The world’s greatest rivalries

Editorial ranking / 1–10 of 50

01 Real Madrid vs Barcelona | Spain

El Clásico — Spanish title battles and the Messi–Ronaldo era.

02 Boca Juniors vs River Plate | Argentina

Superclásico — The 2018 Libertadores final ended in Madrid.

03 Celtic vs Rangers | Scotland

Old Firm — A Glasgow rivalry dating to 1888.

04 Liverpool vs Manchester United | England

North West rivalry — Liverpool won 7–0 in 2023.

05 Galatasaray vs Fenerbahçe | Türkiye

Intercontinental Derby — Clubs associated with opposite sides of the Bosphorus.

06 AC Milan vs Inter | Italy

Derby della Madonnina — The clubs share the historic San Siro.

07 Al Ahly vs Zamalek | Egypt

Cairo Derby — Al Ahly won the 2020 continental final 2–1.

08 Dortmund vs Schalke | Germany

Revierderby — A Ruhr rivalry rooted in industrial communities.

09 Roma vs Lazio | Italy

Derby della Capitale — Both clubs are associated with Stadio Olimpico.

10 Red Star vs Partizan | Serbia

Eternal Derby — A defining contest in Serbian football.

The world’s greatest rivalries

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11 Flamengo vs Fluminense | Brazil

Fla-Flu — A historic fixture associated with Maracanã.

12 Arsenal vs Tottenham | England

North London Derby — Arsenal moved to north London in 1913.

13 Olympiacos vs Panathinaikos | Greece

Derby of the Eternal Enemies — Athens and Piraeus sporting identities.

14 Raja vs Wydad | Morocco

Casablanca Derby — Known for elaborate supporter displays.

15 Real Madrid vs Atlético Madrid | Spain

Madrid Derby — The clubs met in the 2014 and 2016 European finals.

16 Manchester United vs Manchester City | England

Manchester Derby — City won 6–1 at Old Trafford in 2011.

17 Ajax vs Feyenoord | Netherlands

De Klassieker — Amsterdam and Rotterdam compete for prestige.

18 Benfica vs Porto | Portugal

O Clássico — A national contest between Portuguese giants.

19 Juventus vs Inter | Italy

Derby d’Italia — Decades of Italian title competition.

20 Marseille vs PSG | France

Le Classique — A major rivalry between southern France and the capital.

The world’s greatest rivalries

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21 Liverpool vs Everton | England

Merseyside Derby — A rivalry that often divides family loyalties.

22 Corinthians vs Palmeiras | Brazil

Derby Paulista — A defining São Paulo football fixture.

23 Club América vs Guadalajara | Mexico

Clásico Nacional — A national rivalry between two famous Mexican clubs.

24 Peñarol vs Nacional | Uruguay

Uruguayan Clásico — Two historic powers of Uruguayan football.

25 Bayern Munich vs Dortmund | Germany

Der Klassiker — Bayern won their 2013 European final 2–1.

26 Sevilla vs Real Betis | Spain

Seville Derby — Local pride in Andalusia.

27 Dinamo Zagreb vs Hajduk Split | Croatia

Eternal Derby — A rivalry connecting Zagreb and the Dalmatian coast.

28 Kaizer Chiefs vs Orlando Pirates | South Africa

Soweto Derby — A celebrated southern African football fixture.

29 Benfica vs Sporting CP | Portugal

Lisbon Derby — Two historic clubs in the Portuguese capital.

30 Newcastle vs Sunderland | England

Tyne-Wear Derby — A contest for north-east English sporting pride.

The world’s greatest rivalries

Editorial ranking / 31–40 of 50

31 West Ham vs Millwall | England

East London rivalry — Roots in London's industrial communities.

32 Athletic Club vs Real Sociedad | Spain

Basque Derby — A shared regional identity and sporting competition.

33 FC Copenhagen vs Brøndby | Denmark

Copenhagen Derby — A defining fixture of the modern Superliga.

34 Racing Club vs Independiente | Argentina

Avellaneda Derby — The clubs have remarkably close home grounds.

35 Grêmio vs Internacional | Brazil

Grenal — Southern Brazil's defining football contest.

36 Be■ikta■ vs Galatasaray | Türkiye

Istanbul Derby — Part of Istanbul's rich football tradition.

37 Sparta Prague vs Slavia Prague | Czechia

Prague Derby — A historic contest in Czech football.

38 Austria Vienna vs Rapid Vienna | Austria

Vienna Derby — A longstanding Austrian club rivalry.

