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The establishment of the Eretz Israel football association

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ABSTRACT

The Eretz Israel Football Association was established on 14 August 1928 and became an official member of FIFA in May, 1929. The establishment of the Association culminated an extended process including efforts extending throughout the 1920s to institutionalise football in Eretz Israel. This article describes these efforts and the phases of institutionalising football in Eretz Israel in the 1920s; the contribution of the Russians, British, French, and Egyptians; and the rivalry between Hapoel and Maccabi, all of which ultimately contributed to the establishment of the Israel Football Association (IFA).

KEYWORDS Israel; Eretz Israel; football; FIFA; Hapoel; Maccabi; Israel football association

The origin of football in Eretz Israel

No accurate information is available on how football was initially introduced into Eretz Israel. Jewish athletic and sports associations were first established in Ottoman-ruled Eretz Israel in the early twentieth century, and written eyewitness reports of football games from 1912 exist.¹ In that year, the Russian Football Association was established and it is not inconceivable that the game was introduced by new immigrants of the Second Aliya, most of whom came from Russia.

At that time, there were no institutionalised games or permanent pitches (games usually were held on makeshift fields specifically prepared for a - match),² and the state of the roads and means of transportation in Eretz Israel did not allow for great mobility. As a result, teams' ability to compete against each other, especially against teams from remote locations, was extremely limited and many of the competitions held in Eretz Israel were ad hoc affairs involving teams that were organised for the event, similar to today's neighbourhood pickup games.

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However, even in that early period, there is some evidence of ‘organized’ football teams with fixed compositions, coaches, and uniforms. Gymnasia Herzliya in Tel Aviv had a football team (known as Ofer), while Maccabi Tel Aviv (also known as Maccabi Jaffa at the time) established a football department in 1913, and in 1915 the Ayala football team was established under the Tel Aviv branch of Maccabi Association.³ Football departments were also established by various Maccabi Associations, and the sporadic news items on football games indicate that such football departments were established in Petah Tikva, Mikve Israel, Rehovot, Rishon Letzion, Nes Ziona, and Jerusalem. The football teams from the various clubs played against each other in friendly games on Saturdays, and these were occasionally reported in the press.⁴

Britain, which administered Eretz Israel since 1920 under a League of Nations mandate, made a significant contribution to the development of football there. The British forces in the country cultivated their own football teams and influenced the establishment of Jewish and Arab football teams, significantly accelerating football’s domination of local sport activities and spurring local efforts to institutionalise the sport. The Jewish teams of this period can be divided into three groups: (a) football departments established within existing Maccabi associations; (b) Hapoel football associations (Hapoel was a new workers organisation formed in 1923 and established as a formal association in 1926); and (c) groups of youngsters who organised independently to establish football teams that were unaffiliated with Maccabi or Hapoel (e.g., Hazvi Jerusalem, Hagibor Jerusalem, Balfour Jerusalem, Hashmonay Jerusalem, Allenby Tel Aviv, Hagibor Haifa, and others). Most of these teams had disappeared by the late 1920s, having mostly merged into Maccabi associations. Maccabi Hashmonay, for example, merged into Maccabi Jerusalem in 1925, and Hagibor Haifa merged into Maccabi Haifa.

The proliferation of teams prompted a series of football games among the various Jewish teams, between Jewish and British teams, and occasionally between Jewish and Arab teams. Though these were not official games or part of any league or cup organisation, they attracted enormous interest and a large number of spectators attended the matches.

