**First part: PENALTIES – MOMENTS OF CRUCIAL IMPORTANCE IN THE FOOTBALL MATCH OF LIFE**

**Chapter 1. Conceptions of penalties and approaches taken towards them**

**1.1. History of penalties**

Since football is generally a low-scoring game, penalties can potentially play a decisive role in the final result, in contrast to the 7 m penalty throw in handball or the free throw in basketball.

The penalty issue was first raised approximately 130 years ago, in 1890, by (of all people) a goalkeeper - William McCrum, of Milford Everton in Ireland. The initial reaction was one of incomprehension – what could possibly have possessed him, a goalkeeper, to come up with such a suggestion? After heated debate within the Irish federation, in June 1890 the proposal was forwarded to FIFA. One year later, on 2 June 1891, the penalty was introduced in the Players’ League as rule number 13 [26], and on 14 September 1891, in a match between Wolverhampton Wanderers and Accrington, the first penalty in an official match was awarded [321].

Others contend that the introduction of the penalty originated from a specific incident, when in the FA Cup semi-final in 1891, between Notts County and Stoke City, one of the players for the former team stopped a goal from being scored by pushing the ball away with his hand. A direct free kick – the sanction for such an offence at the time – was unsuccessful, which everyone agreed was a scandalous and absolutely unacceptable situation. A new rule was clearly required to prevent such a thing from ever happening again [200].

At the outset teams were somewhat reluctant to accept the idea of the penalty, seeing it as beneath the dignity of a gentleman to benefit from a “free gift” of this nature [*ibid*]. Some teams held that profiting from a penalty was nothing less than a form of cheating, while others even saw the new rule as “an oak spike in the heart of the game” [14]. These honourable scruples rapidly disappeared, however, and players were soon only too eager to convince the referee to award a penalty.