Needle Exchange

World Cup Soccer Ball Knitting Pattern

This pattern is great for people who have little time to do anything. It's knit in pieces, with each panel (a pentagon or hexagon) created individually. Just pick up a few stitches, knit a panel, and put it away. It's all very laid-back, and great for people with short attention spans. It is the "Garfield the Cat" of knitting patterns.

In total, you'll have to make 20 hexagons and 12 pentagons. Don't worry, though, each one takes about ten minutes, tops! It uses up less than a ball of yarn for each colour so it's a perfect stash-buster, and if you knit it in your national colours, it's patriotic, too!

Size

Slightly smaller than a regulation soccer ball

Colours

The pentagons are usually black and the hexagons white. I did the opposite because I am a culture jammer. (Just kidding.) You can pretty much do whatever you want; a few example colour schemes are available at the end of this pattern.

Materials

- 2 or 3 balls of worsted weight yarn, depending on your colour scheme. Allow one ball for each colour you use. If you plan to play with the soccer ball, make it a washable yarn; probably acrylic.
- 5mm double-pointed needles
- Place markers
- Tapestry needle
- Stuffing or inflatable beach ball

Gauge

28 stitches and 36 rows to 4 inches.

Pattern Notes

The complexity of this pattern is in keeping track of where to put the pentagons and hexagons. It's really easy if you just remember that making a soccer ball is like making lots of little daisies. Some daisies will share petals (the hexagons), but you'll never see two pentagons side-by-side.

I found it easier to pick up stitches and add panels straight onto the ball than to make them all individually and seam them together. If you just want to stitch it all together, more power to ya; it's easier to block that way, but remember that you'll be blocking 32 individual pieces.

The following diagram is a rough guide to constructing your ball. The coloured lines mean the edges are meant to connect.

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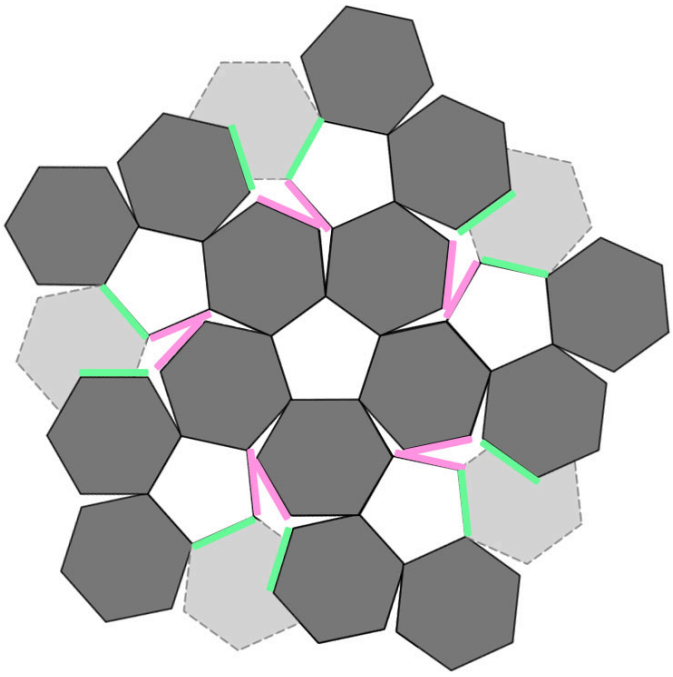

Soccer Ball Construction Diagram

Continue as above, keeping to the rule that every pentagon is loosely encircled by five other pentagons.

To make a Pentagon

Cast on 25 stitches using a Twisted German cast on, a long tail cast on, or any other stiff cast on and join in the round.

Row 1: * K3, K2tog, place marker, repeat from * until end of row.
Rows 2 - 4: * Knit until 2 stitches before marker, K2tog, pm, repeat from * until end of row.

Feed yarn through remaining stitches (there should be 5 of them) and tie off.

To make a Hexagon

Cast on 30 stitches and join in the round.

The instructions for the hexagon are exactly the same as for the pentagon, except you'll be doing everything 6 times per row instead of 5 times per row.

Row 1: * K3, K2tog, place marker, repeat from * until end of row.
Rows 2 - 4: * Knit until 2 stitches before marker, K2tog, pm, repeat from * until end of row.

To bind off, feed your yarn through the remaining stitches (there should be 6 of them this time) and tie off.

Picking up stitches

If you don't want to knit, block and sew together 32 panels (like me), you can pick up stitches from previous panels and build onto them. I usually made a ring of 5 hexagons and then picked up 25 stitches from the ring in the middle to complete the "daisy." All you have to keep in mind is that there are 5 stitches to a side, so if you're adding a hexagon to the side of another, cast on 25 stitches and then pick up 5 stitches to make 30 stitches in total. If you're adding a hexagon onto two side-by-side hexagons, cast on 20 stitches and then pick up 5 stitches from each hexagon. If you're adding a hexagon between two hexagons, it gets a bit complicated; cast on 15 stitches, pick up 5 from the first hexagon (carrying the tail along behind the work), cast on 5 more stitches, and then pick up a final 5 stitches to make 30 in total.

