

AC Milan was founded as Milan Foot-Ball and Cricket Club in 1899 by English expatriate Herbert Kilpin.[8] The club claims 16 December of that year as their foundation date,[21] but historical evidence seems to suggest that the club was actually founded a few days earlier, most likely on 13 December.[2] However, with the club's charter being lost, the exact date remains open to debate.

In honour of its English origins, the club has retained the English spelling of the city's name, as opposed to the Italian spelling Milano, which it was forced to bear under the fascist regime. Milan won its first Italian championship in 1901, interrupting a three-year hegemony of Genoa, and a further two in succession in 1906 and 1907.[7] The club proved successful in the first decade of its existence, with several important trophies won, including, among others, the Medaglia del Re three times,[22] the Palla Dapples 23 times[23] and the FGNI tournament five times, a competition organized by the Italian Gymnastics Federation but not officially recognized by the Italian Football Federation.[24]

In 1908, Milan experienced a split caused by internal disagreements over the signing of foreign players, which led to the forming of another Milan-based team, F.C. Internazionale.[25] Following these events, Milan did not manage to win a single domestic title until 1950–51,[10] with some exceptions represented by the 1915–16 Coppa Federale[26] and the 1917–18 Coppa Mauro,[27] two tournaments played during the First World War which, especially the former, received a lot of attention and proved to be highly competitive, despite them not being officially recognized by the Italian federation.