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**Abstract:**

In recent years there has been a wealth of research into how the game of football developed, however, rather than establishing a common theme this research has led to competing theories with some historians taking an 'orthodox' perspective, believing that the public schools played the lead role in the development of the sport. Others subscribe to a 'revisionist' position, arguing that the public schools were not as influential as traditionalists believe and that the lower-middle-classes were more relevant in the game's ultimate development.<sup>1</sup> This paper informs the debate by considering the evidence to suggest an alternative way of viewing the history of the world's leading professional team game. Much has been written about the game's birth, even if academics have differing views on what constitutes the birth of the sport. This paper considers how to utilise the evidence provided within the existing debates to establish a new framework. This framework will determine how best to work the orthodox-revisionist debate into an all-encompassing framework which, it is hoped, will prove a model for the sport, and potentially for all sports in the forthcoming years.

<sup>1</sup> For historiography see Graham Curry and Eric Dunning, 'The Problem with Revisionism: How New Data on the Origins of Modern Football Have Led to Hasty Conclusions', *Soccer and Society* (2013): DOI: 10.1080/14660970.2012.75357; Peter Swain and Adrian Harvey, 'On Bosworth Field or the Playing Fields of Eton and Rugby? Who really invented Modern Football?', *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 29, no. 10 (2012): 1439; Peter Swain, 'The Origins of Football Debate: The Continuing Demise of the Dominant Paradigm, 1852–1856', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* (2014), DOI: 10.1080/09523367.2014.918542.