoever. A 1/76 scale Ken Baily, England's mascot figure even received his own slot on the lower tier of the box along with an England flag...slight overkill for us stunned England fans and one can only imagine how Scottish youngsters (and dads) felt when opening the box on Christmas morning '73.

Despite England's failings, the Subbuteo Munich Edition was a peak for Subbuteo and the last of the big boxed sets of the Golden Era. By the time of Argentina '78 the Heavyweight players were no more - replaced by the unfancied "Zombie" player type and international Subbuteo sales were in decline. Things would pick up in the 80s with the advent of the Lightweight, machine printing of kits and better balls but the days of the Grand Boxed Sets were over and, in keeping with Subbuteo's uncanny habit of following the real game, the creator of the table-top game, Peter Adolph had left SSG in the early 70s and would be followed by Sir Alf Ramsay who was fired from his England manager post in 1974.

Funny old game!



Pic: The World Cup Striker box set

Credit: Keith Littler

THE STORY OF MUNICH '74

In 1972 Subbuteo exported its first ever team to markets in Europe and beyond. It had taken the brand over two decades to start selling in Europe and, unsurprisingly given the game's popularity in the country, it took a trip to Italy to set the ball rolling.

The company's unnamed 'Italian rep' took Subbuteo to the 1972 Milan Toy Fair and it was a huge success. A trip to Nuremberg followed where again interest in the game was intense. At the time it was described as a 'real breakthrough' for the company and it proved the catalyst for an incredible two years that saw one of Subbuteo's best ever box sets and a tournament that took the game to Europe and beyond.

This is the story of Subbuteo and Munich 74.

A monopoly on football games was important for Subbuteo at a time when attendance at matches was dropping. The 1973/74 season saw the average crowd in the English top flight slump to below 30,000 for the first time in eight years as a recession, high employment and the rise of hooliganism kept match-going fans away.

Long before FIFA and Football Manager there was just one thing children could turn to when they wanted to take their team to cup glory in their living room. The biggest and best form of table soccer ever produced. Local media reported in 1973 that "While attendances at real football matches are slumping, table soccer is enjoying a boom period. Subbuteo is unique in that it is the only actual representation of soccer as it is actually played, and it combines elements of skill and luck as the real game does."

At the time Subbuteo knew it was on the cusp of something special. Interest in the brand had gone global and the company was soon recording interest as far as Hong Kong and as a result of growing internationalism, turnover increased by about 30% at Subbuteo Sports Games Ltd.

The UK's entry into the Common Market was a major factor in Subbuteo expanding its team range in the 1970s. In fact, all numbers between 80 upwards are likely down to the brand's expansion into Europe. As reported in the Chronicle and Courier of the time: "A company with an enthusiastic commitment to the new enlarged EEC is Subbuteo Sports Games Ltd, of Tunbridge Wells, who make the popular table soccer game, Subbuteo."

"As a direct result of Britain's entry into the Common Market, they have increased the number of different team colours they can provide, from 80 to 160, and they can now supply First Division team colours - in authentic detail - from any of the Common Market countries."

The promise to provide team colours from any Common Market country did not stretch to the tiny nation of Luxembourg. However, references 82-89 are some of the most beau-

tiful Subbuteo teams ever made, covering the likes of Den Haag, Go Ahead, Feyenoord and the rare Haarlem side.

The 90-100 range included Italian sides, and they were followed by Swiss, Austrian, German and French teams. Subbuteo also used the opportunity to launch South Africa and new international sides as part of the major expansion.

Alan Ellis, who worked for Subbuteo at the time, told the Tunbridge Museum that these new teams caused plenty of problems for the company. "When we started producing all the different colour strips," he says, "all the teams in the British league and all the teams abroad, It was a job to keep up with it. In the end we started putting out the work to outside contract packers for a while, because it was to a certain extent seasonal. With the football season plus Christmas of course. You could employ enough production people to meet your peaks and also keep them usefully employed during the quiet times. It became so successful that we started putting it out to contract packers. John West salmon for instance is an office in Liverpool, but all the canning and labelling is done by outside people. It wasn't until I got involved with contract packers I realised what a big business it was."

Business was stretched but Subbuteo were thinking big and were about to pull out a marketing plan that would set them on a course for global domination. The new teams were sparking interest in the game at home and abroad but what they needed was a halo set to sit at the top of the range. A set that would be the pinnacle of what the brand could produce.

Subbuteo had already launched a World Cup set in 1970, a beautiful big box of accessories that proved the concept. This, coupled with a tournament at London's Savoy Hotel, had left a lasting impression on the owners of the brand. Now they wanted to go bigger. In 1973 Subbuteo Sports Games introduced the stunning Munich World Series box set and it was unlike anything it had ever attempted before.

Subbuteo World, which has the set for sale for a whopping £899, describes it as: "The Holy Grail of Subbuteo Collectables. If you have everything Subbuteo chances are you won't have this German Edition. (It is) Very sought after."

In the box you get a fence surround, a German flag and interchangeable goalkeepers. Other items include a mangher, trainer and bench set, ambulance set, a baize pitch, two floodlights, referees and linesmen, TV tower, balls and teams. Corner figures, a Ken Bailey mascot with rattle and a scoreboard are also included in the vast collectable set.

The set was huge and Subbuteo were worried that as most fans of the game already had teams, a pitch and all of the accessories needed to play the game, it would need to convince people they wanted the Munich set becau-

se of its grandeur. For players of the time, it worked. It became the Holy Grail for young Subbuteo fans across the country.

WoodyStumpy (on Twitter), who shared pictures of his set for The Hobby, says: "It's the daddy for me. I prefer it to the World Of Sport because of its cardboard inner. It looks quality."

"My box & lid are quite worn but the contents are complete & look unused. Take the lid off & the original soft white protective sheet is still there. Most of the items are in tier one. Note the uncut 1974 World Cup team sheets for both the brown scoreboard & the half time scoreboard. I absolutely love this set. It came out when I had started playing. We all wanted it even though we already owned 90% of the stuff in it. That probably sums up the magic of this set."

Even now the Munich set has achieved mythical status among Subbuteo collectors. It's big, brash and expensive. Sets sell for upwards of £300 on the resale market due to high demand and the fact Subbuteo did not actually make a huge amount of complete Munich sets.

The marketing marathon

The golden age of Subbuteo was here and the marketing push was snowballing. The Munich set was just the start. Tournaments across Europe were becoming increasingly competitive. Players used mostly flats and were gathering in increasingly well-organised numbers across the continent to compete for the likes of the Europa Cup. It was the tournament all serious players wanted to win and Subbuteo wanted in on the action.

Subbuteo had already held the relatively successful 1970 World Cup in London. A UK-based tournament would have been easy but with a host of new European teams to sell and a major new box set on the way the company needed something else. It needed the first ever officially organised Subbuteo World Cup on foreign soil - and it was going to cost them. Subbuteo ploughed a hefty £40,000 marketing budget into a Subbuteo Table Football Competition set to take place in Munich, a week before the real life World Cup was to be played. It was to be an international competition open to people of all ages with the aim of finding national champions from different countries.

As well as organising lengthy qualification tournaments to find a representative for each nation who would take part, Subbuteo also launched competitions to find younger players and fans to take to Germany. A clever marketing ploy that would have hooked a huge number of young players to the game. Many of these boys - and it was predominantly aimed at males - would become the players and collectors of later years.

With a new box set in place, advertising



in major newspapers and magazines and even a World Cup song, representatives from Subbuteo and competitors set off for Munich for the groundbreaking event.

Giant gold and silver 'falcon' trophies were produced for the potential winners by Subbuteo and in June 1974 the bright and the best Subbuteo players in the world took trains, planes and cars to Munich for the groundbreaking event.

Despite the hefty marketing budget the tournament itself started off quietly in the UK. A regional Scottish newspaper sent a reporter and Radio 4 contacted the English qualifier for some colour pieces before the tournament but it was not broadcast anywhere in the UK.

However, the players were in high spirits as they descended on Munich - even if the new sense of internationalism did not always seem evident in the tournament room.

A report in the Press and Journal at the time described the hall as "a kind of sporting tower of Babel" with live bagpipes for the Scottish contingent and "exciting paraphernalia of interpreters and international referees, and trilingual announcements about the order of events".

Champions brought along fans - winners of write-in competitions. The report said: "The sight of dozens of youngsters, many of them far away from home for the first time, clearly settling in happily in a strange country and vociferously making friends is a cheering one."

The Players

Michael Dent, a serious Subbuteo player at the time, did not even expect to qualify for the tournament, having beaten close friend Norman in the qualification final - a match where he had 'squeezed a shot between the keeper and the post' and then deployed a defense strategy to keep the ball and run down the clock.

He describes the tournament room as something new and exciting. Previously tournaments had several pitches set up alongside each other with almost constant games. However, the Munich World Cup was a more professional setup with only a handful of tables and all of the viewers' attention focused on individual games at any one time.

Red ropes kept the spectators at bay and the tournament was fiercely competitive, according to Michael. It also threw up some big ties including talented Dutchman Dick Rietveld versus Pater Czarkowsky of Italy - the reigning German champion and a future World Champion himself. That match finished 0-0.

Michael says: "Games were longer back then and it afterwards players were mentally and physically shattered. It may seem strange to say that as we were just standing at a table flicking men around but it was more tactical back then. It was like a game of chess - you were always thinking ahead.

"The last thing wanted to do was go charging upfield and leave your defence exposed."

In fact, the competitive atmosphere had not gone unnoticed by the visiting press.

The Finals

The Press and Journal report had already covered early tempers and tantrums. It said: "The referee disallowed the goal to floods of tears from the young Italian player. Around the pitch in Munich the international crowd cheered and booed as the Italian supporters howled in anguish. There had already been official protests and a spectacular walk off the field and the air was twanging with tension."

It led to a tense atmosphere, but Michael won through the early stages of the tournament. Before he flicked off he had taken part in a couple of fun interviews over the phone for Radio 4 but they were soon becoming more regular and there was a sense of excitement back home as he moved through the rounds.

Michael explains: "There is a Netflix series called the Queen's Gambit where she is in a chess tournament and in each round she leaves the venue to be confronted by bigger crowds each time, before she reaches the final and she can barely get out of the door because of the throng of journalists.

"It felt a bit like that in Munich. It got bigger as the tournament went on."

The final was held on the final day of the tournament, a Friday. Michael says there were now 'lots of people watching' as he prepared for the big game.

Hamley's Toy Store in London stocked Subbuteo at the time and began to show the scores in the window. By the time Michael had reached the final of the tournament, a crowd of around 25 people had gathered to get news on the final.

It was to be Michael against Dirk Reitveld in the final. Michael was first to score and, like his qualification matches, he knew that could be enough to see out the game. He was defending his lead well despite it being a mentally draining task across the tactical, tense 40-minute games.

With just seconds to go the news began to trickle through and it was well received by

the crowd at Hamleys, who believed the match was over and the World Cup was coming to England. In Munich however, things had begun to go wrong.

However, in Munich disaster was about to strike. With all of the crowd focused on the central table Michael had begun to lose his composure. The assured, defensive Subbuteo he had employed in the qualifier went out of the window as nerves struck.

"I was playing really well. I was disciplined but as soon as I went 1-0 up my hands started to shake. He scored straight away. When he went to take his shot the rules said my goalkeeper had to be upright and I didn't react quickly enough. I was unable to move and he slid it in. I thought I'd lost it.

"He went on to score in extra time. I was devastated."

Dirk, described by Michael as a 'fantastic' player, had won the trophy and it was heart-break for Michael. It was a tale of glorious defeat and one that is all-too familiar for English football fans. But Michael would not make the same mistakes again. He went on to win the Europa Cup in 1976, before following it up with a host of European and UK titles in the following years.

He went away with a good impression of the tournament - keeping particular praise for the standard of refereeing and the competitiveness of the players, particularly those from Italy.

For Subbuteo the legacy of the tournament was huge. Michael remembers it being a step-change in how people perceived the game. He says: "I wasn't expecting anything that big. A lot of people has heard about Subbuteo but after the tournament everybody in my office knew about Munich. I still speak to former colleagues who remember all of the fuss from the time."

Subbuteo has put on a major tournament and it had gone very well. However, the incredible box set was not so successful. Despite the marketing push it proved too expensive for fans of the game and by 1976, Subbuteo had moved back towards smaller sets.

It didn't abandon tournaments so quickly. The Munich 74 World Cup proved there was an appetite for tournaments and later iterations such as the bad-tempered Italia 90 tournament were even shown live on British TV.

The modern table football events are still going strong and they owe it all to the success of 1974 - a year that gave us the greatest Subbuteo World Cup ever and one of the best box sets ever made.



Inside the two layers of the Munich box set



ROY OF THE ROVERS AND SUBBUTEO REVISITED

Flicks for Comics

“Roy Race was groundbreaking. I wanted to make him as real as possible and he was the first boys’ comic hero to get married and become a father. At the time soaps were becoming popular in the UK and that is exactly what Roy of the Rovers became.”

Barrie Tomlinson is the man behind the success of Roy of the Rovers - probably the best-known and most beloved fictional football of all time. First appearing in Tiger comic in 1954, Roy Race was given his own comic in 1976, when Barrie, then the editor of Tiger, launched Roy of the Rovers as a separate title. For many years, Barrie rubbed shoulders with celebrities, footballers and even royalty as Roy Race and his teammates took over the world.

The popularity of Roy of the Rovers cannot be understated. For generations it has been the go-to magazine for football fans and is still beloved to this day, with a polished relaunched a couple of years ago introducing Melchester Rovers to a whole new generation.

