

Big Count 2006 – FAQ

What is the Big Count?

The Big Count is the informal name of a survey that FIFA periodically conducts of its member associations, a kind of census of world football that reveals the game's most important statistics.

Which statistics does the Big Count compile?

The Big Count is based on a simple one-page questionnaire which is used to poll the most important categories of stakeholders in the game, such as players (both registered and unregistered), referees, officials and clubs.

Who is the Big Count for?

The Big Count is by no means just for FIFA: it supports the view that football is the world's most popular sport, not just with regard to media coverage, but also in terms of how widely it is played. The Big Count satisfies a continual demand for overall figures on associations, regions, categories, etc. Reliable statistics on world football are a source of interest to the media, fans, the advertising industry, sports equipment manufacturers, marketing companies and, last but not least, football associations themselves.

How many Big Counts have there been so far?

The first survey of this kind was carried out by FIFA in the year 2000 and was published the following year, while the second Big Count was conducted in 2006 and published in 2007. Similar projects were also undertaken as far back as thirty years ago (e.g. in 1974), but there is only a limited overlap with today's survey because of the different categories of data compiled in each case. The most direct point of comparison between the surveys is the number of registered players, which was scarcely 18 million at the beginning of João Havelange's presidency in 1974 and which had risen to 38 million by 2006.

When will the next Big Count be?

Due to the considerable expense of carrying out surveys of this nature and the fact that in most cases, the figures compiled remain valid for a few years, research of this kind is conducted twice a decade at the very most. The next Big Count is therefore not scheduled until 2010. In any case, the research tools and methodology used for the latest Big Count enable FIFA to continually update its records on associations whenever any new information is received.