First phase of institutionalisation

The first effort to institutionalise football in Eretz Israel was made in 1923 by the Jerusalem-based British Sports Club, established by high-ranking British Mandate officials. The Club organised the Eretz Israel Cup Tournament for all football teams in the country that registered for the competition. The Flying Team of Ramla, which represented the Royal Air Force, won all Cup games apart from the 1926 competition which was apparently won by the Supreme British Military Command team from Amman.⁵

The Hebrew-language press devoted little space to these games and only occasionally noted the involvement of one or another Jewish team. As a result, there is an incomplete picture of these games. In 1923, Maccabi Tel Aviv was the only Jewish team that participated in the Cup Tournament. It achieved a tie twice (2:2 and 4:4) against the Sarafand Hospital team, but was defeated 9:2 in their third game.⁶

There is little information on the games of the Jewish teams in the 1924–26 Cup games. The April 1924 issue of the *Maccabi Newsletter* reported that Maccabi Tel Aviv defeated Hagibor Jerusalem in the Eretz Israel Cup, and on 15 April 1924 the daily newspaper *Haaretz* reported that the Jerusalem-based Hazvi team defeated Maccabi Tel Aviv 1:0. In contrast, *Beit Halevy* reported that Maccabi Tel Aviv lost to the Flying Team of Ramla 7:1 in 1924.

An item published on 12 February 1926 in *Haaretz* stated that the first game in the Eretz Israel Cup would be played the following day between Maccabi Tel Aviv and the Flying Team of Ramla, and that this was the third consecutive year in which Maccabi was competing for the Cup against this specific team (‘a matter of fate’), which indicates that Maccabi Tel Aviv also participated in the 1925 Cup games and was defeated by the strong Ramla team.

More extensive information on the participation of the Jewish teams is available for the games that took place in 1927. Five Jewish teams participated in these games: Maccabi Tel Aviv, Maccabi Jerusalem, Maccabi Petah Tikva, Maccabi Haifa, and Hapoel Haifa. The greatest success was achieved by Hapoel Haifa, which advanced to the semi-finals, the highest stage that a Jewish team ever reached in these games, though it was ultimately defeated 3:20 by the Amman British command team, the previous year’s Cup holder.⁷

The hegemony of the British teams ended as a result of a policy instituted by the High Commissioner of the British Mandate for Palestine, Lord Plummer. Having assumed his post in 1925, Plummer reduced the British military presence in mandatory Palestine from 6,300 troops and 100 police officers (since 1922) to 300 British troops in 1929.⁸

This reduction had a perceptible impact on the British football teams, most of which left the country, including the leading Flying Team of Ramla. At that time, talk started of reorganising the cup tournament and football in Eretz Israel in general,⁹ which was one of the reasons that led to the establishment of the Football Association in 1928.

Organising the regional leagues

Another effort to institutionalise football in Eretz Israel was a regional one. The inconvenience and expenses of travel in those years made it difficult to conduct regular national league games: the substitute was a series of regional leagues. Based on available information, four regional leagues were

established at some point: in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Judea (the country's southern area), and Haifa.

The Jerusalem league was organised by the Jerusalem Association of Football Teams, sponsored by Maccabi and originally including 11 Jewish teams.¹⁰ According to the January 1925 issue of *Maccabi Newsletter*, the plan was to have 14 teams compete at the first level and six at the second level, but in practice, the league was held with six Jerusalem-based teams: Hagibor A, Hagibor B, Hazvi A, Hazvi B, Maccabi, and Hanasher.¹¹

This issue also provides accounts of additional football initiatives in Jerusalem, including a roaming cup for Jewish teams, the Nashashibi Cup for all the teams in Jerusalem (named after the Mayor of Jerusalem), and the British Deeds Cup (named after Wyndham Deeds, Chief Secretary of the British High Commissioner for Palestine at the time) that comprised the various British government departments. This British league, established in 1920, was in fact the first British effort to establish a football league in mandatory Palestine. The frequent rotation of British government officials, however, put an end to it, and the league's operations were renewed only in 1925.¹²