Barrie’s ability to drive the brand forward led to a number of incredible cameos. The Duke of Edinburgh wrote a note for the first issue (“I just wrote to Buckingham Palace and asked the Duke if he would write for us”) while Sir Alf Ramsey, who had won the World Cup with England, was convinced to appear in the magazine and take control of a Melchester Rovers.

“It was one of our best storylines,” says Barrie, “Roy has been shot and I asked Sir Alf Ramsey to take charge and he agreed. a sense of humour but he was great to work with. He took over the team and they won 14-0 - a record score! The match was broadcast to Roy’s hospital room via loud speakers and it got him out of his coma.”

From watching Hungarian legend Ferenc Puskas take shots against Gordon Banks in a photoshoot to posing with Dickie Bird, Barrie’s passion and drive to expand the horizons of Roy Race led to a phenomenon that is as long-lasting as Subbuteo.

Barrie had other ideas for Roy of the Rovers too. When he was planning the first issue of 1976 he had already planned a couple of spin offs. Of those, one of them proved to be a huge hit with younger readers and it was all inspired by Barrie’s own childhood.

He says: “As a child I had a Subbuteo team, but I only had one and I had nobody to play. I converted some toy soldiers into a second team and they played each other. I played as both teams so I can say I never lost a match.

“My parents had a beautifully polished dining table and I marked a pitch in chalk. I used two goalposts and used my mother’s hair nets as nets. I had some jolly games and I got away with marking the table!”

When he was planning the first issue of Roy of the Rovers, in 1976, he made notes of story ideas and one of those involved a boy called Mike and his own Subbuteo team.

“With Roy everything had to be about football and I wanted to get away from that. I

wanted to do a Subbuteo team

Barrie’s notes from the time say: “Subbuteo is a very popular game with boys. This is the story of a boy, Mike, who has his own Subbuteo team. His team plays in a mini league against other boys. They have all the dream of real-life football in their games. Mike can come up against bullies, nice kids and nasty ones as he competes.

He added notes stating that storylines could see Mike adding to his set, losing pieces and entering tournaments, while lessons learned on pitch could help with real-life football solutions in his youth teams.

Roy of the Rovers had a slight issue however. They were not allowed to mention the word Subbuteo at all and instead the story was labelled ‘Mike’s Mini Men’. Despite that, relations with Subbuteo were friendly and Barrie’s original pitch also hints at future marketing activity and giveaways with the Subbuteo brand - something that certainly did come to fruition.

“At the time every story we did had to be about football and I wanted to get away from it,” explains Barrie. “Luckily I could do what I wanted and I didn’t have to get clearance for things like this. Conveniently feedback showed people wanted a Subbuteo story and Subbuteo was happy for us to do it.”

“We could never use the name but feedback from readers was very good. It was one of our most popular stories.”

Mike’s Mini Men is one of the best-known and most popular stories from the Roy of the Rovers stable and its success was not the only tie-in with the brand.

The Roy of the Rovers kit with the single stripe is arguably the most famous and it was Barrie’s influence that inspired the famous red and yellow colours.

“I’m biased of course but that is the best Roy of the Rovers kit. It was originally red shirts, yellow sleeves and blue shorts but we dropped the blue shorts because it was difficult to find opposition kit colours that did not clash.”

As Barrie predicted, Subbuteo was keen to cash in on the Roy of the Rovers craze and it was that kit that was to be reproduced as the first ever Melchester Rovers Subbuteo team.

“I consulted with Subbuteo on the team and I was very pleased that they went for the



strip I designed,” he says.

Roy’s popularity led to a sponsorship deal with kit manufacturer Gola. However, the idea of a brand appearing on Roy’s shirt was more controversial than it would be today. Seen as ‘advertising to children’, it sparked outrage and a debate in parliament that actually banned it from appearing in comics for a short time.

“It was a bit of a tragedy,” says Barrie, who argues it was simply a reflection of what was happening in real football of the time.

He also confirmed the deal came with just one necessary request; one of the players in the Melchester Rovers team had to be blond to replicate Roy himself.

At the time Roy Race was the only Subbuteo player in existence with blond hair and the set, despite selling well, is one of the rarer and more sought after novelties of the Subbuteo range.

It was the first proper fictional Subbuteo team created and was the forerunner to more unusual brand partnerships such as a team designed by the band The Farm, a Tango



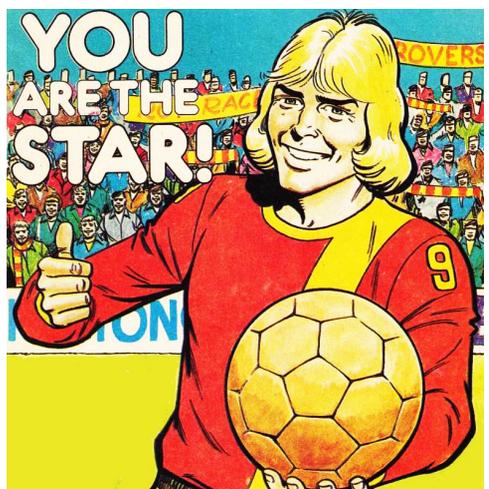
Pic: The new Roy of the Rovers

team given away as a marketing promotion and even Budweiser teams in the brand's later years.

While those marketing teams are rare and collectable none really capture the imagination as well as the Melchester Rovers Subbuteo set - two of the biggest off-pitch football brands in the world.

That was not the end of the brand tie-ins. Barrie regularly teamed up with Subbuteo for giveaways and shared an incredible picture of one lucky fan receiving a Subbuteo World of Sport box set - the biggest and most expensive Subbuteo box set ever sold. Now fetching prices of over £1,000, it features several layers housing Subbuteo football, cricket and rugby sets and the iconic white international team poster on the inside of the leather-bound box.

Barrie still loves Roy of the Rovers and Subbuteo. He spends plenty of time on social media site Twitter sharing incredible photographs and anecdotes about his time at Tiger and Roy of the Rovers.



MELCHESTER ROVERS TEAM GUIDE



Subbuteo released a Melchester kit on three occasions. All were sold through the comic as mail-aways in 1980-81, 1984 and 1994. The first of these was Melchester's classic 1970s kit (red with one yellow vertical stripe).

Unusually for Subbuteo, the box was named but did not come with a reference number. This reflected the one-off nature of the deal to produce Melchester Rovers figures.



Released in 1984, the second Melchester Rovers set featured Subbuteo's first ever blond player in Roy Race.

It featured the Gola strip worn by the team at the time but it did not include the advertising on the front of the shirt.

For the first time the team was given a number in the Subbuteo reference range - 568.

It was a lightweight, machine-printed kit and sells for upwards of £50 on eBay.

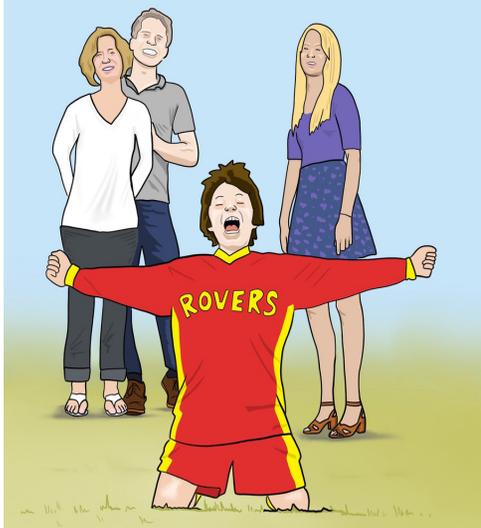


The third Melchester Rovers team arrived in 1994 under reference number 806. It's a stylish striped kit to reflect the team at the time. The kit itself was a result of a reader competition.

The team also featured the Subbuteo sponsorship as Subbuteo moved into featuring sponsors on shirts for the first time.

Sadly, Roy of the Rovers was in decline at this point, moving to a monthly publication and moving away from the storylines of its past by featuring helicopter accidents and Roy's retirement after losing a foot. The comics focused on Roy's son, Rocky, who is also the protagonist in a recent relaunch.

HERO OF THE DAY



An exclusive story written for *The Hobby* by Barrie Tomlinson, former Group Editor of the Sport and Adventure Department at IPC Magazines. Illustration by Brad Lloyd.

It was the Final!

The day fifteen-year-old Noah had been waiting for. It was the final of the football tournament he was determined his team, Morton Rovers, would win. It had taken a lot to persuade his parents to come to the game and he wasn't going to let them down. This was going to be his special day.

There was a big crowd for the match. As kick-off neared, Noah looked around. Lots of his friends were at the final. Suddenly, he couldn't believe what he was seeing. Grace was there! The girl from his class at school. Previously, he had tried to chat to her but she had never seemed very keen. This was a chance to really impress her.

Noah's nerves started to kick in. Sweat trickled down his face. He wanted the match to start. Once that happened, he knew he'd be all right.

Tolford City had got to the final but their record wasn't particularly impressive. Not like Morton Rovers. His team had only conceded one goal in all the previous rounds.

No worries!

Kick-off was only seconds away. Noah glanced towards Grace. She was looking at him. She smiled at him. His heart pounded. Maybe he was in with a chance! A voice inside Noah was screaming at him. 'Concentrate on the game!'

Rovers kicked off but they quickly lost possession and the ball was sent into the Morton Rovers penalty area. Their defence was all over the place as the City forwards exchanged quick passes, ending with a fierce shot at goal, just out of reach of the Morton 'keeper. One-nil to City!

This was not the start Noah had wanted. He looked towards his parents. His mum was looking down but his Dad gave him a thumbs up. What was Grace doing? She was chatting on her mobile phone, not looking at him!

Noah knew he had to get a grip of this situation ... and fast! Now all the pressure was coming from Rovers. A weak clearance gave Noah a shooting chance. Could he take it?

He could!

Noah's shot was to the bottom corner of the net. There was no way the 'keeper could reach it.

'G-O-O-O-A-L!

Noah punched the air and looked towards Grace. She was smiling at him!

Despite both teams having more goal chances, the scores remained level at half-time. There was still everything to play for: Victory in the match, his promise to his parents and another special smile from Grace ... or maybe even a hug!

It was going to be quite a second half. After five minutes, City had a clear chance to take the lead but the shot at goal was just wide and Noah could breathe again. A few minutes later, at the edge of the rival penalty area, Noah was in a great po-

sition to score. Once again, he aimed for the bottom corner of the net. The goalie just managed to get to the ball and push it out, back into play.

This time Noah made no mistake. The ball flew into the back of the net like a rocket.

Morton Rovers 2, Tolford City 1.

Noah didn't glance at the onlookers. He couldn't afford to lose concentration. Now all the pressure was coming from City. Time after time it looked as if City was going to equalise but it didn't happen. In defence, Rovers were outstanding.

With only seconds to go, City missed with a final chance. The shot went straight to the goalkeeper and it was all over!

Noah's Morton Rovers had won the final.

Suddenly, Noah's Mum and Dad were alongside him, hugging their son.

'Well done, lad,' said Noah's Father. 'You did us proud!'

His mother wiped a tear from her eye. 'You were wonderful!'

Noah looked across to where Grace had been watching. She wasn't there. All the celebrations meant nothing if she hadn't been there at the end. Then he felt an arm around his waist.

It was Grace!

'That was cool!'

Noah blushed. 'Come here,' she said and suddenly she was kissing him on the cheek!

'You're the best Subbuteo player in the world!'

The presentation was made to Noah and he began to put his team back in their box.

It had been a tabletop tournament to remember!

★ EXCLUSIVE OFFER! YOUR OWN MELCHESTER ROVERS FOOTBALL TEAM by Subbuteo AND SOCCER PLOTTER LEAGUE DIVISION CHART

£2.75 post paid

We certainly scored when we offered Roy's very own Football Team — Melchester Rovers — by Subbuteo, at the start of the Soccer season last August. For those readers who may have missed the opportunity to buy a set we are pleased to be able to offer you this exclusive Melchester Rovers team together with an added bonus. With each team we are including the Subbuteo Soccer Plotter. This super chart is for the four Football League Divisions. Printed in full colour, our chart measures (when opened) 29 1/2" x 10" (approx) and is supplied complete with team figures that you can simply peel off and press down in position on the League chart. This enables you to follow your favourite team and to alter the positions week by week. Packed with useful information including a list of League Champions 1892-1978, this chart will give you endless fun and enable you to check League positions at a glance. These two marvellous offers by Subbuteo are exclusive to Roy of the Rovers and are yours for just £2.75 post paid. Don't worry if you haven't enough pocket money to send for your set straight away, because we will be repeating this offer in forthcoming issues of your favourite publication. Now you can stage Melchester Rovers matches against any of the many other teams offered by Subbuteo and have your own League position chart too! For just £2.75 post paid this is a bargain no Roy of the Rovers fan will want to miss. So send for yours today. How to order details shown on the order coupon below.

HERE'S HOW TO ORDER: Fill in both coupons with your name and full postal address in BLOCK LETTERS and send with your crossed cheque or postal order, made payable to I.P.C. Magazines Limited, and with your name and address on the back to: Roy of the Rovers, Department R022, Rochester X, Kent ME99 1AA. Only available while stocks last to readers in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Not available in Eire, Channel Islands or Overseas. Orders are normally despatched within 28 days, but please allow time for carriage. You will be notified if a longer delay is expected. Subject to availability.

Subbuteo was a regular advertiser in Roy of the Rovers magazine. It was vindication for Barrie Tomlinson and his original plan for Mike's Mini Men.

Over the years Subbuteo gave away huge box sets such as the iconic World of Sport in competitions, while teams were launched as giveaways with football magazines and soccer plotters.