39 Espérance vs Club Africain | Tunisia

Tunis Derby — A major contest in the Tunisian capital.

40 Persepolis vs Esteghlal | Iran

Tehran Derby — Two prominent clubs from the Iranian capital.

The world’s greatest rivalries

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41 East Bengal vs Mohun Bagan | India

Kolkata Derby — A century-old Indian football tradition.

42 Al Hilal vs Al Nassr | Saudi Arabia

Riyadh Derby — A prominent Saudi championship rivalry.

43 Portland Timbers vs Seattle Sounders | USA

Cascadia rivalry — Pacific Northwest traditions predating MLS.

44 LAFC vs LA Galaxy | USA

El Tráfico — A modern MLS rivalry beginning in 2018.

45 AIK vs Djurgården | Sweden

Stockholm Derby — Both clubs were founded in 1891.

46 Hammarby vs AIK | Sweden

Stockholm Derby — An important fixture in Stockholm football culture.

47 Colo-Colo vs Universidad de Chile | Chile

Chilean Superclásico — A major Chilean national club rivalry.

48 Universitario vs Alianza Lima | Peru

Peruvian Clásico — Two historic Peruvian football institutions.

49 Persija Jakarta vs Persib Bandung | Indonesia

Indonesian rivalry — A major contest between Jakarta and Bandung.

50 Melbourne Victory vs Melbourne City | Australia

Melbourne Derby — A modern A-League rivalry.

Historic matches & discussion

Selected results, not a live head-to-head database

2009 • Real Madrid 2–6 Barcelona

2010 • Barcelona 5–0 Real Madrid

2011 • Manchester United 1–6 Manchester City

2013 • Bayern Munich 2–1 Dortmund (European final)

2018 • River Plate 3–1 Boca Juniors (after extra time, final second leg)

2020 • Al Ahly 2–1 Zamalek (CAF Champions League final)

2023 • Liverpool 7–0 Manchester United

What makes a rivalry important: geography, history or trophies?

Would you prefer a derby win or a league title? Why?

How can supporters celebrate without disrespecting opponents?

What makes comparing different eras difficult?

Football IQ quiz

15 questions / Score: ____ / 15

1. Which clubs contest El Clásico?

_____

2. Which country hosts the Superclásico?

_____

3. Which clubs contest the Old Firm?

_____

4. Which city hosts the Cairo Derby?

_____

5. What was Liverpool’s famous 2023 win over United?

_____

6. Which clubs contest Fla-Flu?

_____

7. Who won the 2013 European final?

_____

8. Which city hosts the Madonnina derby?

_____

9. Which clubs contest the Copenhagen Derby?

_____

10. Which country hosts the Kolkata Derby?

_____

11. Which clubs contest De Klassieker?

_____

12. Which rivalry is El Tráfico?

_____

13. Which country hosts the Soweto Derby?

_____

14. Which club shares San Siro with AC Milan?

_____

15. Name one way to show sporting respect.

_____

Answer key & personal ranking

Compare your answers and build your own Top 10

1. Real Madrid and Barcelona
2. Argentina
3. Celtic and Rangers
4. Cairo
5. 7–0
6. Flamengo and Fluminense
7. Bayern Munich
8. Milan
9. FC Copenhagen and Brøndby
10. India
11. Ajax and Feyenoord
12. LAFC and LA Galaxy
13. South Africa
14. Inter
15. Example: shake hands or encourage fair play.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Coaching academy

Ten small-sided activities / Adapt to age and ability

1. Rondo

4v1, rotate defender every 45 seconds. Scan before receiving.

2. Dribbling

1v1 to two gates. Switch opponents every minute.

3. Transition

4v4; react immediately when possession changes.

4. Pressing

5v5; nearest player presses while teammates cover.

5. Defending

3v3; protect central space and communicate.

6. Finishing

Pass, receive and shoot; rotate roles after each attempt.

7. Fair play

4v4; recognise supportive behaviour alongside goals.

8. Leadership

Rotate captains every three minutes.

9. Counterattack

3v2 to goal; choose when to pass or carry.

10. Festival

Rotate teams in short games; finish with a group reflection.

My rivalry workbook

Personal reflection and further reading

My favourite rivalry:

_____

_____

Three reasons why:

_____

_____

A match I would like to watch:

_____

_____

My fair-play promise:

_____

_____

My next training goal:

_____

_____

Ranking is subjective. Historical notes are selected examples, not independently verified live statistics.

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Further reading