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Author Bio



Paul Gerald grew up in Memphis, Tennessee, and still has an NASL Memphis Rogues pennant somewhere. He had a very brief career as a decent goalkeeper until around the age of fifteen, at which point his strong tendency toward laziness kicked in and he decided to write about sports instead of playing them.

When he got to Southern Methodist University, he started writing in sports for the student newspaper. He eventually had jobs at the Dallas Times Herald, the Memphis Commercial Appeal, and the Memphis Flyer before fleeing the southern summers for Portland, Oregon in 1996.

Since then, he has written sports, travel, and outdoors articles for publications all over the country and is the author of five guidebooks for Menasha Ridge Press, including Portland's best-selling hiking guide, *60 Hikes within 60 Miles: Portland*. He has guided hiking trips in Oregon, California, Colorado, Italy, and Nepal.

Along the way, since writing never really pays the bills, he has also worked for nonprofits, restaurants, tour companies, an insurance company, Radio Cab Company in Portland, and on Alaskan fishing boats. And that's just what he can remember.

Since his first English soccer game in 2011, he has seen more than 100 contests at more than 70 different grounds. Back at home, he's a Portland Timbers season ticket holder and a dues-paying member of the Timbers Army; he hates nothing in life more than the last 10 minutes of a game when the green and gold are ahead by one goal. His neighbors in section 217 can attest to this.



PAUL GERALD

THE GROUNDHOPPER GUIDE TO SOCCER IN ENGLAND

Meet the clubs. See them play. Eat, drink, and sing like a local.

2022-2023 SEASON



About the Book

The Groundhopper Guide to Soccer in England is a travel and cultural guide to all things football in the UK, completely updated for the 2022-23 season. Written by an American who has seen more than 100 games all over the UK, the book includes:

- Profiles of more than 80 clubs: their history, songs, and favorite pre-match pubs
- A guide to all the leagues and cups in England
- Historical information, including where the word “soccer” came from
- A detailed look at this year’s schedule
- Stories from the author’s “groundhopping” adventures

The book has three audiences in mind:

- The casual fan at home, watching on TV, wanting to know more about what they’re seeing
- The tourist hoping to mix a game into their vacation plans
- The enthusiast hoping to plan an entire vacation around seeing football

Book Excerpt

Consider this book an invitation.

Whether you have been to soccer games in England, only watched them on TV, dreamed about seeing them in person, or just recently heard from your kids that a game at (insert big club here) must be a part of your English vacation, you can think of me and the rest of the team at Groundhopper Soccer Guides as standing in English Soccer World and telling you it's great fun in here.

I've personally been to more than a hundred games at seventy-plus clubs all over the country, and I want you to know that it's not dangerous, it's not difficult (though it might be expensive), and I think it will remind you of what sports were like in your youth. Remember when television hadn't completely taken over the experience? Remember when rowdy visiting fans filled a corner of the stadium? When going to a game didn't take up the whole day? When the loudspeakers weren't blaring music all the time, when dance teams weren't gyrating, when replays and ads and cheering instructions weren't constantly emanating from a giant TV screen?

That's English soccer—with more singing.

So I am inviting you to come over and check it out. More than that, I am inviting you to visit an England that you wouldn't otherwise see. Specifically, I hope you will leave London, leave the big six clubs, and go find a true English soccer experience. I know you (and most certainly your kids) want to see Chelsea, Arsenal, Man U, Man City, Liverpool, or Tottenham. Those places are great. But I really want to get you to Charlton, QPR, Millwall, or Fulham. Better yet, I want to get you out of the capital entirely—to Sheffield, Nottingham, Brighton, Norwich, Newcastle, Leeds...I could go on.

So many people are fixated on seeing The Best—or on seeing the clubs that are always on TV or that their friends saw on their trips. What I am saying is that a home game at Leeds or Nottingham Forest will be much more entertaining (and cheaper) than seeing Man City cruise through a game at a mostly silent Etihad. In fact, any local derby at any level, or a top-of-the-table clash in any league, or even a relegation scrap in League One will be more fun than you probably realize. And there's a decent chance that your neighbors in the stadium will be surprised to have a foreigner sitting with them. They will also be pleased if you know a little something about where you are, what you're looking at, and what the locals are singing. For that is our real invitation: to not just go to a game or two but to learn about the town you're visiting and learn the club's songs, history, and traditions. In other words, we want you to be a proper football fan, if only for a day. This is what we are trying to help you do with not only this book but also the entirety of our efforts at Groundhopper Soccer Guides.