MY SUBBUTEO STORY

By Wayne Ball



My Subbuteo story started in the late 1970s when my two brothers and I would receive a Subbuteo set for Xmas. Looking back it would have been a basic club edition, we'd probably last until Xmas day night until we had a casualty with either a broken goalkeeper or a player that had been knelt on. Hindsight was a wonderful thing on my Dad's behalf and he'd always have a tube of superglue on hand. Of course, the beauty of two brothers and a dad there meant two semi finals and a final!

As my elder brothers hit their teenage years the passion for Subbuteo died but for some unknown reason in the late 80's (nostalgia probably) we picked up a set out of a local free ads paper and decided to mount the pitch on a board and invite a couple of mates round for a game, before we knew it eight of us were playing four nights a week with a mixture of basic, advanced and our own rules. We all had a 'home' ground and everyone had home and away teams, it was awesome and carried on for about four years. One of my friends had started getting a few accessories including some terracing and stadium accessories so it was decided that his ground would be used for cup finals, it was at that point that me and my brother decided that we would one day build our own stadium.

The passion unfortunately died over the next 26odd years but I always kept the few items I'd purchased in the loft my prized AstroPitch, by the time we'd finished playing all of those years ago I'd managed to get enough terracing to border the pitch but never actually set it up properly.

Fast forward 23 years since we finished playing we entered lockdown,

having a couple of weeks off work lead to the usual jobs list that other halves find from nowhere and my first job was to clear out the loft. Old suitcases, Xmas decorations, VHS videos would have to go, whilst going through I saw the familiar sign of a green box poking from behind my kids memory boxes. I'd not opened them for years but thought why not, let's see what's in there. I found old league tables, fixtures lists, cup drawers and my brothers ref 710 Scotland 2nd and a picture of him wearing the matching shirt in front of a pitch (see above), a set of world goals and fence surrounds. I had a further rummage around and all of the items from that photo were still there, I'm not ashamed to say I physically broke down and cried almost uncontrollably.

Why would I cry you may ask? Four years ago my brother died of cancer and if I'm honest I've never really got over it I immediately took the boxes out of the loft and transported them to the 'man cave' in the garden, explained to my wife what I was about to do and set about straight away making plans for the stadium that we said we would build all of them years ago, I set up an eBay account and within a relatively short space of time had the stands that I'd need, of course I would need to use the AstroPitch that we used all of those years ago and I had a firm plan of trying to keep the stadium as 'vintage' as I could.

The build is almost done, for now, and I'm sure they'll be changes in the future for no other reason than when I see it or change something in it it brings back the happy memories that me and my brother shared all of those years ago.



STADIUM NEWS

MINI PRINTS



The 3D printed West Ham towers - £25 at minisoccerbuilds.com.

Throughout the stadium section of our magazine you will see references to subbuteostadium.com - an online shop selling a variety of 3D printed parts for a stadium.

Ron, the man behind the shop, has been the backbone of stadiums built across the world. However, the issues surrounding Brexit mean customs charges a higher at the moment. It means UK buyers looking for stadium accessories may find higher prices and more expensive delivery costs for already pricey accessories.

That is not to say you should abandon subbuteostadium.com - Ron does superb work and the accessories are second to none.

But there is another option. A relatively new shop called www.minisoccerbuilds.com is UK-based and the prices are eye-catching. At £15 for standard seats for a two-tier stand and £18 for the more premium rounded seats, it does represent an affordable option if you are

experiencing custom woes.

There are also seats that fit Zeugo stands and dugouts if you are after something with a bit more detail.

There are also some unique structures such as the West Ham and Everton towers. These cost £25 for a pair and look fantastic in a stadium build.

The accessories have already had rave reviews from Subbuteo painter extraordinaire Calum Westwood of Westwood Table Soccer and the low prices are definitely an option for Subbuteo stadium builders across the country.



PITCH PERFECT

Subbuteo World has revealed it will be launching three new astroturf pitches in the coming weeks including a winter pitch and a 'beach soccer' pitch.

The Subbuteo store announced it will release a muddy astropitch by the weekend based on the hugely successful Table Football Monthly cloth muddy pitch, designed by Keith Littler. The Pegasus pitch was initially planned for before Christmas but needed to be tweaked before going on sale.

The muddy pitch was originally printed on cloth by Keith but the design has now been used for the Pegasus Astroturf range.

Subbuteo World has also announced two brand new pitches will be arriving as part of the Pegasus astropitch range - a winter pitch and beach soccer pitch in both full and half sizes.

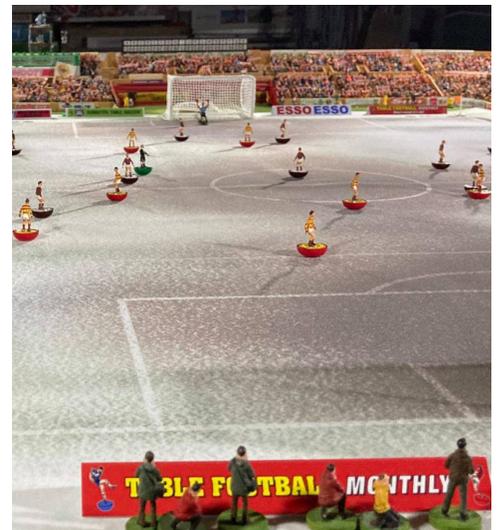
The winter pitch is likely to feature a snow effect and should prove popular given Subbuteo's own winter cloth pitch was in high demand in 2020 when it was released. That pitch was cloth and featured a snow effect for the first time on an official Subbuteo product.

The new beach soccer pitch will be a completely unique product and will be the first ever sand-effect pitch on sale at Subbuteo World in the UK.

In an announcement, Subbuteo World said: "Apologies for the delay, we were hoping to release the pitch before Christmas but Keith and I felt the pitch needed more work.

"Thanks to the efforts of everyone involved we now feel it's ready! Subbuteoworld will have the half size Muddy AstroPitch for sale on our website by next weekend. This will be followed by The Pegasus Beach Soccer Astropitch full & half size, The Pegasus-TFM Winter Astropitch full & half size and the Pegasus-TFM Muddy Astropitch full size."

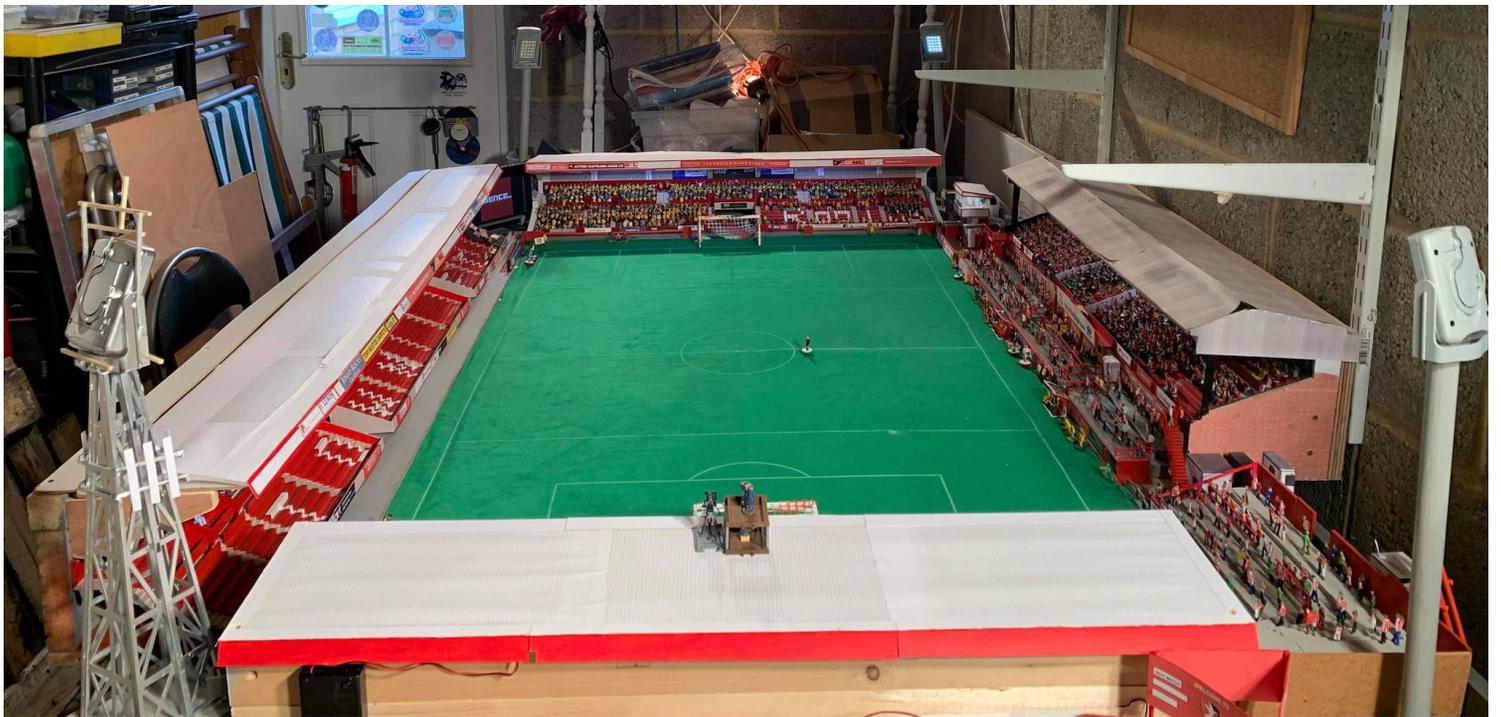
A full size Pegasus astro costs around £55 on the Subbuteo World website. pitch.



Pic: The new snowy Table Football Monthly pitch. Chilly.



ROCKIN' ROBINS





Jason Christopher did not intend for this to happen. A lapsed Subbuteo player who used to play in tournaments, he wanted a desk ornament in homage to the game he used to play.

"I used to play Subbuteo on the circuit when I was younger. Subbuteo paid for me to go all over the place but I hadn't played for a few years," he explains.

Even when he was playing in tournaments it had always been his ambition to build a stadium when he retired but that was still some way off. But when lockdown hit he decided to hand build a few pieces for his desk to keep busy.

And we all know that definitely wouldn't escalate, right?

Using a few bits of card and plastic lying around he built a sign that mirrored those typically seen outside lower league football grounds. Next game a homemade communications tower joined the sign as pride of place on his desk.

Then Covid-19 hit the UK and Jason found himself furloughed and with plenty of time on his hands. Despite being based in Portsmouth - where had already begun to play again in the at Havehill Rovers Subbuteo Club ("It was all modern stuff. For the first couple of games I resisted, I refused to play with the giant keepers, but I kept getting chipped") - he is a lifelong Cheltenham Town fan and his plan was to recreate Whaddon Road in Subbuteo form.

Fast forward nearly a year and Whaddon Road has featured on local and national

news, been shared far and wide in Subbuteo groups and on forums, and has bits of detail that make it one of the best Subbuteo stadiums around. In this issue of The Hobby we wanted to celebrate the beauty of intricate detail in stadium builds and Jason's stadium has plenty of that.

Take a look at the tiny details in this vast stadium project. The concertina-like extending player tunnel, 3d printed stairs leading to the top tier from subbuteostadium.com, tv gantries and broadcast boxes for those sky games.

"Some of it is from subbuteostadium.com, like the stairs in the Main Stand. I've made lots from bits of rubbish."

The remarkable fact about this stadium is that Jason keeps it updated as the real ground changes.

"I like to keep it updated to match the real Whaddon Road. The hoardings are based on the real thing and the scoreboard is quite new."

He has fashioned the scoreboard using a tiny electronic photo frame and a USB stick filled with lineups, matchday sponsors and player goal celebrations for that match day atmosphere.

What next for Whaddon Road? "I've started to paint a fan with each Subbuteo reference number. It looks good but takes a lot of time."

Thanks to Jason for sharing some of the incredible details in his spectacular stadium build.



Handmade hoardings and detailed fans full mini Whaddon Road.



Best use of a mini USB picture frame ever? Yes, yes it is.



Subbuteo hooligans are no plastics



LED strip lights provide atmosphere, while Jason has stolen some nets from 1990s Italy...



Pic: The Subbuteo notice board arena

SIT UP AND TAKE NOTICE

Ever been sat in your office wishing you could ditch the spreadsheets and set up an impromptu game of Subbuteo?

A Subbuteo fan has taken the classic office daydream to new heights after stopping a blue office notice board from being binned.

Dig J Maher shared his ingenious use of the doomed notice board after he turned it into a brilliant indoor football arena.

He says: “A couple of weeks ago this was a notice board being thrown into a skip at work. Now it’s my indoor pitch!

“There wasn’t much to it and it’s cost me zero pence. The idea came to me when I saw my boss walking to the skip with it. The material is very similar to what you might find on a pool table. It must be cork board underneath. It definitely takes a drawing pin.”

He used a permanent marker and a ruler to

draw the lines, while cereal bowls were used for the goalkeeping areas.

As for the rules, he says: “There is no off-side. You can use the barriers, shoot from anywhere outside the D. It is proper street football and it’s pretty enjoyable.”

As office notice boards are on sale from retailers from around £20 it’s a nice way to create a cheap indoor football arena. All you need is a marker, some boards for the perimeter and some goals and you can get started.

After posting to Facebook, Dig has been inundated with praise for his clever use of unwanted office goods.

He added: “I won’t be the first to do this but I’m amazed at the reaction I got. Hopefully Staples will see an upturn in the sales of notice boards!”

LEICESTER CITY STADIUM BUILD

An incredible Subbuteo stadium based on Leicester City’s King Power shows the beauty of modifying Subbuteo.

Michael Keddie has built a stunning homage to his beloved Leicester City using Subbuteo stands and the result has to be seen to be believed.

The stadium is customised with modified stands and 3D-printed seats spelling out LCFC and The Foxes on the stands, leaving no doubt about the inspirations of the stadium.

