CLAIMS

1. A football shoe or football boot including a sole, an upper, a fastening means to fasten the shoe or boot in place, and a layer of material that in situ is disposed between the fastening means and an underlying foot or hose, wherein the layer of material includes a ball control region, wherein the ball control region comprises a transversely curved outer ball control surface between respective lateral ridge portions, which ball control surface is contactable with a football during kicking, wherein said ball control surface lies rearwardly of a foremost region of the layer of material and wherein the ball control region is dimensioned such that it lies generally within a region defined by opposing plural eyes, apertures, or inner sleeves in the upper, said plural eyes, apertures, or inner sleeves being adapted to receive the fastening means, and wherein the layer of the material is attached to or integral with the upper laterally of the ball control region to each side thereof ~~with an outer ball control surface contactable with a football during kicking, and wherein said ball control surface lies rearwardly of a foremost region of the layer of material~~.

2. The football shoe or football boot of claim 1, wherein the ball control region is provided by an element integral with, or formed with, the layer of material.

3. The football shoe or football boot of claim 1, wherein the ball control region is provided by a separate element secured or adapted to be secured to the layer of material.

~~4. The football shoe or football boot of claim 3, wherein the element includes a first portion that overlies and contacts an outer surface of the layer of material, which first portion includes the ball control region.~~

~~5. The football shoe or football boot of claim 3 or 4, wherein the element includes a second portion, which second portion is secured or adapted to be secured to the layer of material.~~

~~6. The football shoe or football boot of claim 5, wherein the second portion of the element is adapted to be secured to the layer of material by being adapted to be received within a slit, or within a slit defining a pocket, in the outer surface of the layer of material.~~

~~7. The football shoe or football boot of claim 5 or 6, wherein the second portion is adapted to be secured to the layer of material by being stitched, welded, or otherwise fastened thereto.~~

~~8. The football shoe or football boot of any one of claims 5 to 7, wherein the second portion of the element is a relatively thin elongate tab located forward of, or extending from, the first portion.~~

~~9. The football shoe or football boot of any one of the preceding claims, wherein the ball control region is dimensioned such that it lies generally within a region defined by opposing plural eyes, apertures, or inner sleeves in the upper, said plural eyes, apertures, or inner sleeves being adapted to receive the fastening means.~~

~~10. The football shoe or football boot of claim 9, wherein the fastening means comprises one or more of lacing, clasps, clips, straps, bands, or the like.~~

~~11. The football shoe or football boot of any one of claims 4 to 10, wherein the ball control region is provided by a separate element secured or adapted to be secured to the layer of material, and wherein the element includes plural eyes or apertures for receiving lacing such that, when the shoe or boot is worn, the position of the element relative to the layer of material may be controlled.~~

~~12. The football shoe or football boot of any one of the preceding claims, wherein the ball control region comprises a transversely curved outer ball control surface between respective lateral ridge portions.~~

4~~13~~. The football shoe or football boot of any one of the preceding claims ~~12~~, wherein the transversely curved outer ball control surface presents a concave surface, at least when contacted with a football during kicking.

5~~14~~. The football shoe or football boot of any one of the preceding claims ~~12 or 13~~, wherein the lateral ridge portions of the ball control region are inwardly tapered rear to front.

6~~15~~. The football shoe or football boot of any one of the preceding claims ~~12 to 14~~, wherein the lateral ridge portions of the ball control region are curved inwardly and downwardly when viewed from a transverse cross-section and define, at their edges,

outwardly extending shoulders which includes plural eyes or apertures for receiving lacing.

~~16. The football shoe or football boot of any one of the preceding claims, wherein the layer of material is a tongue that is attached to the upper or integral with the upper at its forward end.~~

~~17. The football shoe or football boot of any one of claims 1 to 15, wherein the layer of material is attached to or integral with the upper laterally of the ball control region to each side thereof.~~

7~~18~~. The football shoe or football boot of any one of the preceding claim~~s 17~~, wherein the layer of material extends rearwardly into a collar portion, which collar portion extends about an ankle or lower leg of a wearer when the shoe or boot is worn.