There is scarce information on the results of the league games and their duration, other than that Maccabi Jerusalem won the Jerusalem Cup for Jewish Teams in 1924, and Hazvi won in 1925.¹³ The first league games in the Tel Aviv region took place in 1923 with Maccabi Avshalom Petah Tikva, Nordiya Rishon Letzion, Maccabi Tel Aviv, Maccabi Ness Ziona, and HaKoach Tel Aviv. The December 1923 issue of the *Maccabi Newsletter* presented the results of all the games and the table at the end of the first round, but other than that, there is no information on whether another round was held or on the league's further activities. Still, we know that in late 1928, teams played in a regional league in Tel Aviv, but these were different teams: Maccabi Tel Aviv, Maccabi Avshalom Petah Tikva, Hapoel Tel Aviv and three British teams: Tzrifin Hospital team, a new Flying Team of Ramla, and the Tzrifin Wireless team.¹⁴

In late 1923, another league was organised in the Judea region and included Rishon Letzion, Nes Ziona, Gedera, Rehovot, and Ekron. Rishon Letzion defeated Nes Ziona, Ekron, and Rehovot (the Gedera team withdrew during the competitions).¹⁵

A league was also held in Haifa, having been established by a senior British officer (Colonel Homes) and comprising nine teams. The roster of the teams in this league is not available but in contrast to the other regional leagues of the time, this league included non-Jewish teams. The 3 March 1925 edition of *Haaretz* noted that the Jewish team YMHA (Young Men's Hebrew Association) was the second of the nine teams; if a Jewish team had headed the table, the newspaper would presumably have noted this fact and not mentioned the team in the second place alone. Another item published by

Haaretz on 15 March 1925 reported on the competition between several Haifa-based teams, and if the report is in fact referring to the above league, it indicates that additional teams participated in the league, including Maccabi Haifa, a German team (probably, from the Hasmoshava HaGermanit) and Hapoel Haifa, which was still part of Maccabi Centre. We know of Carmel, which was a Haifa-based Christian-Arab team, and the Train Workers' team, which may also have been one of the teams participating in this league.¹⁶ The fact that the league was not based exclusively on Jewish teams was apparently the cause of tension and violence. An item that appeared in *Haaretz* on 3 March 1925 reported that Holmes decided to cancel the remainder of the league games 'due to altercations and disputes.'

In late 1926, the British once again initiated a league in Haifa and the daily newspaper *Davar* reported on 10 November 1926 that Deputy Governor Kitrosh invited 'all the football clubs in the city to establish a sports league.' Twelve British, Arab and Jewish representatives came to the meeting. The main problem was the tension between Maccabi and Hapoel in the city, which resulted in Maccabi's lengthy boycott of Hapoel in Haifa. Maccabi and Hapoel representatives argued that they needed approval of their respective centres before they could participate in such a league, and it was only in 1928 that the league apparently resumed its activities.¹⁷

Maccabi football association

Football's popularity in Eretz Israel in the early 1920s prompted the Maccabi Histadrut to promote the establishment of a national association and create a formal framework for Jewish football in Eretz Israel. The October 1923 issue of the *Maccabi Newsletter* contained a specific proposal to establish a 'Jewish football association in Eretz Israel [by Maccabi Histadrut],' including a system for organising football in Eretz Israel, among other things. According to this proposal, the association would be divided into three districts, with each district holding a championship in which teams would compete against each other twice. The top two teams in each district would participate in a national championship. The proposal addressed various organisational issues such as players' registration, approval of pitches, and registration for the leagues. The fact that this issue also included a list of soccer rules underlines Maccabi's intentions to institutionalise football.

According to available data, this proposal was not immediately put into practice. The December 1923 issue of the *Maccabi Newsletter* contained a detailed description of the 'inaugural games' of the teams in Judea (mentioned earlier), which were organised by Maccabi's 'technical council.' The Magen Shimshon games, the first football cup games for Jewish teams in Eretz Israel, were also launched in 1923. Participants in these first cup games included the second Maccabi Tel Aviv team (apparently because the first

team participated in the Eretz Israel Cup games), Ayala Tel Aviv, Ofer Tel Aviv, Baranovitz Petah Tikva, Maccabi Rishon Letzion, Maccabi Rehovot, and Maccabi Haifa. Due to the geographic distances, it was decided that the teams in the centre of the country would compete against each other, and the winner would play against Maccabi Haifa. Maccabi Nes Ziona advanced to the finals against Maccabi Haifa, which took place on Maccabi Tel Aviv's home field, and defeated Maccabi Haifa 2:1 to become the first Jewish team to win a Jewish cup.¹⁸