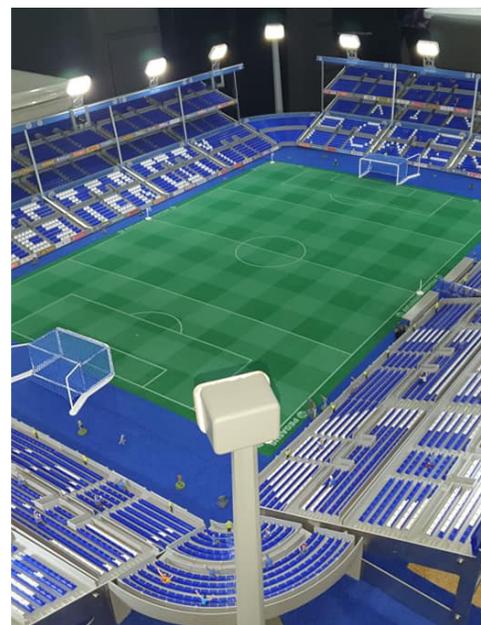
The highlight is the huge three-tier Main Stand, with the full Leicester City name across the seats and a clever use of Subbuteo grandstands to add two tiers to the standard terrace.

The Subbuteo Leicester City stadium Elsewhere, additions such as the floodlights on top of the stands, modified Greek style

floodlights and custom goals with blue nets are some of the highlights of the breathtaking self build.

There are also hints the stadium is used for the purpose it is meant for – to actually play Subbuteo. The Pegasus Astroturf pitch is one of the more premium surfaces available to Subbuteo fans. Sold by Subbuteo World, it is available in different surface patterns and the chequered effect is a nice nod to the King Power’s groundsman and his unique grass pattern displays.

Eagle-eyed Foxes fans will notice the lettering does not exactly mirror that of the King Power. Michael says: “This might upset some, but the King Power is being expanded, so that I can see the letters, I have put on the lettering onto the first tier rather than second. I know it’s not as now, but didn’t want to build twice and want to see the lettering.”



Pic: Floodlights for the Foxes



ROLL-UP ROLL-UP

A NIGHT AT THE FLICKS

A Subbuteo fan has revealed the most technologically advanced Subbuteo stadium we have ever seen.

Christakis Ioannou has a 7,500 capacity Subbuteo stadium that includes six working cameras that feeds a live stream of the action to a scoreboard.

The amazing miniature camera system matches that of top level games in real life and is a real feat of engineering in something as small as a Subbuteo stadium. Using six mini cameras and two iPad Minis he has managed to have a scoreboard and a video feed of the action as well as enough space in the grandstands for thousands of spectators.

Christakis revealed the details of his stadium and the clever camera set up he has developed.

“Here is my effort in creating a Subbuteo stadium, which was always an ambition of mine ever since I was introduced to the world of Subbuteo back in the late seventies, but never had the space or the funds to pursue it.

“Silver Castle Park comprises of Subbuteo red/blue stands with Zeugo corner stands and seats and other accessories by SubbuteoStadium.com. It has a total capacity of 7.564 (7.264 sitting and 300 standing) spectators, which I have and need to find the time to place them on the stands. It is also equipped with 6 mini cameras (4 at the corner stands and 2 either side of the tunnel stand) plus a PTZ mini camera in the middle stand opposite the tunnel.

“The cameras are connected via a DVR and are transmitting video to a iPad mini, serving as a TV screen, placed on the North Stand. The scoreboard (the iOS Subboard app installed on another iPad mini) has been placed on the South Stand. There are four floodlights at the corners (with LED lights from SubbuteoStadium.com) as well as a strip of LED lights on each main stand.

“The light emitted is more than adequate (an understatement actually) to play night games. You may notice that the pitch has patches of dampness, caused by an accidental water spill. I cannot change it as it is fixed on the board, but the playing surface has not suffered any damage and is fully playable.



Subbuteo will launch a new rubber-backed pitch that can be rolled out with wrinkles, the brand has announced.

New licensee Longshore, based in Hong Kong, has revealed a first look at the new Deluxe Pitch but has not revealed prices or where it will be available for UK customers.

The new Deluxe Pitch is a positive move from the brand. It can be rolled up and stored and because of the rubber-backed design it will not need to be ironed. It means newcomers to the brand will be able to roll out the pitch and play quickly.

Previously rubber-backed pitches were sold by Subbuteo as ‘Astro’ branded pitches. They were sold in tubes and are widely regarded as the one of the best pitches ever sold by the brand itself.

Since Subbuteo’s success with the Astro pitch in the 1980s onwards others have perfected the idea of a roll-up pitch. Extreme Base and Astrobase both sell premium astro pitches, while UK-based Subbuteo World has several pitches under the Pegasus brand, including new snow-effect and beach-effect designs in collaboration with Youtube channel Table Football Monthly.

The new Subbuteo design is entering an already competitive market and price will be key to its success. However, once again the brand’s cryptic social media launches have not revealed when or even if the pitch will be on sale for UK customers.

It follows unusual launches for a new 2020/21 range of official Subbuteo items. Following the launch of England and standard blue and red team box sets last year, Subbuteo has since launched a new range of fences and a controversial VAR set. However, a set of four new teams will not be made available to UK customers and was criticised for the low quality of the players and sloppy design.

COLLECTIONS

So you have decided to collect Subbuteo and relive that nostalgia with a few teams and that stadium you have always dreamed of.

Welcome to the club.

What you have to decide is which Subbuteo to collect – because there is a huge amount of choice when it comes to the game that has been produced since the 1940s. Your options range from the early heavyweight range with its high prices but vintage charm to the modern lightweights, with accurate kits and bargain basement costs.

In between you have the short-lived and sickly-looking Zombie figures, the early lightweights in boxes with large, clear plastic windows, and the early 1990s and the introduction of the first Premier League teams.

All of them are good options (I have gone for the early 1990s) but there may be a more modern, more affordable range that would be ideal for beginners – The Subbuteo La Leggenda – Fabbri Edition.

What is the Subbuteo La Leggenda range?

Firstly, a history lesson. In the late 2000s Subbuteo, now owned by Hasbro, was not really producing much in the way of new sets. However, Fabbri Editori in Italy was keen to take advantage of the game's popularity.

It managed to secure a license to produce a part-work range. That means it was given away with a regular magazine. Fans could collect the teams by buying the magazine each week and complete the set by not missing an issue.

Enter the Subbuteo La Leggenda Fabbri Editori range. The producers were quite clever about it, basing the box set on the 1980s lightweight range and labelling it the Legends range.

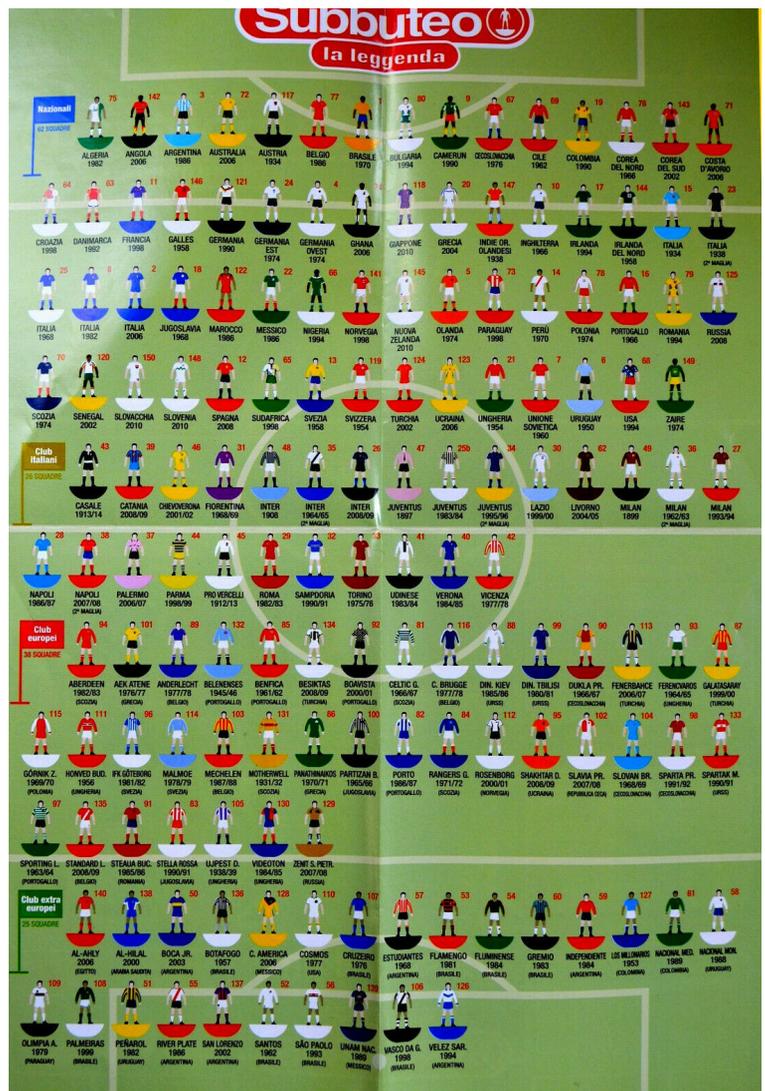
Each team is based on a classic football team from World Cup winners to great club sides. With detailed kits, slick boxes (with the team's formation on the back) and a wide selection of teams from around the world they are a brilliant addition to the world of Subbuteo.

In fact, they were so successful another La Leggenda range, the Platinum Edition, has just been launched based on the old heavyweight Subbuteo teams.

Why should I collect Subbuteo La Leggenda?

There are many reasons to consider the Subbuteo La Leggenda range. For a start there are just 150 of them, which is a semi-achievable target given the bloated numbers of the original Subbuteo lineups.

LA LEGGENDA



Despite the relatively small number there are rare teams to get your hands on – for example Dutch East Indies from 1938 (reference 147) is a superb team and would be an incredible bit of Subbuteo history to own.

What are they actually like?

On first look the detail on the La Leggenda range is superb. I ordered a set of 16 teams for just £30 from We Are Games and found a nice selection of unusual club sides including the striking violet of Anderlecht, the orange and red of Galatasaray and rarer sides such as Red Star Belgrade, Botafogo of Brazil and New York Cosmos.

Each team has a miniature badge and trim details on their kits. The attention to detail is a step up from the often hand-painted early lightweight teams but they do retain the charm of the earlier sets.

The important thing though is how they play. The sets were created from a new mould compared to the lightweight teams and as a result they do play different. They are a little heavier than the 1990s lightweights made by Waddingtons and as a result are more difficult to curl.

They are also slightly top-heavy, meaning they do topple over regularly and require picking up.

However, I did enjoy playing with them. They were heavier meaning quicker shots and more accuracy when flicking from distance, while they connected well with the ball and it was easier to string together passing moves.

They are also more durable – making them ideal for beginners or kids – in the three games we played we found they held up well and only once did a particularly nasty clash force the player to separate from his base. It quickly clicked back in and this was a nice alternative to the player snapping at the weaker points such as the ankles.

Review summary

A huge selection of beautiful-looking teams and a good beginner set to learn the ropes of the game, the La Leggenda range is an underrated Subbuteo set of teams that should tempt any collector to get involved.



THE LIST

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Brazil 1970 1 | Palermo 2006-07 37 | North Korea 1966 76 | Gornik Zabrze 1969-70 115 |
| Italy 2006 2 | Napoli 2007-08 38 | Belgium 1986 77 | Club Brugge 1977-78 116 |
| Argentina 1986 3 | Catania 2008-09 39 | Poland 1974 78 | Austria 1934 117 |
| West Germany 1974 4 | Verona 1984-85 40 | Romania 1994 79 | Japan 2010 118 |
| Holland 1974 5 | Udinese 1983-84 41 | Bulgaria 1994 80 | Switzerland 1954 119 |
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| USSR 1960 7 | Casale 1913-14 43 | Porto 1986-87 82 | Germany 1990 121 |
| Italy 1982 8 | Parma 1998-99 44 | Red Star Belgrade 1990-91 83 | Morocco 1986 122 |
| Cameroon 1990 9 | Pro Vercelli 1912-1913 45 | Rangers 1971-72 84 | Ukraine 2006 123 |
| England 1966 10 | Chievo Verona 2001-2002 46 | Benfica 1961-62 85 | Turkey 2002 124 |
| France 1998 11 | Juventus 1897 47 | Panathinaikos 1970-71 86 | Russia 2008 125 |
| Spain 2008 12 | Inter 1908 48 | Galatasaray 1999-2000 87 | Velez Sarsfield 1994 126 |
| Sweden 1958 13 | Milan 1899 49 | Dinamo Kiev 1985-86 88 | Club Deportivo Los Millionarios 1953 |
| Peru 1970 14 | Boca Juniors 2003 50 | Anderlecht 1982-83 89 | 127 |
| Italy 1934 15 | Penarol 1982 51 | Dukla Prague 1966-67 90 | Club de Fútbol América 2006 128 |
| Portugal 1966 16 | Santos 1962 52 | Steaua Bucurest 1985-86 91 | Zenit St Petersburg 2007-08 129 |
| Republic of Ireland 1994 17 | Flamengo 1981 53 | Boavista 2000-01 92 | Videoton 1984-85 130 |
| Yugoslavia 1968 18 | Fluminense 1984 54 | Ferencvaros 1964-65 93 | Motherwell 1931-32 131 |
| Colombia 1990 19 | River Plate 1986 55 | Aberdeen 1982-8 94 | Belenenses 1945-46 132 |
| Greece 2004 20 | São Paulo 1993 56 | Shaktar Donesk 2008-09 95 | Spartak Moscow 1990-91 133 |
| Hungary 1954 21 | Estudiantes (de La Plata) 1968 57 | IFK Göteborg 1981-82 96 | Besiktas 2008-09 134 |
| Mexico 1986 22 | Nacional Montevideo 1988 58 | Sporting Lisbon 1963-64 97 | Standard Liege 2008-2009 135 |
| Italy (second kit) 1938 23 | Independiente 1984 59 | Sparta Prague 1991-92 98 | Botafogo 1957 136 |
| East Germany 1974 24 | Grêmio 1983 60 | Dynamo Tbilisi 1980-81 99 | San Lorenzo 2002 137 |
| Italy 1968 25 | Nacional Medellin 1989 61 | Partizan Belgrade 1965-66 100 | Al-Hilal Club 2000 138 |
| Juventus 1983 25 | Livorno 2004-2005 62 | AEK Athens 1976-77 101 | Puma (Club Universidad Nacional) |
| Inter 2008-09 26 | Denmark 1992 63 | Slavia Prague 2007-08 102 | 1989 139 |
| Milan 1993-94 27 | Croatia 1998 64 | Mechelen 1987-88 103 | Al-Ahly 2006 140 |
| Napoli 1986-87 28 | South Africa 1998 65 | Slovan Bratislava 1968-69 104 | Norway 1998 141 |
| Roma 1982-83 29 | Nigeria 1994 66 | Ujpest Dozsa 1938-39 105 | Angola 2006 142 |
| Lazio 1999-00 30 | Czechoslovakia 1976 67 | Vasco De Gama 1998 106 | South Korea 2002 143 |
| Fiorentina 1968-69 31 | USA 1994 68 | Cruzeiro 1976 107 | Northern Ireland 1958 144 |
| Sampdoria 1990-91 32 | Chile 1962 69 | Palmeiras 1999 108 | New Zealand 2010 145 |
| Torino 1975-76 33 | Scotland 1974 70 | Olimpia Asuncion 1979 109 | Wales 1958 146 |
| Juventus 1995-96 34 | Ivory Coast 2006 71 | Cosmos 1977 110 | Dutch East Indies 1938 147 |
| Inter 1964-65 (second kit) 35 | Australia 2006 72 | Honved 1956 111 | Slovenia 2010 148 |
| Milan 1962-63 (second kit) 36 | Paraguay 1998 73 | Rosenborg 2000-01 112 | Zaire 1974 149 |
| | Ghana 2006 74 | Fenerbahce 2006-07 113 | Slovakia 2010 150 |
| | Algeria 1982 75 | Malmö 1978-79 114 | |



