



# Soccer in Spain: Politics, Literature, and Film (Scarecrow Soccer Series)

*Timothy J. Ashton*

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Soccer has the unique ability to represent and strengthen different cultural identities and ideologies throughout the world. Perhaps nowhere can this be seen more prominently than in Spain, which has surged to the forefront of the world's most popular sport. The national team has won the last two European Championships and the 2010 World Cup, while the two preeminent club teams in Spain, Real Madrid and FC Barcelona, have reached the semifinals of the UEFA Champions League in 2011, 2012, and 2013. Even before the sport became a global phenomenon, soccer had established a strong connection with Spanish identity and culture.

In *Soccer in Spain: Politics, Literature, and Film*, Timothy J. Ashton examines the sport's association with Spanish culture and society. In this volume, Ashton demonstrates how Spain's soccer clubs reflected the politics of the region they represented and continue to reflect them today. The author also explores the often-tenuous relationship between the intellectual classes and the soccer community in Spain. Although some of the country's most highly-praised literary figures had a passion for soccer—which was often reflected in their work—many intellectuals deemed the topic unsuitable for critical study. Ashton also discusses how soccer films faced a similar rebuff from Spanish intellectuals, though the popularity of these films has grown in recent years.

As soccer continues to be one of the modern world's most significant representations of globalization, its importance as a cultural touchpoint cannot be ignored. For anyone wanting to learn more about the relationship between soccer, politics, and popular culture, this volume offers critical insights. *Soccer in Spain* is a valuable read for students and scholars of Spanish political history, literature, film, and sport.

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