

# The Origins of AFL

Year 10, History

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# What is Marngrook?

For thousands of years, First Nations people played a game called Marngrook with a ball made from possum skin and tied with kangaroo sinews.

The word Marngrook is the Gunditjmara word for 'game ball'. It had different rules to what we know as AFL today, but it is now more commonly known to be the game that inspired AFL.

Source: [AIATSIS](#)

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# What were the rules?

The game involved 50 to 100 players and could go on for several days. There were no goals. Instead, each team tried to catch the ball after it was kicked high into the air.

At the end of the game, the player who kicked the ball the highest was tasked with burying it in the ground. Different versions of this game were played throughout Victoria, and within the Northern Territory.





# Influence on AFL

A non-Indigenous man, Tom Wills from Moyston, helped create the first AFL rules in 1858. Historians debated whether Marngrook influenced AFL, but in 2016, historian Professor Jenny Hocking found evidence linking the game to the area where Wills grew up.

This discovery challenged the idea that Marngrook wasn't played in that region. It solidified how First Nations oral traditions and storytelling provides valuable historical insights.

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