

A NEW GAME IN TOWN

Have you ever waited a long time for something special? Can you imagine waiting more than a hundred years for something? Well a football team in the north of England has waited that long. Read more to find out why they think it was worth the wait.

A long wait

Hull is in the north-east of England and has a population of around 250,000. Hull City Football Club was founded in 1904 but they had to wait until May 2008 to win the Championship play-off final at Wembley. Their 104-year wait to join the highest division in English football came to an end. Their entry into the Barclays Premier League meant their fans could celebrate something they had hoped to see for years although some fans never expected it to happen. But why was the wait so long?

It is an interesting story and is connected with a different type of football.

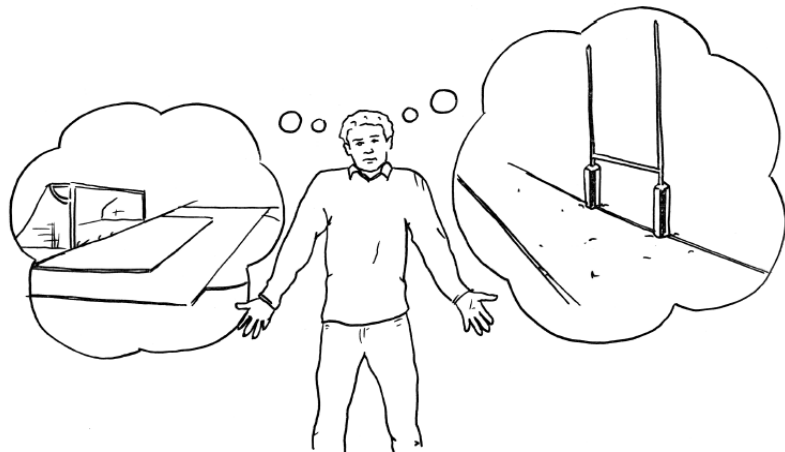


Football in a rugby town

If someone said: 'It was a great match. They scored four tries and four conversions' would you understand? In Hull they would know you were talking about a different sport because for a long time, Hull has been famous for sporting excellence, but not in football – Rugby League.

Competing with history

Rugby League has a strong tradition in the north of England and Hull has two popular and successful Rugby League clubs. In fact, more than 20,000 people regularly go to watch these rugby league teams so Hull City Football Club had to win more than football games to be successful. They had to win the hearts and minds of the people of the city too.



Placing Hull on a global map

If your city, town, or village achieved sporting success would it make a difference to you? Chris Speck lives in Hull and teaches English there.

We asked him if he has seen any changes since Hull joined the Barclays Premier League:

'Yes, I really can. First, there is a new self confidence about the town and its residents. They are very proud of their city. You see as many people wearing the shirts of the football team as you do wearing the shirts of the rugby teams. Also, Hull is now on the global map. The students I teach know something about Hull before they come to the city to learn English.' Like all Hull fans, Chris is looking forward to their second season in the Barclays Premier League and hopes they will be staying there for at least 100 years.

Activity 1

What do you think?

Do you know of any team that became successful after a very long wait? Are they still successful? What about a town or city that has changed because of a team's success? Do you think this is a good thing?

Activity 2

Match the following numbers or dates to their meaning in the text.

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|------------|--|
| 1. 250,000 | a. People who regularly attend rugby league games in Hull. |
| 2. 1904 | b. The year Hull City Football Club was founded. |
| 3. 2008 | c. The number of years Chris hopes they will stay in the top division. |
| 4. 104 | d. The population of Hull |
| 5. 20,000 | e. The number of years Hull City fans had to wait to join the highest league in England. |
| 6. 100 | f. The year that Hull won promotion to the Barclays Premier League. |

Activity 3

Look at the following sentences from the text that contain examples of *wait*, *hope*, *expect* and *look forward to*

they had to <u>wait</u> until May 2008 to win the Championship play-off final	They had no choice about when Hull won the Championship final
their fans could celebrate something they had <u>hoped</u> to see for years	They wanted to see Hull win promotion
although some fans never <u>expected</u> it to happen	Some fans thought / believed it would never happen
Chris is <u>looking forward</u> to their second season	Chris feels happy and excited about their second season
Chris <u>hopes</u> they will be staying in the Premier League for at least 100 years	Chris wants them to stay in the Premier League for 100 years

Activity 4

Match the sentence 1 – 4 to the sentence a – d with the same meaning.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| 1. I have to wait until he comes | a. I want him to come. |
| 2. I hope he will come. | b. I can't do anything until he comes/ |
| 3. I expect him to come. | c. I feel happy and excited that he is coming |
| 4. I look forward to him coming. | d. I'm sure he will come. |

Activity 5**Find out more**

Use the internet to find out more about rugby league in Hull. What other sports are popular in your city and your country?

Search terms (search in English)

Hull Rugby League
Hull City Football Club