


Beach soccer

Highest governing body	FIFA
Nickname(s)	Beach football, beach footie, beasal
First played	1992. Brazil
	Characteristics
Contact	Yes
Team members	5 at a time
Categorization	Team sport , ball sport
Equipment	Football
Olympic	No



Beach soccer, also known as **beach football** or **beasal**, is a variant of [association football](#) played on a [beach](#) or some form of sand. The game emphasises skill, agility and shooting at goal.^[1]

Whilst association football has been played informally on beaches for many years, the introduction of *beach football* was an attempt to codify rules for the game. This was done in 1992 by the founders of [Beach Soccer Worldwide](#), a company set up to develop the sport and responsible for the majority of its tournaments to this day. This was a major foundation for what is now known as *beach football* and what has led to the sport rapidly growing in popularity.

The irregularity of the soft-sand playing surface leads to a totally different style of play than is used in association football, with a greater degree of improvisation. The compact pitch, much smaller than a normal [association football pitch](#), allows players to score from anywhere on the sand, leading to an average of sixty attempts at goal in a single game. With an average of scoring rate of one goal every three or four minutes, around eleven goals are scored in total per game.

History

Foundation

Beach Soccer (Beasal) started in [Brazil](#), more precisely at Leme [beach](#), [Rio de Janeiro](#), and has grown to be an international game. The participation of internationally renowned players such as flamboyant [Frenchman Eric Cantona](#), legendary Spanish strikers [Michel](#) and [Julio Salinas](#) and Brazilian stars such as [Romário](#), [Júnior](#) and [Zico](#) has helped to expand [television](#) coverage to large audiences in over 170 countries worldwide, making Beach Soccer one of the fastest growing professional sports in the world and converting it into a major showcase for international commercial opportunity.

Beach football had been played recreationally all over the world for many years and in many different formats. In 1992 the laws of the game were envisioned and a pilot event was staged by the founding partners of BSWW in [Los Angeles](#). By 1993, the first professional beach soccer competition was organized at [Miami Beach](#), with teams from the [United States](#), [Brazil](#), [Argentina](#) and [Italy](#) taking part.

Growth

In April 1994 the first event to be covered by network television transmissions was held on [Copacabana Beach](#) in [Rio de Janeiro](#) and the city hosted the first [Beach Soccer World Championship](#) in 1995. The competition was won by the host nation, making Brazil the first ever World Champions of Beach Soccer. The success of the tournament saw commercial interest begin to match developments on the pitch and growing demand for the sport around the world gave rise to the [Pro Beach Soccer Tour](#) in 1996.

The first Pro Beach Soccer Tour included a total of 60 games in two years across [South America](#), [Europe](#), [Asia](#) and the [United States](#), attracting major names both on and off the pitch. Interest generated by the tour in Europe led to the creation of the [European Pro Beach Soccer League](#) in 1998, providing a solid infrastructure that would increase the professionalism of the spectacle on all levels. The EPBSL, now known as the Euro BS

League, brought promoters together from across the continent and satisfied the demands of the media, sponsors and fans. Only four years on from its creation, the successful first step in the building of a legitimate Worldwide Competition Structure for the sport of Pro Beach Soccer had been taken.

Behind the scenes key developments were also taking place, with the Beach Soccer Company relocating its headquarters to Europe, firstly to [Monaco](#) and then [Barcelona](#), before becoming Pro Beach Soccer, S.L. in April 2000. One year later they would join forces with Octagon Koch Tavares, who had continued to organise the World Championships and events in South America, to form a single entity known as [Beach Soccer Worldwide](#) (BSWW), with the aim of unifying all major Pro Beach Soccer tournaments in the world under the same structure and providing representation of the sport to major sponsors, the media and [FIFA](#).

The EPBSL was also flourishing, a nail-biting 2000 season was decided in the closing match of the final tournament when [Spain](#) beat [Portugal](#) in an intense encounter. The Americas League also took shape, with teams entered from North and South America, whilst the Pro Beach Soccer Tour extended its horizons to the [United Arab Emirates](#), [Thailand](#), [Mexico](#), [Greece](#), [Japan](#), [Australia](#) and the [United Kingdom](#).