The Hebrew-language press rarely reported these games. As a result, the information about them is incomplete and based mainly on occasional reports that appeared in Maccabi newsletters. In 1924, Maccabi Nes Ziona won the cup again (the identity of its contender is unknown), and in 1925 Maccabi Tel Aviv defeated Maccabi Petah Tikva 7:0 in the finals. In 1926, only eight teams participated in the games, and Maccabi Tel Aviv once again won the finals, beating Hashmonay Jerusalem 6:1.

The Magen Shimshom games were held for the last time in 1927. In the finals, which took place in Jerusalem, Maccabi Hagibor Haifa defeated Maccabi Hashmonay Jerusalem 4:0.¹⁹ This was the swan song of these games, which no longer were held after the Eretz Israel Cup games were organised in 1928.

The Maccabi Football Association was first mentioned in late 1924. The November 1924 issue of *Maccabi Newsletter* recounts that eleven teams in Jerusalem came together to form the Jerusalem Football Association under Maccabi's sponsorship. The founders of this association – Z. Weizmann, Yitzhak Halutz, Stefan Turk, and Yosef Yekutieli – were also among the founders of Maccabi Histadrut, and later among the founders of the Football Association. The establishment of an association in Jerusalem sparked the establishment of the national Maccabi Football Association soon afterwards. The December 1924 issue of the *Maccabi Newsletter* reported that an association of the football teams had been established by Halutz, Turk, and Tamari (Tennenboim) and representatives of the district associations on 28 November 1924. The seat of the Association was set in Jerusalem, and its function was 'to manage all the interests of the football teams, conduct the top competitions and cup games in Eretz Israel, in full coordination with the central management of Maccabi Eretz Israel.'

The October 1926 issue of the Maccabi Newsletter presents a detailed annual report of the activities of the management of the Football Associations Society in 1926, including information on the management's activities in that year. Reports included an account of the management's relocation to Tel Aviv and the numerous difficulties that the move entailed, the desire to conduct league games in Eretz Israel, the shortage of referees, and even a complaint against the scourge of 'professionalism' that was prevalent in various forms. This issue also contained the constitution of the

National Society and the constitution of the Magen Shimshon games, which were defined as cup games exclusively for associations that ‘belonged to the national Maccabi Histadrut.’ We may assume that the fact that first Hapoel teams were founded that year prompted Maccabi’s emphasis on its ‘patronage’ of the Magen Shimshon games. Information from following years recounts the activities of the association, which would come to be known as the ‘National Society of Football Teams under Maccabi Histadrut.’

The October 1926 issue of the Maccabi Newsletter also included a text of the constitution of the inaugural games (which was the title of the championship games at the time). Apparently, there were intentions to hold the national championship games without dividing the country into districts in advance. The various rule books also indicate that the teams travelled to games at their own expense and paid half of their revenues to Maccabi Centre, while the home teams covered the referee’s fee (a third-class train ticket).

Efforts to establish a joint football association with Hapoel

Maccabi’s National Society did not actually function as a national association: it did not include British or Arab football teams, and most importantly, it did not include the Hapoel teams.

Hapoel Haifa was behind the first attempt to establish a national Hapoel Association in August 1925. Three months after the council convened (in Afula), Maccabi Histadrut launched its first initiative to establish a national football association that would also include Hapoel teams and constitute an umbrella framework for all the Jewish teams in Eretz Israel.