SUBBUTEO SLOTS

Paul Darke has one of the biggest and most interesting Subbuteo collections in the world. From a Subbuteo slot machine to hundreds of teams, from League Cup trophies to Adidas Subbuteo trainers, he has it all.

Can you tell us a little bit about your collection?

It's getting quite large as in the last 15 years I started collecting quite seriously. I collect Subbuteo as a whole and not just teams and box sets. Each to their own but for me it has to be real Subbuteo also.

How long have you been collecting Subbuteo?

I have been collecting Subbuteo for a number of years but it's always been on my life since the age of around 12. I am now 52.

Any tips for people who want to pick out some bargains?

This is hard one as most collectors are very smart and know all the tricks but I would have to say the 'Fat fingers' website over the years has got me some right bargains, including Subbuteo 'World of Sport' box set for £60! I can't believe I shared this tip!

What is the story behind the Subbuteo fruit machine? Where did you get it from and what is it like?

A friend of mine services fruit machines so I asked him to keep an eye out for a Subbuteo one for me. He said they are so rare and most were scrapped years ago. Around 6am one morning my phone goes and it's my mate Gibbo saying one has just been listed on eBay.

Bidding started at £9.99, or buy now £40. I could not press 'buy now' fast enough without even checking where it was in the country! Next day I travelled to Southampton to collect it. When I got home I found it had some old pound coins inside and two £10 notes!

It was stored in my Mother-in-law's garage for a couple years but now stands proud in my Subbuteo room on the third floor in my house. Getting it up those stairs was a nightmare but worth it. I'm currently waiting for my mate to come and service it and change it to the new pound coin mechanism so it can become my money box for other Subbuteo purchases I want.

Is there any particular type of Subbuteo that you prefer to collect over others?

Without doubt for me it's any Subbuteo pre 1998 era, I have some stuff after this

that I have stumbled across cheaply, but I don't like it. It has to be genuine Subbuteo aswell.

Finally, what are your top five Subbuteo items in your collection?

1. Trimm Trab trainers Subbuteo limited edition. They are just a thing of beauty and I have them unworn and in my size.
2. A Peter A Adolph signature, to own something he signed in person was something I had been after for ages.
3. Subbuteo World of Sport box set. The proper Holy Grail of the great game. People go on about League Cup being a Holy Grail but there are lots of them about. You don't see many World of sports sets about. Recently just the outer box of the set sold on eBay for £200, with no contents inside!
4. Sealed packets of c185 crush barriers. My favourite Subbuteo accessory, although pointless really.
5. My Subbuteo futon chair that my Mrs sorted for me, really nice item made from single bed duvet...



Pics: Paul's collection of teams and box sets (above)
A Subbuteo bedsheet set (Top right)
The Subbuteo ceiling pitch (Right)



Paul Darke has a collection that most Subbuteo fans dream of. He kindly sent over his greatest hits from his vast array of Subbuteo memorabilia.

Here we pick out the best of the collection and provide some background on why it is so special.

A couple of years ago Adidas brought back the famous Trimm Trabb name and design with a series of special edition trainers called the Adi Games pack – and one of them is the Adidas Trimm

Trab Subbuteo.

The limited edition trainers are designed to look like the famous green Subbuteo pitch and the lines resemble pitch markings on the classic baize. There orange interior add a splash of colour, while a football logo at the back is probably about the same size of a Subbuteo ball.

There is one more special treat that came with the Adidas Trimm Trab Subbuteo. The trainers came with a small

Adidas box housing three special edition Subbuteo Adidas balls. This is an accessory that was only sold with the trainers and is now extremely rare. They are also the largest Subbuteo balls in existence.

The Adidas Trimm Trab Subbuteo trainers are available for around £90 on auction sites – but it is those special edition balls that many fans of the game will be desperate to get their hands on.

Other items in Paul's collection are equally impressive.

Originally sold for £79.50, Subbuteo actually struggled to shift the edition and rumours suggest many were given away to workers of the Leeds factory when Waddington made them redundant.

The full list of things included in the set, reference number S250, is: Test Match Cricket, Rugby International Edition and The Football Stadium Edition, there are also four floodlights with a mains transformer.

The contents of the edition are contained in a box with five layers and the lid of the box is hinged. Under the lid is a team chart showing the various reference numbers.

Sets have been known to surpass the £1,000 mark when they go up for sale on auction sites.

Other unique aspects of Paul's collection include a Subbuteo Championship cer-





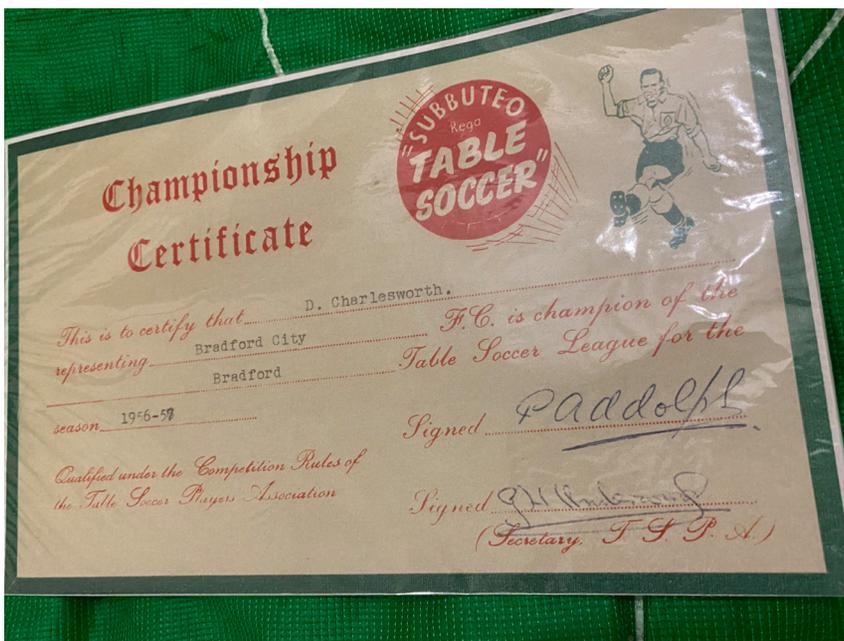
tificate signed by founder Peter Adolph, a rare Subbuteo-sponsored Lledo model van and even the Subbuteo sports bag - an accessory that Subbuteo even gave a reference number to when it was released.

Paul also has three packs of Subbuteo crowd barriers in blister packs. These are rare accessories and are difficult to

find on the market today. In response 3D printers have taken to creating replicas so that Subbuteo stadium builders can incorporate them into their creations.

Thanks to Paul for taking us on a tour of his man cave and the stunning Subbuteo treasures that can be found inside.

Pictures: Paul Darke.



HOW TO RESTORE HEAVYWEIGHT TEAMS

By Westwood Table Soccer



Ok, so you're sitting there surrounded by beautiful green boxes each filled with classic beautiful original Subbuteo.

In your hands you are looking down at these once glorious miniature footballers, whose best days seem a lifetime away. They're pleading to be given just one more chance at career, they've seen players and teams come and go, they've seen some that have been sent to the retirement home in the sky, but these lads have still got life in them, they can still do a job, like Jamie Vardy, these lads have got better the older they've got, they just need someone to believe in them, that someone is you..

When restoring Heavyweight figures there are a couple of routes you can go down, it all depends on the figure or team you have in front of you. Questions you should ask yourself are;

Is the team/figure already a re-painted figure?

If the answer is YES then how thick is the paint? If there is already a thick layer of paint on the figure then it will definitely require stripping as overpainting this will only

serve to make the figure look worse. The best way to identify how thick the paint is;

A) How much of the moulding detail is still visible on the shirt/shorts - can you still clearly see the moulded 'creases' on the shirt?

B) How much space is there in the armpit area? when a Subbuteo repaint has too much paint on it this is an area that 'fills' very easily with paint and will serve to 'join' the chest/back of the shirt to the sleeve. If you think the paint is thick or if you are in any doubt, I'd recommend stripping them clean any way to be safe, there is nothing more demoralising than starting a restoration only to get to the stage where you think "I should have stripped this" because it's become clear that the paint on the figure is too thick.

C) Is the paint on the figure a gloss finish? If yes get it off of there, gloss paint tends to be thicker and can in some cases cause issues with adding paint over the top, the same can be said for a team that has been varnished, it isn't worth overpainting a team like this as the Varnish has added an invisible layer and 9/10 when people have used varnish it is usually applied, liberally, shall we say

Is what I'm going to paint a darker

colour then what is already there?

In most cases if you're going to paint a darker colour or the same colour over the top what is already there then you can probably 'Overpaint' the figure/team and not have any issues with paint coverage.

If your plan is to paint a lighter colour over a darker one then I would absolutely recommend stripping the paint from the figures, trying to cover a darker shade is an absolute nightmare (my teenage self can vouch for this) it doesn't work, leaves an horrible finish and will lead to having to use so much paint to cover the figure that he now represents Lever from the Dog and Duck rather than Keith Weller or Geoff Hurst.

How to repaint a Subbuteo team

Once you've decided whether to Overpaint, repaint, or strip and clean the next steps are different for each option, I'll start with the simplest and work our way over to the the harder option.

Overpaint

If you're overpainting you can do that with zero pre-prep work, simply get your paint, and get to work. You can however if you want too,

give them a little clean with some warm soapy water and a toothbrush, to clean away any dirt, grease or residue on the figures, this may also remove some paint, but if you're committed to painting them any way this shouldn't be a concern.

Stripping

Stripping the paint from figures, can I've heard be done in a number of ways, however I've only got experience with one; Mr Muscle Oven Cleaner. First thing to say here is read the label, this stuff is corrosive, wear gloves, ventilate the area well and be careful.

Before applying Mr Muscle Oven Cleaner to any of your figures make sure you take them out of the bases, the cleaner will damage the lacquer on the bases and they won't slide and glide as they used too, there are again a number of ways to do this I believe, however I use hot water (not boiling) a little dish with enough hot water to cover the bases of the figures you want to remove from the bases, they shouldn't need long so don't leave them too long, again be safe with your hot water, it will burn (Again teenage me can vouch for this)

There are videos on my YouTube

channel which show the way we remove figures from bases, strip and clean players and complete a restoration, I'd absolutely recommend watching them before starting, or if you have any questions about any of this then please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Brushes - advice on brush size? Any particular brands?

There are hundreds of different brushes and sizes out there, my simplest piece of advice is don't buy all of them, personally I use one brush for pretty much everything, a Size 0 brush made by Windsor and Newton, it's called a Sceptre Gold II, which sounds expensive but they're available for around £3.50-£4.00 on the internet. The second brush I use is exactly the same make and model except it's one size down a Size 00. The Sceptre Gold II is like a modern football pitch, its a mixture of both synthetic and sable bristles.....I don't have any technical information as what that actually means in practice, but I've used a lot of different brushes and brands in the 20 years I've been painting Subbuteo and these are by far and away the best ones and as I've said excellent value for money.

How do you colour match?

