**Part 1: PENALTIES: A CRUCIAL MOMENT IN MODERN FOOTBALL**

**Chapter 1. Concepts of penalties and approaches to taking them  
 1.1. The history of penalties**

Football is generally a low-scoring game, and this means that penalties often play a decisive role in determining the final score – something that is not the case with the 7-metre throw in handball, or the free throw in basketball.   
 The idea of the penalty kick was first posited 130 years ago, in 1890, by none other than a goalkeeper: William McCrum of Irish side Milford Everton. To begin with, nobody could understand why a goalkeeper, of all people, would suggest such a thing. Following heated debate within the Irish Football Association, the idea was accepted and put forward to the IFAB in June 1890. One year later, on 2 June 1891, the penalty kick was added to the Laws of the Game as the 13th rule [26], and on 14 September 1891 the first penalty in an official match was awarded during a game between Wolverhampton Wanderers and Accrington [321].   
 Some people claim that the real reason behind the introduction of the penalty kick was that, during the 1891 FA Cup quarter-final between Notts County and Stoke City, one of the first-team's defenders saved a goal by punching the ball away with his hand. The direct free kick – the punishment of the time – did not lead to a goal, and everyone agreed that they had been witness to a scandalous injustice. A new rule was going to be needed to make it impossible for this to happen again [200].   
 Early on, teams were somewhat reluctant to accept the penalty kick, considering it beneath the dignity of a gentleman to receive such a “gift” [ibidem]. Some teams even saw taking advantage of a penalty kick as a form of cheating. Others viewed the new rule quite simply as “an oak spike in the heart of the game” [14]. Soon enough, however, these gestures of honour died out, with players eventually virtually begging for penalties.