

Slightly closer to a proper football (i.e., soccer) match

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This weekend, I attended a soccer match between Chelsea FC and Celtic FC at Seahawks Stadium Qwest Field. The game was the opener of the 2004 ChampionsWorld Series, wherein some of the top soccer teams from Europe tour North America to give us yanks a chance to see how football is done for real. From reading the team's web sites before the match, you'd think that Chelsea had already thrown in the towel, because even before the game started, they were making excuses, blaming jet lag for their loss. The excuses weren't necessary, though, because Chelsea dominated the match and ultimately won 4-2. It was interesting comparing the two teams' styles. When Chelsea scored a goal, you could watch it develop. A through ball, a man open, a pass or two, and the ball is in the back of the net. Celtic's goals were more of a "And he's got the ball, and... hey, how'd he score?" It all happened so fast it was over before it began. Attendance was 30,000, only half the capacity of Seahawks Stadium Qwest Field, but a decent turnout I think for a sport that is still considered fringe here in the States.

Here's Raymond's checklist comparing the match to what he figures a "proper" British football match to be like.

	What Raymond Experienced	A Proper British Football Match
Segregated cheering sections	•	•
Singing	•	•
"Neutral" cheering section	•	?
Post-game riot		•
Alcohol sold during match	•	
Police officers around pitch		•

<u>Streaker interrupts match</u>	•	•
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One aspect of the British football divisions that I find fascinating is relegation, wherein the worst teams of the year are demoted to the next lower league, replaced by the top teams of that next lower league. This doesn't happen in U.S. sports leagues (at least not any of the major ones). In fact, in U.S. sports leagues, the team that has the worst record is **rewarded** with an early draft pick! How's that for reverse incentive.

Raymond Chen

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