I use, almost exclusively Humbrol branded paint, why? Because that is all I ever knew, I started painting and messing around with Subbuteo at a very young age, my Dad is Subbuteo mad and we had it growing up, my dad, also happened to have paints, Humbrol paints, and so that's what I used. I've carried on using them because they're good, very good in fact and they are essentially what Subbuteo used in its heyday. I do also have a small number of Water Based Acrylic paints in my paint box, made by wargaming paint supplier; Citadel. These paints are much much more vibrant than Humbrol paints and I don't tend to use them for restoration purposes as the vibrancy doesn't match the 50's, 60's 70's era that I aim to recreate. If you are interested again please don't hesitate to contact me directly.

Into the actual painting. Are there any particular mistakes you see people making?

I have two bits of advice I always give to people when they ask about Subbuteo painting, the first is keep it simple, don't try to do everything



all at once, especially if you're just starting out, the more complicated and intricate you try to be the bigger the chances of a mistake are, and unfortunately some mistakes aren't salvageable without starting from scratch - and that can lead to a whole new set of problems, especially if you have used a custom colour mix. The second piece of advice I give people is enjoy it, do it because you want to do it, because you love it, don't compare your work to that of any one else, including me. Everyone can paint Subbuteo, and if you're doing it because you love to do it, then it'll be the best painted team it can be.

There are a few pitfalls that can be made by beginners (and even experienced painters too) The first one is linked to my first piece of advice, keep it simple, remember a Subbuteo shirt is less than 1cm² you've got to fit the design on such a small space, adding logos, sponsors, badges, names, number etc - All take up space and in my opinion take away from the kit itself, it's can often be too much a step to far, and like measuring twice and cutting once, you can't take paint back, once it's there it's there. This doesn't mean don't be ambitious and don't test yourself, far

from it, I encourage you to be bold, but get all 10 figures to the same level of completion, decide then do I want/need the sponsor? logo? or is it too much? Does it need it? Am I happy with it? if you can answer those questions before making decisions you won't go wrong.

Another mistake that's easily made is overloading the brush as too much paint will spread, drip, run it doesn't matter how steady your hand is, practice if you can on something else, to get a feel for how much you need. Other mistakes that you can see is not painting the whole figure, Subbuteo Machine Paints are awful for this, make sure you cover under arms, inner legs and and boots are particular areas that can be overlooked, but will affect the overall finish.

If you're painting a kit that isn't a solid colour blocked shirt then I have found over the years that what I call 'framing' to be the best way to get a consistent and clean finish to the design. It works for Halves, Quarters, Checkers, Stripes, Hoops, Monaco Halves and Boca Bands. All it essentially means is using a smaller brush or mould and moving your bristles so you can create

a clean, thin, straight line or edge of whatever shape you're aiming to create. So for example, create the outline of a stripe using the frame and then fill it in afterwards, it'll give a smooth, clean finish. I have a Stripe Painting tutorial video on my YouTube channel where I show framing in action and how you can use it to get equal, straight stripes.



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Prices start from £25 per issue.



PAINING NESSIE

This Loch Ness kit took the internet by storm during the initial Covid-19 lockdown, the kit community especially on platforms such as Twitter really boomed and having already painted the incredible Delphino Pescara Rainbow kit and UC Condogno Wolf kit I received a tweet from one of my followers saying I should paint this Loch Ness kit.

The original picture was of the white kit, but I couldn't look at the white one and not do the black one too, so I got the brushes out the same evening and started working on the kits. When it comes to painting kits with this much minute detail it's so important not to get bogged down in trying to recreate every single detail, a Subbuteo shirt is less than 1cm² and simply to try to include everything isn't possible with a brush and some paint.

First of all I tackled the white kit, it's actually a more simplistic design than it looks at first glance, the key to this one is getting the diagonal divide in the right place first, and not worrying about Nessie and the goal fade underneath. For this kit I used Humbrol 16 Metallic Gold paint for this one, and my usual size 00 brush from Newton and Windsor,

I began as I said with the straight diagonal divide, the collar and the cuff details, making sure that they were both visible but not oversized as to take space from the rest of the shirt, once they were in place, it was onto Nessie, again with this the first stage is to get the basic shape in the right place, at a scale which isn't too big but big enough to be recognisable with the naked eye, so the first step on Nessie is about doing the looping body, head and tail before adding the monstrous spine on it's back, again, this is all done with the same brush, but I manipulate the bristles to create different shapes and widths depending on what I am painting. After Nessie is done the gold fade is simple, try to match the overall balance of gold and white space in the space you have left to produce the finished article.

The second kit, the black and orange, took longer to produce, not least because the base colour is paint and not white plastic, but again the principles are exactly the same. Don't try to copy exactly every single stripe and line on the actual shirt, you'll not get the result you're after. It's about finding the balance of colours that the full size shirt

has on a 00 scale figure, so the pinstriped hoops are placed equidistantly down the shirt on an acrylic paint this time, I use acrylics for the vibrancy, especially when painting onto a dark base coat like this kit. After they're on it's onto the little Nessies that swim amongst the hoops, this is the toughest piece to do as getting the balance of Nessies right to not only represent the original kit, it also has to work on this scale, so knowing when enough is enough is vital, and it comes down to a word I use a lot when I'm talking about kits and painting, Balance.

Lastly the club crests are added to each shirt, this is the hardest part of any kit and one which is very easy to get wrong, the key here is to select the colours and basic shapes that make up the crest and get them into the correct place, starting with your overall shape and then building on top of it to bring about the end result. In this case the end result is two wonderful little plastic footballers who now sit in a display in my studio flanked by RSC Anderlecht and Everton.

STAR LETTER

50 years apart

As a young lad, I was always playing subbuteo. Against friends, relatives, family but mainly against myself. I'd organise fixtures, leagues and even hand paint the players strips to the latest designs or the most fashionable teams at the time. As I grew older and got into other things like drinking and girls etc. (Subbuteo was on the sidelines). Then, I rediscovered it in the 90's when I was working at Burtons and we used to have tournaments at lunchtime. I still had all of my skills and used to batter everyone I played.

Anyway, 2020 has given me the opportunity to sort through old photos and go through my loft and cupboards etc (due to furlough etc). Anyway, the discovery of the old photo of me as a lad and my subbuteo found in the loft, gave me the inspiration to replicate that photo.

My wife took about 20 shots and told me I've got far too much time on my hands! Unfortunately, she is right. Let's hope things get better soon . Stay safe!

Chris

Brilliant picture! Thanks Chris. We'd love to see more of your classic Subbuteo pictures. Bonus points if you can recreate them like Chris.



New old boxes?

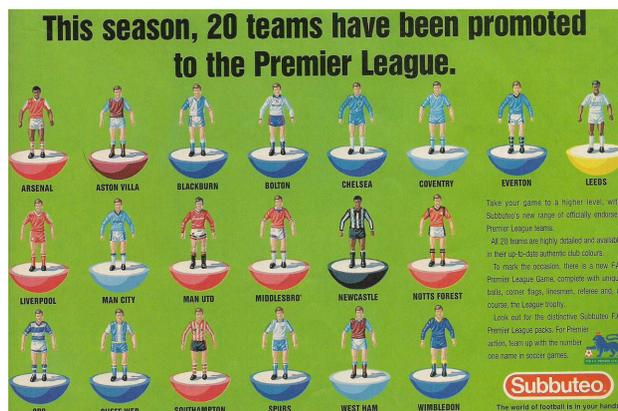
My name is Simon and I have loved the game since my childhood. My personal interest is of the 1992-93 era. The inaugural Premier League Season, and when football really came to life for me!

I have spent years collecting each team from that campaign. There have been errors made, purchasing a later kit for example. The anticipation of receiving a team through the post that I have sought for a long time is brilliant.

My collection is now complete to my knowledge. Furlough has afforded me time I would never have and I have therefore been indulging in my hobbies. I know Subbuteo produced second kits to accompany the home kits of 7/8 of the divisions teams. I challenged myself to paint the remainder of the away kits not provided by Subbuteo. To be fair I think I am making a fair go of it. I wanted to keep the flavour of the original painting methods and not just stick decal transfers on (although they do look great). So far I have produced the away kits for Aston Villa, Norwich City and Crystal Palace. I managed to get my hands on some empty boxes from Ebay to accommodate them. This leads me to a few queries that I can only imagine if you can't answer them, then no one will be able to.

Is there anywhere out there where someone is producing new boxes or templates that are replicas of early 90's style? It has a window with an angled doubled white line and whom I believe to be John Jensen on the front. I need to apply labels with numbers and team names on to make them look as authentic as possible. The correct size labels arrived today. Having sought through all of my Subbuteo sets I have managed to find the team numbers index. However, this is a year early for me. I require the next list on. I want to get the numbering of my new 'away kits' correct as in I do not want them to conflict with numbers already allocated to produced teams. I hope that makes sense? Detailing these plastic figures has been so relaxing and rewarding and I thank my lucky stars I am able to purchase plain men and bases on the internet!

Simon



The early Premier League teams are beautifully detailed. I do remember Subbuteo calling Nottingham Forest 'Notts Forest' on the advert. I assume Forest fans have never forgiven them.

As for the boxes - I'm not aware of anybody who does replicas of boxes from that era but I'm sure if somebody is our readers will be able to help out. If you've spotted the boxes then please drop us a note on subbuteonline@gmail.com.

As for the list of away kit colours in the Premier League era - check out our next issue for that one! In the meantime, Peter Upton's website is a brilliant Subbuteo resource for kit colours.

Does anybody remember Tom's shop?

There use to be a Subbuteo/Table Football only shop in Lichfield around 1999/2000 run by a chap called Tom Taylor, it was really good to visit & be able to see & buy all this Subbuteo.

He also use to do his own teams, called Lunula teams & repainted Zeugo teams into mainly English league teams, but he did some European/South America teams as well.

Tom moved to Wales & opened a shop there, no idea if it is still open.

Subbuteoworld came on the scene , plus I discovered other websites like Astrobase, so I never contacted Tom again.

Robert

I remember Tom, although I never visited the shop. I believe he was also the producer of Subbuteo streakers and generated a storm of publicity for them when they launched.

As for old Subbuteo shops, mine was in Liverpool city centre where Queen's Square bus stop now stands. I'd love to hear reader's memories of their own Subbuteo shops.

A visit to Italy

I first came into contact with Subbuteo in the early 1980s when I would have been about 6 or 7. Every Saturday we would visit my grandad who had an old 1970 Subbuteo set. Eventually we were allowed to 'borrow' the set (you know how grandparents are). I have no idea what happened to that set, all that has survived is the pitch which has in the last few months been back in use.

A few years later I was ready to start my own collection. I went with my dad and my brother to a small toy shop and bought up every team they had: Real Madrid – ref 021 (sign of things to come maybe), an Arsenal-like zombie ref 232 and a claret and blue zombie Aston Villa/West Ham team which I have never been able to find a reference for. I've still got the 021 & 232 (minus the boxes which got destroyed) I don't know what happened to the claret and blue team.

Not long after that my dad came home one Saturday afternoon with a second hand job lot containing around 20 teams and loads of accessories: green fences, ballboys, dugouts, police, TV tower and crew and even two floodlights. Me and my brothers couldn't believe our luck! We played all the time making up our own FA Cup tournaments and World Cups which were usually ended prematurely when we got banned for fighting.

Once I'd got the taste I carried on collecting. No trip to Watford was complete without a visit to Beatties to pick up a new team so my collection kept growing. As I've still got a poster from 1991 I know I was still collecting up until then.

I moved to the Netherlands in 1996 and my collection came with me. It stayed in the attic until last year when I finally got it out to play with my then 10 year old son. We had a little disaster with an astropitch in the summer but with a lot of patience, whitespirit, elbow grease and help from Gareth Christie via Twitter I was able to get it playable again.

Now I've got a Subbuteo itch that needs to be scratched. As Subbuteo wasn't as popular in the Netherlands as it was in the UK, it's difficult to find it being sold second hand. Fortunately I've discovered Subbuteo Labs in Italy and have purchased from them despite the €25 postal charges.

Last summer we were brave/stupid enough to go to Tuscany on holiday so I paid a visit to Subbuteo Labs with my son. We had a great time! Dani's such a nice guy. He's got so much stuff and is happy to show it.

My latest purchase came in last week: Bayern Munich/South Korea (ref 214), Hasbro Inter Milan (ref 63058), Lazio/Manchester City (ref 621) – although it might be mis-sold Napoli (ref 495), I find it difficult to see the difference; a Diadora Samba ball and two dugouts to finally replace the second hand ones I got in that job lot all those years ago which had been blackened with a marker.

My last few purchases have been mainly European club teams. I prefer lightweights from the mid to late 80s and early 90s. After my last order I thought I had everything I need – I know I'll be back for more.

Michael



Another fantastic letter and a wonderful photo of Subbuteo Lab in Italy. When lockdown is over it is a must visit for all Subbuteo fans. You can find them on Facebook.

Great to hear there is somebody playing in the Netherlands although I imagine it is difficult to source teams in the current climate.

Thanks Michael and I look forward to hearing about more of your collection in future.



Talking Balls

On the subject of Orange Tango Balls with the Adidas Trefoil, I can confirm that there was a version sold. I have two sealed packets of orange Trefoil Tangos-although I can only locate one packet at the moment! I bought them on e-bay for I think £19.99 Buy It Now about 2011. I wasn't going to open them as I knew they were rare. It has the 61209 reference number is on the packet. I am interested to see how much they go for. I had the Yellow Trefoil Tango Alicante balls as well but I would have stupidly gave them away to a charity shop in 1993 with my original collection!

I am also a big fan of the decaled Top Spin balls made by David Thorniley. I have several of World Cup balls he sells from 1970's Telstar onwards. He also made decaled Mitre Football League balls from the pre-Premier League era using the original white Large Panelled Ball. I regret only buying one of those as they don't appear to be for sale now!

Stuart

Thanks Stuart! This was i response to an orange Tango I spotted on eBay with the rare Trefoil logo. I did not know if it was genuine but it seems the rare ball does exist. Good to know!

