



**HOW NORTH KOREA  
AND MIDDLESBROUGH  
BECAME UNLIKELY  
FOOTBALL FRIENDS**

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**Title:**

How North Korea and Middlesbrough Became Unlikely Football Friends - Tifo Football

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**Description:**

The story of Middlesbrough and North Korea's unlikely friendship begins at Ayresome Park in 1966, when Pak Doo Ik's winning goal secured the Asian minnows a place in the quarter-finals. There, a curiosity developed in the Middlesbrough locals, after initial disinterest in the team, and the lowest recorded match attendance in the tournament. What evolved over the games, however, was a connection that warmed the hearts of many and one that has continued into the 21st Century.

**Link:**

<https://youtu.be/h5M7Xf3HwAs>

**Original academic article (underpinning research):**

The FIFA World Cup, International Friendship and the 'Mystery Men of the East': When Middlesbrough Fell in Love with North Korea. *North Korean Review*, 15 (1). 51-72. ISSN 1551-2789

**Link to accepted version of academic article (accepted version):**

<https://e-space.mmu.ac.uk/622864/1/THE%20FIFA%20WORLD%20CUP%2C%20INTERNATIONAL%20FRIENDSHIP%20AND%20THE%20%E2%80%98MYSTERY%20MEN%20OF%20THE%20EAST%E2%80%99%20WHEN%20MIDDLESBROUGH%20FELL%20IN%20LOVE%20WITH%20NORTH%20KOREA%20%28ACCEPTED%20VERSION%29.pdf>

**Link to published version (JSTOR):**

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/26632422>