The three Hebrew-language dailies published almost identically worded accounts:

The National Convention of the Football Teams in Israel, convened by the national Maccabi Football Center, took place in Haifa on the 13th and 14th [of the month] in Dr. Haim Weisburg’s apartment. Representatives of 22 teams attended. All those present agreed that reinforcing the national Jewish football society is essential for developing this field of sports. Hapoel representatives stated they would like to join a Jewish football society but they do not have the authority to join Maccabi. The aspiration to unite all the forces led to a compromise decision, according to which a national Jewish society was created as an autonomous block inside Maccabi Histadrut. Hapoel will be admitted immediately to the society and will enjoy all the membership rights on the condition that it determines its categorical position on Maccabi within a fixed period. A directorate, comprising members Halutz, Turk, and Aluf, was elected. The society will be based in Jerusalem.²⁰

The execution of this agreement was, however, precluded by new circumstances that emerged. The national Hapoel Association, which had been established in Haifa, was eclipsed by the General Histadrut (General Organisation of Workers in Israel) and lost its power. Due to the centralist position of its general-secretary, David Ben-Gurion, the Histadrut initiated the re-establishment of Hapoel Association, which took place in May 1926.²¹ The Maccabi Histadrut, through Yosef Yekutieli, launched negotiations based on an agreement that proposed that the two labour unions would exist independently but would operate jointly at the technical level, including in activities such as hiring teachers, organising courses, conducting competitions, and establishing a football league.²² In other words, the establishment of a football league was designed to be part of a comprehensive agreement between the two centres. Negotiations based on Yekutieli's proposal extended for two years, and an agreement between Hapoel and Maccabi was signed in July 1927. The agreement included a clause expressing the associations' agreement 'to create national leagues for various fields of sport.' It was this consent that allowed Maccabi to issue a call to all football teams in the country to establish 'a general national organization that would unite all these separate units into a single unit ... and would help create a healthy sports movement in Eretz Israel.'²³

The founding meeting of this association was scheduled to convene in September 1927 in Jerusalem, but it did not convene because the agreement between Maccabi and Hapoel was not final but rather a framework for further negotiations on the individual clauses. It was determined that a parity committee would be established and its decisions would be subject to the approval of both associations. But while the committee continued to convene from time to time, no meeting apparently took place after April 1928, and Maccabi and Hapoel never finalised their agreement as their mutual hostility and distrust, the violence on the fields, and the wider political tension between them prevented them from signing the agreement.

Football's growing popularity and the proliferation of Hapoel teams called for the establishment of an association that would head and institutionalise at least that field. Maccabi had already come to terms with the fact that it couldn't introduce Hapoel into its ranks as an autonomous block, and the fact that achieving a comprehensive arrangement was a difficult task. From this point onward, it focused on establishing a football association, irrespective of a comprehensive agreement between the two associations.

Yekutieli was the main driving force behind the activities to establish a national association. He aspired to integrate Eretz Israel sports into the international arena, which in turn required that the country's sports institutions gain recognition by the international sports organisations. As early as in 1925, Yekutieli attempted to have FIFA induct Maccabi Histadrut as a member, only to realise that in order for it to be accepted an Eretz Israel

football association comprising the representatives of all local teams – Jewish, British, and Arab – would have to be established. When the Maccabi Hashmonay Jerusalem team travelled to Egypt in November 1927, Yekutieli arranged meetings with leaders of the Egyptian football association (and especially with referee Yusuf Muhammad, who carried weight with FIFA officials), who promised to help him have the Eretz Israel admitted to FIFA once a national association was established.²⁴ Yekutieli succeeded in establishing such a football association on in 1928.