Get in touch with The Hobby!

Visit: Subbuteo.Online

Email: subbuteoonline@gmail.com

Twitter: [@SubbuteoOnline](https://twitter.com/SubbuteoOnline)

Facebook: Search for Subbuteo Online



REVIEW: PEGASUS ASTRO 5-A-SIDE

There is a drama about the huge box that arrives on your doorstep when you order a Pegasus Astro five-a-side set.

It really is massive - the pitch doesn't fold so the box is large enough to hold a Pegasus 5-a-side Astro pitch when the box is open. While we are looking at small-sided Subbuteo here the box is probably larger than most full-size Subbuteo box sets. That's a good thing - the big, bold box has the perfect amount of wow-factor to get children's attention away from the PS5 for a short period at least.

Inside the focus on quality and it really works. The box art is aesthetically pleasing to look at and the premium feel of the cardboard hints that this is a thing made with love - a thing to be loved and used and passed down the generations.

Inside is what Subbuteo World describes as the best Subbuteo pitch on sale in the UK. The Pegasus pitches are astroturf wonders that do not need to be ironed and will provide a flat playing surface that allows players to glide across the turf with ease.

You get two teams, both made of modern Zeugo players that are chunkier and more flexible than traditional Subbuteo players but look fine and have a couple of nice details in the form of long haired-players.

The goals - again a massive step up in quality over modern Subbuteo - click into place easily and you are ready to play instantly.

In true Subbuteo five-a-side style the box is also the venue and the ends have slots to operate the goalkeepers, whose handles poke out of the end. It is quick setup and takes minutes before you can get flicking.

Playing on the Pegasus pitch is addictive. The small-sided game and beautiful surface mean 'just one more minute' becomes an internal mantra as you fire in goals from all angles. For solo play there is no better option.

When playing a partner it is fast-paced, frenetic and fun. Matches can be short and sweet, leading to best of three, then best of five, then... well, you get the picture as competitive streaks take over.

There is one major gripe with this box set. The pitch is marked out with touchlines when it should have been designed to allow for play off the advertising boards down the sides in true five-a-side style. Instead the edges do dip and that means the ball does

stick to the sides, meaning you will have to incorporate throw-ins to your game or modify the box carefully to create a slope around the edges.

That is a minor gripe because the real fun in the box set is the ability to play neat, intricate passes and find yourself with a shooting opportunity in a few flicks as opposed to the more chess-like buildup of the full-size game.

The pitch itself is a premium product and rave reviews are to be expected. But I think the real beauty of the Pegasus pitch is that Subbuteo players and collectors of a certain age have one thing in common - the urge to pass on their favourite childhood game to the next generation.

A new Subbuteo set may be aimed at children but the poor quality and time it takes to set up is a blocker to getting children playing the game.

The Pegasus Astro fixes this problem. The arrival of the box is an event in itself. Unwrapping it for Christmas or a birthday should evoke the same joy you remember as a child when the wrapping paper fell away to reveal a glimpse of that iconic Subbuteo green box.

It may seem ironic that the joy of this small-sided Subbuteo is the vast size of

the box but there is more to it. It feels like thought, design expertise and love for the game have been poured into the Pegasus box and I think people will pick up on that too.

I love this box set because it makes me feel like a child picking up a new Subbuteo box set again. If the box is set up for a game I'll find myself walking past and stopping to flick a few shots at the goals. I find myself planning five-a-side tournaments featuring teams of the world's best players in my spare time.

The Pegasus Astro is a box set to be shared. To be bought as a present to introduce somebody to your hobby and while away a Christmas afternoon with the children. It's a set to be kept and loved and placed pride of place on your shelves to display.

It was not until I received it that I realised that's what I want from the new Subbuteo. A product I love and I know others will love too.

There is room in the market place for a premium small-sided table top football game. Pegasus have figuratively and literally cleared a table with a contender that will take some beating.

Price: £64.99
From: SubbuteoWorld.co.uk



WHAT A VAR-CE



The new Subbuteo VAR set

The new Subbuteo VAR set for 2021 is the first new accessory launched by Subbuteo for a couple of years.

It is notable because it is also the first new accessory from new license holder Longshore, a little over a year since the Hong Kong company took over the table football brand.

After a couple of less than impressive box sets the VAR set is probably not high on the shopping list of many Subbuteo fans but it is not actually that bad.

Priced at around £10 and on sale at Amazon, Subbuteo World and a handful of other sites, it's not the most expensive accessory and is actually a nice idea. While VAR is not particularly popular it follows a long standing tradition of Subbuteo introducing things from the real world of football – from crush barriers in the 1970s to sponsors on shirts in the 1980s and 1990s.

So on to the VAR set. It is actually a new set and not a repackaging of old stock. You get a referee, two referee's assistants and a fourth official holding a board with extra time on it. You also get a VAR screen to place at the side of your pitch. A hefty piece of plastic, it actually feels like decent quality and the VAR branding on the side is a nice touch. The sticker used to show a match day event is a bit tacky but that can easily be replaced.

The screen looks good on the side of the pitch and I will be using it in a stadium build.

As always with new Subbuteo there is a down side. The referee figures are a bit blank. Expressionless faces and cartoon-y design make them look very much like a toy, while the lack of paint on the boots makes them look like they are wearing yellow wellington boots. It's this lack of attention to detail that will hold back the new owners if they don't fix it quickly. However, not all the new designs are bad. The thin bases with wavy green pattern to indicate grass is actually quite nice and you can even chip a ball easily with them if you are that way inclined. The box itself is pretty standard fare for new Subbuteo but does offer a clean, green design too. It looks decent when displayed and is actually a solid if unspectacular start to the new era of Subbuteo accessories.

In conclusion, if you're a die-hard Subbuteo fan then £10 for this set is probably a good price. It's not going to excite you as much as an older bit of Subbuteo kit but it's a baby step in the right direction for a brand that lost its way a long time ago. I definitely like it a lot more than I thought I would.

Does it stand up to people who have 3D printed Subbuteo VAR sets? Subbuteostadium.com has a full VAR set complete with Stockley Park room and the quality is much higher here. At a higher price this is one for the more serious stadium builders, while the new official set is one for more casual fans of the game.

BACK OF THE NET



The Bieme goals are beautiful

Flick for Kicks posted a picture of some beautiful Subbuteo goals late last year.

The goals were decked out in different coloured nets and I promptly ordered a set of the standard white nets.

The goals are Bieme goals - imported from Europe and costing a fair bit at £50 for a set of two. But with the likes of Mundial and European goals from the official Subbuteo range difficult to find for a bargain price, custom and unofficial sets are a popular choice with serious players.

The Bieme set I received are designed for serious play. They come with heavy duty screws on the bottom to affix the goals to the playing table. The chunky design speaks of quality and at first glance they look just like the real thing.

In terms of the design the net is attached to the metal posts and crossbar with a sort of fishing wire. They feel sturdy and it should prevent the net separating from the goal itself even with the heaviest struck shot.

One of the main criticisms of metal goals is that standard Subbuteo balls can split upon hitting the metal frame. I tried a few flicks to test this out but either couldn't hit them hard enough or that or just got lucky. However, I would advise using more professional balls with the Bieme goals.

Are they worth the price? Definitely. For £50 you get just about the best-looking goals on the market at the moment. Perfect for a pitch you play on regularly and with a design that would elevate any Subbuteo stadium build onto another level.

These are the goals of the more serious flickers out there and if it's good enough for them it is good enough for a more casual player like myself.

They also help to fund a Subbuteo Club in Bologna, so there's a nice bonus when you buy them.



NEW BOOK LAUNCH

Keith Littler of Table Football Monthly is set to launch a new book entitled "Flickin' Marvellous! The Post-War history of Table-top Football".

The book is set to be everything you love about Table Football Monthly and provide a new take on the wonderful history of the game.

Keith has kindly sent an exclusive introduction to the book prior to it arriving on shelves.

The tension was palpable. The 1989 FA Cup Final was in the balance with Norwich City and Liverpool locked at 3-3 with the end of Extra-Time looming. Norwich had led on three occasions only to be pulled back each time by a resilient, and it must be said, fortunate Liverpool side.

Wave after wave of Norwich attacks were sure to lead to a winning goal but Liverpool's defiant defence, and the frame of their goal, held the line. Another clearance upfield, another brief respite from the canary yellow attack. But Liverpool midfielder Jan Molby won the ball and played a long, time-wasting diagonal ball forward. John Barnes, already with a goal to his name, managed to drag aching limbs into one last sprint.

Norwich Keeper, Gunn, advanced from his goal but misjudged Barnes' speed. The Liverpool and England wizard reached the ball first and, without breaking stride, deftly dinked the ball over the spread-eagled Keeper and all watched as the ball, in slow motion, arced into the goal. There was silence for a micro second that appeared to last for an eternity and then the timer on the cooker rang out.

Smiffy had won his first major Subbuteo Trophy with the last kick of the game. As I looked up, Keeper rod still in hand, he was sliding towards me across the lino on his knees, both arms raised and smiling like a Supermodel.

I too had sunk to my knees but in despair. I had this game. Three times the victory was mine and yet the dastardly, West Ham loving, long-standing mate and rival had stolen it at

the last...a travesty, a sporting injustice of outrageous magnitude. "Against the run of play," did not come close!

My wife appeared in the doorway curious as to the commotion. No words were needed. Smiffy was now on his feet, jiggling on the spot whilst wafting 'V' signs at me with both hands. I looked like the man with the winning Lottery Ticket who'd absent mindedly thrown it in the bin.

"Look at you!"

We both looked to the doorway.

"It's only a game."

We looked at each other, all rivalries temporarily suspended. For a moment we were as one. "Only a game? Only a game??"

Thirty-two years on Smiffy can still talk you through that goal. He didn't just win. He didn't just win with the final kick of the game. He won with a chip. A revered and rare skill with a Subbuteo Lightweight Player...Barnesy. Good old Barnesy.

There is little point in me piping up with the pre-goal story, the one-way traffic, his fortuitous deflected equaliser for 2-2. No point mentioning double-figures worth of corners and goal frame hits or the Brazilian style passing movements. Smiffy won it. No matter the battles I have won since, no matter that was his last major Trophy. It has become a legend. A Subbuteo version of the Matthews Final of '53, of Hurst's hat-trick goal of '66, Michael Thomas' goal for Arsenal in the final League winning game of '89, Aguero's injury time goal of 2012 to win the Premiership for City. To the victor the spoils.

Subbuteo and indeed any form of table football is not just game. It is life...and everything else is just waiting. That somehow sounded more manly when actor, Steve McQueen, said it of motor racing. Still... it was Flicking Marvellous.



La Leggenda Platinum Edition

What is going to be the next big Subbuteo craze? If I knew then I'd be buying up cheap sets now before prices hit the roof.

If I had a guess it would be the La Leggenda Platinum Edition, launched as a part-work in Italy a couple of years ago. After the older La Leggenda began a buying frenzy from Spanish site We Are Games last year, I feel like these ultra-detailed, heavyweight-style sets could be next in line.

At the moment they are not available in the UK but if and when a stockist does arrive expect them to cost less than £10 a time (they're currently £20-£30 to import on eBay) and with a finite collection of 150 teams it means they could prove a popular collection.

Why is that? For a start each box features a classic international side but the range has some real stunners. Team GB from the 2012 Olympics or the famous Nigerian kit from World Cup 2018 are real highlights. You also get Wales 2016 and plenty of other nations not previously produced in Subbuteo's history.

I got my hands on an Italy side and the detail is astonishing. Kits are patterned in beautiful detail and the figures look and feel just like a classic heavyweight in proper retro-style boxes.

The teams look the part but perhaps don't play as well as the classic heavyweight style. While this won't bother collectors it does mean sales were a little slow in Italy. That brings me back to my original point. If sales were slow that stock has to appear at some point and when it does it could be at a discount.

Keep your eyes peeled for La Leggenda Platinum Edition teams on sale websites. It's a beautiful collection and one that is likely to arrive on these shores sooner rather than later.

PRICES

HEAVYWEIGHT PRICE GUIDE

Welcome to the heavyweight price guide. In this guide we have looked at how much the heavyweight Subbuteo teams are currently selling.

This price guide is only the beginning of our insights into the price of Subbuteo. Each month more sales data will be added to give a more accurate picture of the price of Subbuteo.

At the moment there is only one month of data so prices may not be 100% accurate.

The data was collected from eBay, other online auction sites and other Subbuteo sellers. Only genuine teams (where we can tell) in good condition were used.

An average was taken for all sales of each team and a multiplier introduced to remove postage and the costs of selling on some sites.

The result is an estimate of the value of a team based on recent sales - it is not intended to be a definitive price you can expect to pay or receive for each team.

In future issues and online, prices will be updated each month and shown on a rolling three-month basis for a more accurate 'real time' look at prices.

You may see many of the numbers 1-100 not appearing here. There were very few sales in that set of teams with the only a reference 021 and 025 being sold. We expect more of these teams to appear in subsequent editions.

The most expensive team sold was a reference 118, which sold for £440. That is a big price for a Paris FC but it is a rare team.

It is promising to see a number of teams going for under £20 in the heavyweight category. Teams such as references 021, 025 and a 159 (Peru) are all still affordable and even dropping in price compared to 2020.

Where there is no price we were unable to find recent sales for the team in question. These will be added to as sales happen to complete the heavyweight picture.

If you have any concerns about errors in the data please get in touch at subbuteonline@gmail.com.