Finishing

When you're one or two panels away from finishing, the stuffing / blocking begins. If you're going to stuff your ball, shove a few rags into it and stretch it to however large you want it. Dampen it and let it dry. If you want to actually play soccer with it, you can put in a small inflatable beach ball or some sort of expensive soccer ball bladder, but I have no idea about those.

So you have access to the nipple (hee hee) of the beach ball, knit the last panel (a pentagon in this case) like so:

Pick up or cast on 25 stitches.

Row 1: * K3, K2tog, place marker, repeat from * until end of row.
Rows 2 - 3: * Knit until 2 stitches before marker, K2tog, pm, repeat from * until end of row.

Cast off tightly. The nipple will just poke out. If you want, you can slip the nipple cover under and through the cast-off edge to hold it in place. Inflate the ball, dampen it and let dry.

Your soccer ball is done! Great job!

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Appendix

For more info: here's a cool page where you can find out more about soccer ball construction, in case I did a horrible job of explaining it all.

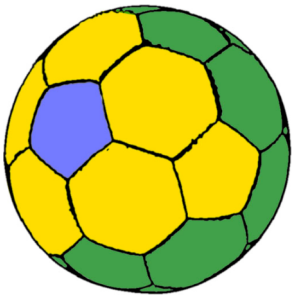
Go to http://needles.guzzlingcakes.com/patterns for updates to Needle Exchange patterns.

National Colour Schemes

Angola!

Argentina!

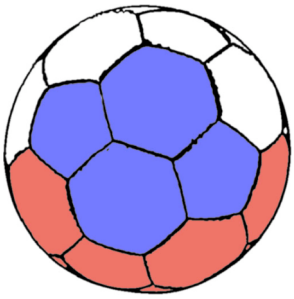
Australia!

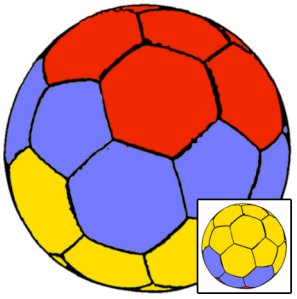

Brazil!

Costa Rica!

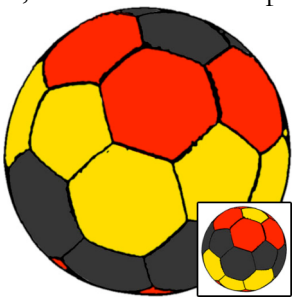
Cote d'Ivoire!

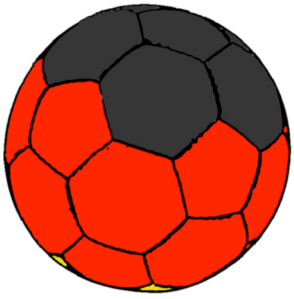
All those countries with red, white and blue stripes!


Czech Republic!


Ecuador!

England and Canada!

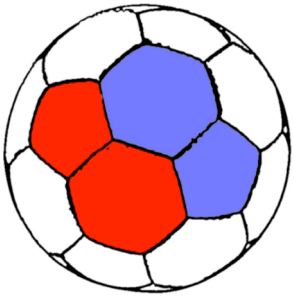

Germany!


Germany!

Ghana!

Italy!

Japan!


Korea!

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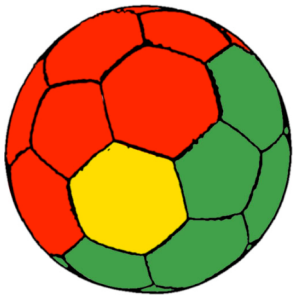
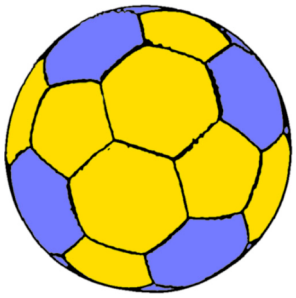
Poland!



Portugal!

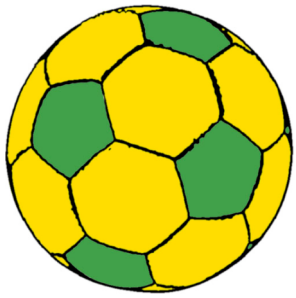
Saudi Arabia!

Spain!



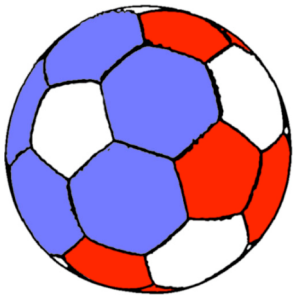
Sweden!

Switzerland!

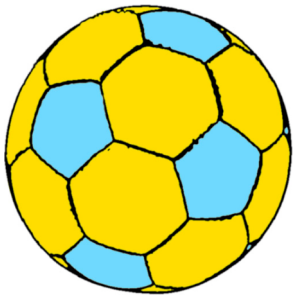


Togo!

Tunisia!



United States!



Ukraine!

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