The Eretz Israel cup and the Mond team

Two organised events paved the way to the establishment of the soccer association. The first was the the 1928 Cup Games, mentioned earlier. The 1928 reduction of British troops in the country and the consequent drop in the number of British football teams led to the establishment of a committee that organised the Cup Games, comprising representatives of British, Jewish and Arab teams as well as Maccabi and Hapoel teams. The names of the committee members do not appear in any sources, but it was mainly based on British members, with only two Jewish members: Stefan Turk representing Maccabi and M. Carmi representing Hapoel.²⁵

The Cup itself was donated by the wine producer Carmel Mizrahi. Of the twelve teams that registered, five were Jewish: Maccabi Tel Aviv, Hapoel Tel Aviv, Hapoel Haifa, Maccabi Hashmonay Jerusalem, and Hapoel Jerusalem. The remaining teams were Carmel Haifa, an Arab team, and five British teams: British Police team, the Eretz Israel Police team, the Gaza Flyers, and Military Hospital team, and Amman Flyers (the Palestine mandate also comprised the territory of Transjordan).

The outcomes of these games clearly reflected the changes attending the reduction of British forces as the dominance of the Jewish teams was unmistakable. Two Jewish teams advanced to the finals: Hapoel Tel Aviv defeated the Military Hospital team 3:1 in the quarter-finals, then defeated the Gaza Flyers 1:0 in the semi-finals, while Maccabi Hashmonay Jerusalem took the favourite Maccabi Tel Aviv by surprise, defeating it 3:2 in the quarter-finals, moving on to defeat Hapoel Haifa in the semi-finals 1:0.

The finals took place in May 1928 on Maccabi Jaffa's home field, with 5,000 spectators. Hapoel Tel Aviv defeated Maccabi Hashmonay 2:0, which for its part challenged the results claiming that one of Hapoel Tel Aviv's players (Moshe Mayer) participated though he was not legally registered. And while Hapoel Tel Aviv agreed to a re-match, the Cup committee accepted the appeal and decided that the Cup would be shared by both teams. This game, which was held before the official establishment of the Football Association is now considered the first finals of the Eretz Israel Cup games, which subsequently became the National Cup Games.²⁶

The second event occurred in June 1928 when Alfred Mond (Baron Melchett) announced, during a visit to mandatory Palestine, the award of £2,000 to allow a Jewish national football team to travel to England for a series of games with strong English teams. This idea required cooperation between Maccabi and Hapoel, which initially established a joint committee headed by Yekutieli. The other committee members were Abba Hushi, Haim Glovinsky, and Israel Carmi (representing Hapoel), and Peretz Dagan and Willy Rozenthal (aka Uri Nadav) representing Maccabi.

Efforts proceeded on two levels:

- Organisation of the Mond Cup games with the participation of four of the strongest Eretz Israel teams: Maccabi Tel Aviv, Maccabi Hashmonay Jerusalem, Hapoel Tel Aviv, and Hapoel Haifa. The games were held as a double-round roving tournament in which each team played all other teams twice. The tournament ended in late July with Hapoel Tel Aviv winning undefeated.²⁷
- Formation of three committees to prepare the national team: a central committee, a professional committee, and an administrative committee.

The committees met regularly and the conflicts that would later give birth to the 'fifty-fifty' method were already evident there. Each association wished to include as many of its own members in the 18-man team that would play in England. Hapoel members adamantly argued that the team should have a greater representation of Hapoel players due to the association's numerical superiority. In addition to the various disagreements related to technical issues concerning the team's preparation (e.g., the identity of the flagbearers, the method for selecting team players), the team itself was attacked by the press, which claimed that the standard of football in Eretz Israel was inadequate and that the games might embarrass Jewish sports. It was further argued that if the Jewish team's travel outside the country was intended to exhibit its strength and to bolster its public image, its planned games against the top English teams would only serve to have it embarrassed due to the marked difference in abilities.

At Hapoel's centre meeting on 5 August 2018, a decision was made to postpone the tour for one year and meanwhile ask Mond to bring a British coach to Eretz Israel to train the team. This decision effectively put an end to all preparations: no coach was sent from England and the idea eventually dissipated.²⁸ Nonetheless, the cooperation between the two sport associations was a significant step forward towards establishing a national football association before too long.