	001		036
	002		037
	003		038
	004		039
	005		040
	006 - £23		041
	007		042
	008		043
	009		044
	010		045
	011		046
	012		047
	013		048
	014		049
	015		050
	016		051
	017		052
	018		053
	019		054
	020		055
	021 - £16.50		056
	022		057
	023		058
	024		059
	025 - £13.27		060
	026		061
	027		062
	028		063
	029		064
	030		065
	031		066
	032		067
	033		068
	034		069
	035		070

PRICES

 071	 106 - £140	 141 - £141.16	 176 - £67
 072	 107 - £84	 142 - £83	 177 - £69
 073	 108	 143 - £41	 178 - £90
 074	 109 - £181.20	 144 - £90	 179
 075	 110 - £127	 145 - £111	 180 - £86
 076	 111 - £103.99	 146 - £47.30	 181 - £102
 077	 112 - £175.21	 147 - £205	 182 - £132
 078	 113 - £42	 148 - £82	 183 - £77
 079	 114 - £83.10	 149 - £15	 184 - £222.19
 080	 115 - £93.64	 150 - £135.50	 185 - £42.53
 081	 116 - £71.25	 151 - £50	 186 - £93.11
 082	 117 - £43.21	 152 - £35.25	 187 - £89.50
 083	 118 - £98	 153 - £40	 188 - £439.99
 084	 119 - £24	 154 - £13	 189 - £78
 085	 120	 155 - £46.25	 190 - £146.66
 086	 121 - £63	 156 - £15.95	 191 - £14.37
 087	 122 - £75	 157 - £18	 192 - £47
 088	 123 - £28.03	 158 - £38	 193 - £23
 089	 124 - £215	 159 - £18	 194 - £26
 090	 125 - £205	 160 - £30.99	 195 - £111
 091	 126 - £258.16	 161 - £27.58	 196 - £139.95
 092	 127 - £155	 162 - £37.50	 197 - £77
 093	 128 - £114.43	 163 - £26	 198 - £41.50
 094	 129 - £87	 164 - £21	 199 - £123.60
 095	 130 - £113	 165 - £61.21	 200 - £143.66
 096	 131 - £71	 166 - £14	 201 - £102
 097	 132	 167 - £37	 202 - £55
 098	 133 - £144.40	 168 - £92	 203 - £9.50
 099	 134 - £39	 169 - £38	 204 - £220
 100	 135 - £74.95	 170 - £43.20	 205 - £62.50
 101 - £45	 136 - £12.99	 171 - £42	 206 - £25
 102 - £21	 137 - £161	 172 - £43.50	 207 - £14.90
 103	 138 - £12.01	 173 - £36	 208 - £24.50
 104	 139 - £62	 174 - £87.87	 209 - £22
 105	 140	 175 - £52	 210 - £107

PRICES

	211 - £44		246		281 - £52
	212 - £77		247 - £77.58		282 - £123
	213		248 - £41		283
	214 - £37.20		249 - £260.01		284
	215 - £27.50		250 - £203.99		285
	216 - £168.72		251 - £170		286
	217 - £160		252 - £112.50		287 - £79.83
	218 - £22		253 - £63		288 - £203.56
	219 - £21		254 - £207		289 - £245
	220		255 - £101.48		290
	221 - £122.40		256 - £19.99		291 - £112
	222 - £91.20		257 - £210		292 - £325.15
	223 - £63		258 - £83		293
	224 - £340		259 - £109.20		294 - £194
	225 - £70		260		295 - £262.50
	226 - £105		261 - £62		296
	227 - £155		262 - £150		297
	228		263 - £64		298 - £63
	229		264 - £41.18		299 - £250
	230 - £244		265 - £36		300 - £215
	231 - £63		266 - £79.29		301 - £96
	232 - £122.40		267 - £69.74		302 - £361
	233		268 - £122.40		303
	234		269 - £74		304 - £304
	235		270 - £85		305
	236 - £115		271 - £175		306 - £180.51
	237 - £127		272 - £213.18		307 - £93.60
	238 - £82.93		273		308 - £51
	239 - £87		274		309 - £103.99
	240 - £350		275 - £196.43		310
	241		276 - £325.15		
	242 - £200		277 - £48		
	243 - £123		278 - £235		
	244 - £184		279 - £79		
	245		280		

LIGHTWEIGHT HIGHLIGHTS



Don't let the plain white kit fool you. A Colo Colo from the 1980s is in high demand and this set sold for a whopping £296.

Another big sale in the world of lightweights is the impressive £219 for a reference 140 (Angers).

We'll be adding a full lightweight guide to later episodes but we are seeing a rise in prices in some very specific eras. Premier League and early 1990s lightweight team - the sets around the end of the Waddington's and beginning of the Hasbro era - are increasingly in value drastically.

The likes of the USA 94 team, the famous CCCP Soviet Union team and even Cameroon have all fetched over £25 on eBay in recent weeks.

Basic club teams such as Liverpool's Adidas strip are also rising and it is now difficult to find a lightweight team under £10. This would have been unheard of a few years ago.

There were even examples of lightweight teams selling for higher values than their heavyweight counterparts,

They include reference 066 - Raith Rovers, which sold for £296 in lightweight version and only £155 in heavyweight. Others include a 141 - Nancy, whose lightweight version cost £157 compared to £114 for the heavyweight.

The biggest disparity came with a reference 167. The beautiful Rochdale away kit with a white shirt and diagonal green and yellow stripe went for £175 in lightweight form and £37 in heavyweight form - a difference of £147. It may be down to the fact that kit can easily be painted in heavyweight form and buyers may be wary of fakes.

The most sold Subbuteo team in January 2020 was a tie between lightweight Brazil and lightweight Germany

Subbuteo World of Sport

A Subbuteo World of Sport set sold for £1,148 on eBay at the beginning of February. The set is one of the few single Subbuteo items to fetch four figures. Produced in limited numbers, the World of Sport was given away as competition prizes and to workers as it sold in such small numbers. However, the leather box is in high demand now and it is one of the more sought-after items.

Strangely, it doesn't actually contain anything unique aside from the box itself. The Subbuteo football, rugby and cricket sets can all be bought separately but there is something about the World of Sport that captures the imagination of Subbuteo fans.

I got through this entire update without writing the words Holy Grail too. Apart from just then, obviously.



League Cup update

A League Cup sold for £175 - a massive £75 more than the same item sold in December. It seems demand for the three-handled trophy is still heating up. January was notable for a couple of League Cups with broken handles going for £25. With the broken handles included surely that is a more affordable way of getting your hands on the trophy?

Box sets

Italia 90 box sets in January are selling for an average of £50 when they are in good condition. The popular set is actually a bargain when you see the price of the individual boxed accessories such as the balls (£7.50), goals (£21) and pitch (£20).

The USA box set is selling for a slightly lower average price for around £35, although one sold for just £20 despite being in almost perfect condition. The Euro 96 box set is now fetching closer to £40, while a France 98 set in good condition is selling for £42 on average.

I expect the steadily rising prices of the 1990s box sets will only grow as children who grew up in that era come back to the game with disposable income.



Single players are heating up



The desire to build Subbuteo single player displays by many collectors seem to have supercharged the price of single players and spares.

A notable eBay sale in January was a job lot of over 320 spare players that sold for £420. With 19 bids right up to the last minute of the auction it was a popular lot.

Single players were traditionally a cheap and easy way to get different references represented in your displays but rare players are

increasingly available at high prices on the auction website.

In fact, the price of all single player sales rose by 5% from December to January. This includes heavyweight, Zombie and lightweight players and indicates that the market is heating up.

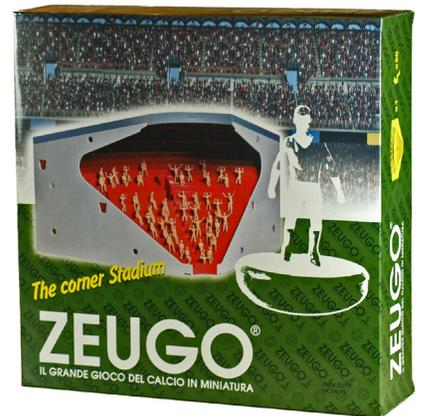
Subbuteo player swap Facebook groups continue to be a better source for those who need specific single players. eBay is awash with fakes and the best way to spot these is to check if the seller has a lot of rare players available. If they do it should raise some red flags.

However, the Facebook groups seem to be very helpful when it comes to advising on fakes and player spares.

If you are looking for single players you should also check out www.wobblyhobbyshop.com, a new online store specialising in spares, modern teams and accessories and a selection of rare vintage teams.



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FINAL WORD

What can we expect from Subbuteo in future?

It is a worrying question. Owners Hasbro have the copyright for Subbuteo until 2025 in the UK and they are expected to renew that in a couple of years. But amid the company announcing 4% of revenue growth in 2020 up to \$1.72 billion there were hints the company is dramatically moving away from the markets that Subbuteo occupies.

The purchase of live-action TV company eOne indicates Hasbro is only really interested in brands where it can tie in toys with big-money movies and TV series.

The annual accounts read: "We integrated our acquisition of eOne and while live-action TV and film production was limited, we made substantial progress developing Hasbro IP for storytelling that we believe will lead to enhanced revenues and earnings power from Hasbro brands from multiple income streams."

The accounts explain the offloading of the Subbuteo license to Hong Kong-based Longshore. Hasbro is pivoting hard and there looks to be no room for Subbuteo in the brave new world.

It is even more galling for some who have seen Hornby trains recorded a profit in 2020 and Games Workshop recording strong performance during lockdown. Hobbies are big business at the moment and for many it seems Subbuteo is missing an open goal when it comes to growing the brand.

University Games at least seemed up for the challenge of importing Subbuteo to the UK market. They erected a large stand at the heart of the 2020 London Toy Fair, a huge event featuring the biggest and best toymakers from around the world. The stand had a Subbuteo table set up, two brand new box sets and even a new TV advert playing on a loop.

University Games promised the largest Subbuteo marketing campaign in 40 years and in terms of money spent it held true to its word. Advertising on hoardings at England internationals was a bit expenditure and signing up John Motson to voice the new advert was another. It seemed the ship was slowly turning in the right direction.

Then came a global pandemic. Designing, producing and shipping new products became expensive and difficult. You can cut a new company some slack in the current situation.

But Longshore have no excuse for the ridic-

ulous marketing around the brand. Social media posts promising new products with no information on how and where to buy were just the beginning. We approached University Games and Longshore a number of times offering support and publicity for UK launches but were ignored. This is a company that does not even look like it wants to sell the products it is creating.

Poor communication was followed by the fact a number of products will not be available to UK buyers. Perhaps it's a consequence of Brexit. Perhaps it's just another sign of the general lack of professionalism and regard for one of the most beloved toy brands ever to grace the shelves of the UK. Either way we find ourselves here. A year after the promise of a major launch we have a couple of half-hearted products sold mostly on Italian and Spanish websites and a general feeling things are not going to get better any time soon.

It was 2000 when Hasbro first decided to shelve Subbuteo forever. It was 2012 when it failed to bring the game back. It was 2020 when it gave up completely and handed Subbuteo to another company without the experience or ability to do anything but devalue the brand further.

How long can a brand survive launches and relaunches? How long can Subbuteo, which has been a part of UK life for 70 years, survive after nearly a third of that time has been spent in complete disarray?

That's the bad news. But let's cut Longshore some slack.

In the days before the magazine launched Subbuteo launched a roll-up pitch and a women's football set. These are two clever moves by the brand. The pitch makes Subbuteo accessible and easy to play for the younger generation while the Lionesses set will attract an entirely new demographic to the game. When we wrote about that set the responses flooded in from men and women saying they want to buy it, with a number keen to introduce their daughters to a women's Subbuteo set for the first time.

The sets are a small green shoot of hope for fans of the brand and if they can develop some good quality teams there may be a way back.

What would I do?

Running a company during a pandemic is hard. Being tasked with saving Subbuteo during a pandemic is very hard. Doing all this with a vocal community who all want different things is almost impossible. As a

thought experiment I would do two things.

Firstly, I would keep pushing out Subbuteo products aimed at families and the younger generation. Make it inclusive, easy to use and keep the boxes bright and colourful to stand out on toy shelves. Bring the price down and advertise this 'new' Subbuteo to its target demographic. Ignore the old moaners like me and just sell to children.

Then I would release a new brand. I know splitting your brand, particularly one as small as Subbuteo in terms of sales, could dilute your message. However I think a Subbuteo Classic or Subbuteo Vintage brand would be the way to go. It would free up Longshore to create a product based on classic Subbuteo in the same way the La Leggenda teams are.

The Classic brand can bring back reference numbers, run limited edition runs of teams such as non league sides and tie in deals with leagues such as the MLS and A League. Make the boxes look beautiful and sell them at a slightly higher price for collectors. This is where the disposable income can be found and I suspect you would see a Hornby-like revival of people collecting the new teams.

Jason Christopher, who appeared in this edition, described the current Subbuteo as the equivalent of Hornby only producing Thomas the Tank Engine sets for children and ignoring the rest of the train sets it sells.

I truly believe there are better options on the market out there at the moment. Zeugo is everything Subbuteo should be, with superb new teams and excellent stadium sets. The custom paint market delivers teams with intricate details and beautiful presentation. Do we even need a Subbuteo Classic brand?

I think so. An officially branded, high quality product continuing the tradition of the Subbuteo brand could sit alongside these other fantastic options. It could focus purely on limited editions at specific times of the year instead of aiming for mass market. I believe this would sell. It would sell to fans of Subbuteo and fans of football in general.

Will it happen? Probably not. Subbuteo wants to get the brand aimed at the younger generation correct first. However, the previous failed launches by Hasbro does indicate that is a tough market to crack in the world of FIFA and Football Manager.

Perhaps this time the people holding the rights to one of the most beloved brands of all time should try something different. Because it may not be able to survive a third false dawn of this century.