8. The football shoe or football boot of any one of the preceding claims, wherein the fastening means comprises one or more of lacing, clasps, clips, straps, bands, or the like.

~~19. The football shoe or football boot of any one of claims 16 to 18, wherein the layer of material comprises a soft flexible material and/or is of similar material to the upper.~~

9~~20~~. A football shoe or football boot including a sole, an upper, a fastening means to fasten the shoe or boot in place, and a tongue that is in situ disposed between the fastening means and an underlying foot or hose, wherein the tongue includes a ball control region with a transversely curved ~~an~~ outer ball control surface between respective lateral ridge portions, which ball control surface is contactable with a football during kicking, and wherein said ball control surface lies rearwardly of a foremost region of the tongue and wherein the ball control region is dimensioned such that it lies generally within a region defined by opposing plural eyes, apertures, or inner sleeves in the upper, said plural eyes, apertures, or inner sleeves being adapted to receive the fastening means.

1021. The football shoe or football boot of claim 920, wherein the ball control region is provided by an element integral with, or formed with, the tongue.

1122. The football shoe or football boot of claim 920, wherein the ball control region is provided by a separate element secured or adapted to be secured to the tongue.

1223. The football shoe or football boot of claim 1122, wherein the element includes a first portion that overlies and contacts an outer surface of the tongue, which first portion includes the ball control region., and

24. The football shoe or football boot of claim 23 or 24, wherein the element includes a second portion secured or adapted to be secured to the tongue., and wherein preferably

25. The football shoe or football boot of claim 24, wherein the second portion of the element is adapted to be secured to the tongue by being adapted to be received within a slit, or within a slit defining a pocket, in the outer surface of the tongue.

26. The football shoe or football boot of claim 24 or 25, wherein the second portion is adapted to be secured to the tongue by being stitched, welded, or otherwise fastened thereto.

1327. The football shoe or football boot of any one of claims 24 to 26claim 12, wherein the second portion is a relatively thin elongate tab located forward of, or extending from, the first portion.

28. The football shoe or football boot of any one of claims 20 to 27, wherein the ball control region is dimensioned such that it lies generally within an opening in the upper defined by opposing lateral edges of the upper.

29. The football shoe or football boot of claim 28, wherein the upper includes plural eyes, apertures, or inner sleeves for receiving lacing, said lacing adapted to secure the shoe or boot to a wearer's foot by closing the opening in the upper to an appropriate extent.

30. The football shoe or football boot of claim 28 or 29, wherein the ball control region is provided by a separate element secured or adapted to be secured to the

~~tongue, and wherein the element includes plural eyes or apertures for receiving lacing such that, when the shoe or boot is worn, the position of the element relative to the opening the upper may be controlled.~~

~~31. The football shoe or football boot of any one of the 20 to 30, wherein the ball control region comprises a transversely curved outer ball control surface between respective lateral ridge portions.~~

14~~32~~. The football shoe or football boot of any one of claims 9 to 13 ~~31~~, wherein the transversely curved outer ball control surface presents a concave surface, at least when contacted with a football during kicking.

~~33. The football shoe or football boot of claim 31 or 32, wherein the lateral ridge portions of the ball control region are inwardly tapered rear to front.~~

15~~34~~. The football shoe or football boot of any one of claims ~~31~~ 9 to 14~~33~~, wherein the lateral ridge portions of the ball control region are curved inwardly and downwardly when viewed from a transverse cross-section and define, at their edges, outwardly extending shoulders which includes plural eyes or apertures for receiving lacing.

16~~35~~. The football shoe or football boot of any one of claims ~~20~~ 9 to ~~34~~15, wherein the tongue extends further rearwardly than a rearmost edge of the element thereby providing cushioning between the rearmost edge of the element and a wearer's ankle.

~~36. The football shoe or football boot of any one of claims 31 to 35, wherein the upper comprises a soft flexible material and the ball control region comprises a relatively more rigid material for defining the ridge portions and the transversely curved outer ball control surface, thereby imparting a greater velocity to a ball kicked by contact with the upper including the ball control region.~~