



Finding the Game: Three Years, Twenty-five Countries, and the Search for Pickup Soccer

Gwendolyn Oxenham

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Across two dozen countries—from back alleys to remote beaches to the roofs of skyscrapers—an eye-opening journey into the heart of soccer

Every country has a different term for it: In the United States it's "pickup." In Trinidad it's "taking a sweat." In Brazil it's "pelada" (literally "naked"). It's the other side of soccer, those spontaneous matches played away from the bright lights and manicured fields—the game for anyone, anywhere.

At sixteen, Gwendolyn Oxenham was the youngest Division I athlete in NCAA history, a starter and leading goal-scorer for Duke. At twenty, she graduated, the women's professional soccer league folded, and her career was over. In *Finding the Game*, Oxenham, along with her boyfriend and two friends, chases the part of the game that outlasts a career. They bribe their way into a Bolivian prison, bet shillings on a game with moonshine brewers in Kenya, play with women in hijab on a court in Tehran—and discover what the world looks like when you wander down side streets, holding on to a ball.

An entertaining, heartfelt look at the soul of a sport and a thrilling travel narrative, this book is proof that on the field and in life, some things need no translation.

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