

[Download free ebook] Football's Comic Book Heroes

## Football's Comic Book Heroes

*Adam Riches, Tim Parker, Robert Frankland*  
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**Adam Riches, Tim Parker, Robert Frankland : Football's Comic Book Heroes** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Football's Comic Book Heroes:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. They Call It Soccer TooBy A CustomerCombining two of my favorite subjects into one finely assembled book was a dead cert for 5 stars for me. I have been an avid collector and reader of comic books for decades, and an ardent fanatic of the beautiful game ever since I can remember.Oddly

enough I didn't read soccer comics as a kid in England; for that matter I rarely read any British comic books at all, preferring instead American superhero publications from the likes of Marvel and DC. The author Adam Riches delves into a unique facet of the comic book art form, selecting a genre with a fantastically rich and evolved style that at one time saw 350 million comics a year sold in Britain. Beginning with the narrative laden tracts, the so-called "penny dreadfuls" of the mid to late 1800s, Riches cements the foundation stones of what would become the modern-day football comic. Early on and for some time to come, the heroes of the football world in print were largely upper-class, scrupulous Victorian chaps who "live[d] clean, manly and Christian lives." With the advent of the war years, the football comic became the perfect vehicle to encourage young working class lads towards the battlefields of Europe and beyond, and the comic footballers gradually morphed to more closely reflect the class of the readership. Interestingly the dearth of men able to make up the numbers for competing teams, lead to the formation of 'ladies' football leagues, the most famous of which Dick, Kerr Ladies, pulled a crowd of 53,000 in 1920. Consequently women found their way into the football comic stories; albeit fleetingly. Some football people in England seem to take perverse delight in mocking Americans use of the term 'soccer' to describe association football, so much so, that you'd be forgiven for thinking Americans invented the slang word for the game. The book however, shows us that the word 'soccer' was common parlance throughout the last century in Britain as evidenced by the comic covers and illustrations reproduced in the book. Speaking of Americans, football comic "Wizard," presciently introduced multi-millionaire, Split O'Keefe, of Arizona who took over fictitious team Rockvale FC for 12 issues in 1932. Many serious issues were tackled by the soccer comics, including race and class, although women and girls were largely invisible in these publications aimed at boys. Roy of the Rovers, was the final hero to play out his days in the football comic book format, his publication of the same name petering out in 1993, ending completely over a century of fantasy world heroics that enabled millions of boys to dream via words and drawings of playing professionally and as brilliantly as the stars of the football comics. Eventually video games overwrote the minds of the average young lad and did all the dreaming for him; comic books suddenly seemed so 'dad.' I'd recommend this book to anyone interested in comic books, regardless of whether they take an interest in soccer, such is the fascinating presentation Riches gives us. Every page has beautifully reproduced art work in color and black and white and the narrative is highly evocative and informative. Well worth buying. Incidentally, original football comic titles are readily and inexpensively available on Ebay UK, and they make an interesting addition to the standard American collectors' fare.

Ever since comics for boys were first published in the late 19th century, they have offered their readers fun, adventure, and escapism. As participation and attendance at sports events rose dramatically during the first half of the 20th century, boys' comics began to regularly feature sportsmen of all types, and soccer players became the ultimate favorite. The introduction of soccer comics presented in a cartoon-strip format became immensely popular during the 1960s, with Rover, Hotspur, and Wizard among the top titles. Although these comics are no longer in circulation, there is still a significant level of interest, and the culture of the comic-book hero continues. Renowned publisher D.C. Thomson has delved into its archives to produce the definitive document of the most legendary soccer playing characters to grace the pages of comics, including such favourites as Limp Along Leslie, Roy Race, Billy Dane, and Hotshot Hamish. Extensively researched to cover the history and the storylines associated with these comics and their heroes, this is a unique, nostalgic account of the soccer comic book phenomenon that will jog the memories of older readers and introduce the magic of these imaginary sporting stars to a new generation.

"This lavishly illustrated paean to the genre will delight devotees (Book of the Week)" -- Simon Redfern Independent on Sunday "If you need a book on football comics, this is the one to have" When Saturday Comes "Sheds light on a largely forgotten but still strangely edifying genre" ShortList "Excellent" Sport Magazine "A pictorial romp ... Nintendo and the rest will never be as much fun as this lot" philosophyfootball.com About the Author D.C. Thomson and Ergon were two of Britain's most successful comic book publishers and the most popular of their titles regularly achieved a circulation of more than 400,000 in the genre's heyday.