



On May 10, 2005 **Switzerland** issued a stamp for *Football (soccer) for the Visually Impaired*. This is the first stamp in a “Four-piece Football (soccer) Jigsaw series”. The first one starts with this stamp which shows a visually impaired football player playing the “beautiful game”.

Football for the Visually Impaired

Most people are probably not aware that a large number of blind and visually impaired play football. Many started playing when they were attending schools for the blind or playing with their friends in regular school or at home. They simply adapted the rules and equipment so they could play the game close to that played by the sighted. Football is a simple game to play and you need very little equipment to play the basic game. To make the ball audible is simple; a bell or marbles or anything is put inside so the ball makes a sound. In some cases wicker balls have been made and have a bell/s in them. Go to any country where football is played and you will find blind children and adults playing the world’s most popular team game.

“At the moment, there are admittedly not many leagues, but in recent years the sport has spread throughout the world, and several European and World Championships have already been held: Euro 1997 in Barcelona, 1999 in Porto, 2001 in Paris 2003 in Manchester, 1998. World Championships in Campinas (Brazil), 2000 in Jerez (Spain), 2002 in Rio de Janeiro, plus 2004 in England. And in the 2004 Paralympics in Athens, there was an Olympic champion in this discipline for the first time. As in top-class

soccer, two of the best-known footballing countries met in the final, with Brazil beating Argentina 3-2 on penalties when the game ended 0-0 after going into extra time.”

Swiss Post *Focus on Stamps*, Issue 2/2005

One thing that is different is that while the game is in play the spectators have to be quiet so the players can hear the ball and their coaches.

For more information on the history and rules of Football (soccer) for the blind and visually-impaired see Information Sheet #185, August 5, 2003. It is about the Argentina issue, May 3, 2003 for ***Blind Soccer (football) World Champions***.

Note: Most ball sports have been adapted for the blind and visually-impaired, including Football (American).