Establishing the football association

In early August 1928, Maccabi Histadrut sent requests to all football teams to send their representatives to the founding meeting of the Eretz Israel Football Association, scheduled to be held on August 14. The meeting was attended by 14 Jewish participants and one Arab participant. Participating Maccabi members were Rozenthal, Uri Nadav, Peretz Dagan, Yosef Yekutieli, Israel Gott, Stefan Turk, Mordechai Ben Dror, Ezra Ichilov, Jula Braun, Meir Caspi, and Efraim Rubinstein. Israel Carmi, Aharon Urik, and Efraim Perlstein represented Hapoel. The Arab delegate, a member of the Nusseiba family, represented An-Nadi ar-Riyadi, the Islamic sports club. Five attendees were elected as board members: three Maccabi representatives (Turk, Rozenthal, and Yekutieli), and two Hapoel representatives (Carmi and Urik), with Turk serving as the Association's first president.²⁹

The fact that the Association included the Eretz Israel denominational teams (British representatives joined later; Spicer, a British representative, served as the Association's second president) allowed it to apply for a FISA membership. Yekutieli used his contacts with the Egyptian association, which agreed to endorse the membership. In addition, deputy chair Nadav travelled to Vienna to meet with Hugo Meisel, a Jewish member of the Austrian Football Association who was also a member of the FIFA committee that organised the first World Cup Games in 1930. Nadav gave Meisel a review of all football developments in Eretz Israel and asked for his assistance with FIFA. Meisel apparently agreed, and the Association was granted provisional FIFA membership in December 1928, with its request for permanent membership officially approved at the annual FIFA conference in Barcelona on 17 May 1929.³⁰

The Cup games had begun even before the Association was established. Maccabi Tel Aviv defeated Hashmonay Jerusalem (4:0) in 1929 and was victorious again the next year after defeating the British team Battery 48, 2:1. At the same time, the Association made preparations to organise the first league games in Eretz Israel. For this purpose, it published a 'Useful Book' that included lists of all teams in the league as well as match schedule. Tensions following the widespread 1929 Arab riots and the attendant anti-Zionist British policy (reflected in the 1930 Passfield White Paper) led to jeering and taunting against the British team, and in January 1931 the High Commissioner ordered that the games be suspended.³¹

In addition, Hapoel members left the Association in response to clashes with Maccabi representatives. Hapoel members claimed that the Association was controlled by Maccabi members who discriminated against their Hapoel counterparts. The parties began negotiations that lasted nine months. Maccabi rejected Hapoel's demand for parity in the Association's board committee and proposed an arbitration body to resolve any conflicts that

arise. On 1 August 1931, at a general meeting of the Association, Hapoel announced that it would join it. In Justifying its capitulation, it referred to the ‘need to belong to the Association and continue from the inside the war to promote the field of football in Eretz Israel.’³²

The national league began on 7 October 1931 with a game in which Hashmonay Jerusalem defeated Hapoel Jerusalem, 8:0. The British Police team won this championship, which ended in May 1932. It soon became clear that the compromise between Maccabi and Hapoel was only temporary. The very next season, no league games were held and the disputes between the two associations continued to persist for decades. An account of their ongoing dispute is, however, beyond the scope of this article.