There are many great places to visit all over England, and there are many places where even the locals will wonder why you're there. But going to a football game is such a great way to be, as American writer Rick Steves always says, a temporary local. Really, it's meeting the people—and hearing them sing and curse and tell stories—that we think you'll remember most.

We want you to have the soccer adventure of your dreams, but we also invite you to expand those dreams. If it's a big six club you want to see, we can help. But we want to get you on the terraces, with a Bovril and a basket of chips, singing your guts out and yelling, —Who are yall at the wankers in the away end. Because that's where we'll be and what we'll be doing.

Come and join us.

Product Details

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SPORTS & RECREATION / Soccer

TRAVEL / Special Interest / Sports

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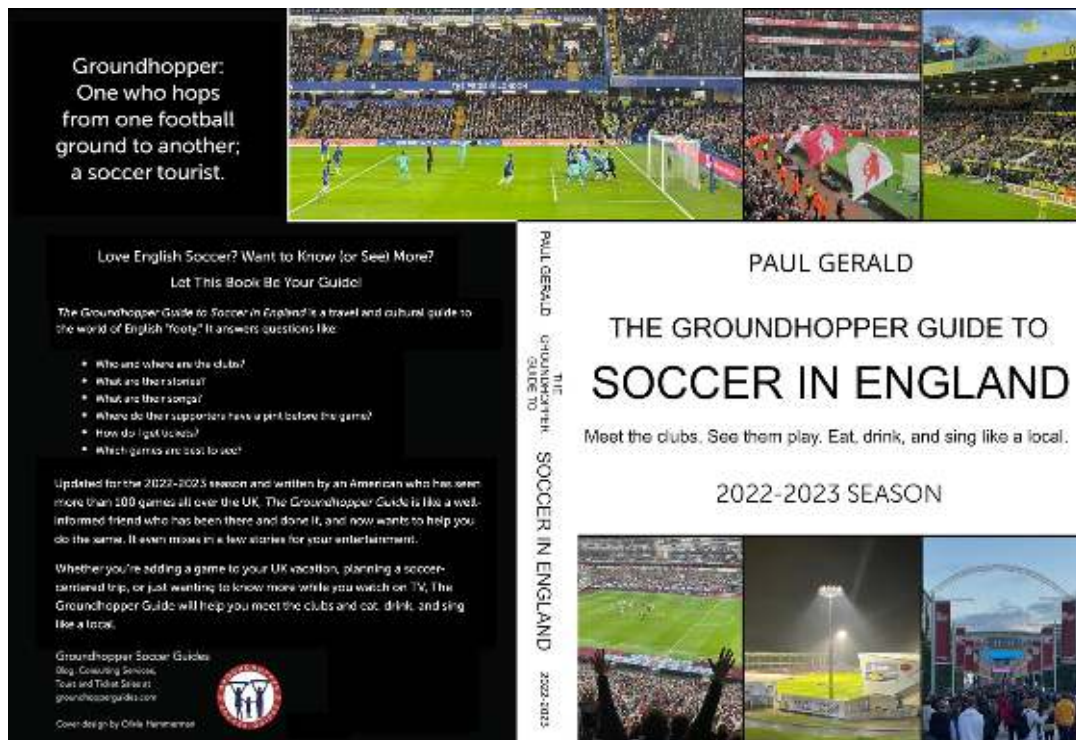
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Interview Questions

1. What is a “groundhopper”?
2. What’s it like attending a game in England?
3. How hard is it to get tickets?
4. Is it safe?
5. Is it something the whole family would enjoy?
6. What are some of the things that might surprise people about actually being there?
7. What are some of your top tips for enjoying a game?
8. Anything to make sure you don’t do?
9. What is in your book?
10. What else does Groundhopper Soccer Guides offer the traveling fan?



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