In August 2011, Olympic news outlet [Around the Rings](#) reported that beach soccer could be vying for inclusion in the 2016 Summer Olympics. FIFA President Sepp Blatter reportedly spoke recently with Rio 2016 president Carlos Nuzman about including beach soccer on the Olympic agenda.

Recent years

The next four years would see this growth consolidated by further progress both on and off the pitch, with the EPBSL emerging as the strongest Pro Beach Soccer competition in the world. By 2004, some seventeen nations had entered teams, with this number expected to rise to over ^[2] stage events.

Such interest has allowed BSWW to strike major sponsorship deals with international companies including [McDonalds](#), [Coca-Cola](#) and [MasterCard](#), who stepped up their involvement in 2004 and are now title sponsors of the Euro BS League. Recognition has also come from FIFA, who have cited BSWW as the major entity behind the creation and growth of Beach Soccer, forming a highly promising partnership that that was in its full splendour seen in the 2005 world cup, held in copacabana beach, Brazil. France won the first world cup and the next year Brazil won it at the same venue. The world cup has continued to flourish with the first world cup held outside Brazil in 2008, with future world cups spreading as far out as [Tahiti](#) in [2013](#) and [Portugal](#) in [2015](#)

Rules

Players

Each team consists of five players, including the goalkeeper and an unlimited amount of substitutions, from a selection of 3 to 5 players. Throw-ins and kick-ins mean the pace and flow of the game is much higher than regular association football. Shoes are not allowed, although ankle guards are permitted. Goal kicks are taken by the goalkeeper using his hands to throw the ball.^[3]

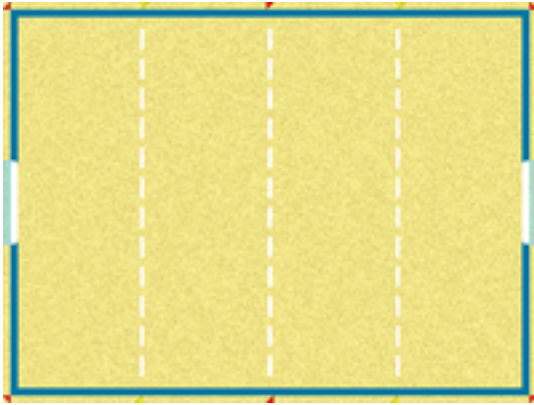
Match length

A game lasts thirty-six minutes, and is split up into three twelve-minute periods. Every beach soccer match is won by one team, with the game going into three minutes of [extra time](#), followed by a [penalty shootout](#) if the score is still on level terms after normal time. Unlike association football, penalty kicks are decided by [sudden death](#) rules.

Referees and discipline

Three [referees](#) officiate the match. Two on the pitch and one off, controlling the teams' benches. Any fouls committed lead to a [free kick on goal](#), which has to be taken by the player who was fouled, unless awarded for deliberate handling. As in association football, yellow and red cards can be issued. However unlike in the main game, when a player receives a yellow card he must leave the pitch for two minutes and the team must play without that player for that duration of time. When a player receives a red card, he is dismissed from the game entirely. Unlike in 11-a-side association football, the team can then bring on a substitute to replace the dismissed player after two minutes.^[4]

Pitch



A beach soccer pitch is considerably smaller than a regular [association football pitch](#).

In international competition, the pitch is composed entirely of sand and is cleared of pebbles and seashells, along with any other objects which could injure a player.

The pitch is rectangular in shape, and the touch line is longer than the goal line.

The pitch dimensions are:

Length : 35-37m / 38.2 – 40.4 yards

Width : 26-28m / 28.4 – 30.6 yards

The penalty area is within 9 m (9.8 yds) of the goals, and is marked by a yellow flag situated in touch.

Two red flags opposite each other are at the centre of the pitch to represent the half-way line.

The goals are slightly smaller than their standard association football counterparts, being 2.2m from the ground to the bottom of the crossbar and 5.5m in width between the inside of each upright.