Notes

1. For example *HaHerut*, 12 June 1912.
2. Eventually permanent fields were constructed, though they varied over time. For inauguration events of permanent fields, see for example *Hamaccabi*, December 1935; *Davar*, 13 October 1925.
3. See photograph and composition in Yekutieli and Tidhar, *The Maccabi Jaffa-Tel Aviv Album*, 72.
4. *HaHerut*, 1 July 1913 & 27 January 1914.
5. *Haaretz*, 3 February 1927; *Davar*, 27 March 1927.
6. Beit Halevy, *Seventy Years of Football*, 62.
7. *Davar*, 27 March 1927. According to *Davar*, on 31 March 1927, Hapoel Haifa filed an appeal against the outcomes of the game. The appeal was most probably rejected.
8. Shavit and Bigger, “The British Mandate,” 92–93; and Slutzky, *The History of the Hagana*, 212–18.
9. See the criticism and call to establish new sponsorship for the Cup Games, *Haaretz*, 23 February 1927.
10. *Hamaccabi*, October 1934.
11. Halevy, *Seventy Years of Football*, 70; and Zimri, *Physical Education and Sport in Eretz Israel*, 36.
12. Speed and Yekutieli, “Football in Palestine,” 75.
13. *Hamaccabi*, May 1935 (Iyar 5695).
14. *Haaretz*, 26 February 1929; *Davar*, 14 February 1929.
15. Beit Halevy, *Seventy Years of Football*, 65–71.
16. Kaufman, “The Founding of the Hapoel Sports Association,” 129–30. According to the transcripts of Hapoel Haifa, Maccabi objected to include Hapoel in the Haifa league. See for example *Haaretz*, 18 June 1925. Carmel was a mixed Arab-Jewish team, *Haaretz*, 18 June 1925. The Train Workers had a group comprising Jews and Arabs, called Hakatar. *Haaretz*, 18 December 1924.
17. Kaufman, “The Founding of the Hapoel Sports Association,” 142; Labour Archive, Iv-244-186b.
18. Beit Halevy, 61–62.
19. *Hamaccabi*, March 1937.
20. *Haaretz*, 7 December 1925; *Doar Hayom*, 24 November 1925; *Davar*, 26 November 1925.

21. Kaufman, "The Founding of the Hapoel Sports Association."
22. Yekutieli's proposal was formulated on 31 August 1926. See Labour Archive iv-208-59a and Kfar Hamaccabiya Archive 1-139. For the negotiations surrounding the agreement, see Kaufman, "Maccabi vs, Hapoel – The Beginning of Political Confrontation in Eretz Israel Sport," 93-98.
23. *Davar*, 4 July 1927; *Doar Hayom*, 19 August 1927.
24. Gabay and Paz, "Seventy Years to the Israel Football Association," 23-24.
25. Yekutieli's letter to *Haaretz*, 10 June 1928. M. Carmi's letter to *Davar*, 18 June 1928.
26. On the Cup games see, for example: *Davar*, 10 October 1928; 9 May 1928; 29 May 1928; 27 May 1928; *Haaretz* 14 May 1928 and Yekutieli's criticism 10 June 1928. Also see Brenner, "It's Our Cup," 6-7. For a detailed description of the finals, also see Goldberg, "Photographic memory," *Haaretz*, 11 August 2002.
27. *Haaretz*, 14 June 1928; 3 July 1928; 1 August 1928; *Davar*, 14 June 1928; 15 July 1927; 18 July 1928; 30 July 1928.
28. Meetings of the professional committee 30 July 1928, Labour Archive iv-244-68; meeting of the central committee 27 July 1928, Labour Archive, iv-244-120; meeting of the central committee 16 August 1928, Labour Archive, iv-244-80a. The three committees and their composition appear in *Davar*, 14 June 1928. The composition of the committees in the meeting transcripts is not identical to the report in *Davar*. Apparently only two committees were active – the central committee and the professional committee. Also see *Davar*, 9 August 1928; *Haaretz* 1 August 1928; 14 August 1928.
29. See invitation dated 5 August 1928, Labour Archive iv-244-210. Also see Gabay and Paz, "Seventy Years to the Israel Football Association," 22-24, and 1959 *Yearbook: Football Association in Israel*.
30. See photograph in Arzi and Paz, p. 18.
31. *Davar*, 9 November 1930; 24 November 1930. The prohibition was removed only in January 1932, *Davar*, 26 January 1932.
32. See the meeting of Hapoel and Maccabi Centres on 6 February 1931, Labour Archive iv-244-81; Circular dated 15 September 1931, Labour Archive, iv-244-63; *Haaretz* 6 August 1931.

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