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**BALL, ALAN:** Truly there was not an inch of Wembley turf that the ginger-haired maestro didn't cover on that never to be forgotten afternoon in 1966. The last Englishman to play in the midfield for Arsenal.

→ **Stats**

Matches played: 975

Length of career: 21 years

Clubs represented: 8. Everton, Arsenal, Blackpool (x2)

Southampton (x2), Bristol Rovers, Vancouver Whitecaps, Philadelphia Fury, Eastern Athletic.

**BARKER, SUE:** Filth.....Very allegedly it is claimed that Sue was responsible for taking Tim Henman's virginity. However, no footage exists and rumours that the England number one celebrated with a trademark fist pump are unlikely to be true. (See Cliff Richard, Greg Norman, Liverpool FC 1978-1983)

→ **Stats**

Highest World Ranking: 3

Grand Slam Semi-Finals Reached: 4

Number of Years Hosted Question of Sport: 10

**BATES, KEN:** A Chairman of the Old School. He was uninterested in placating fans with big money purchases and more taken with exploring the possibilities of having them caged in behind crocodile infested moats.

In the 1970s an Irish Court stated that the one time dairy farmer was not a suitable man to run a company. He went on to run Oldham, Chelsea and Leeds.

A friend of Dave's (Mellor)

ODD FACT: If, God forbid, he had his time again he would like to come back as a General or a Bishop. Or, possibly, both.

**BOUNCE, THE WORLD CUP**

*Real per Capita GDP growth, Annual Percentage Rate, 2 years pre- and post World Cup. Source Penn World Tables.*

.....  
 1954 Germany (Champion) 7.1 and 9.1  
 Switzerland (Host) 4.0 and 5.5  
 .....

1958 Brazil (champion) 5.7 and 3.3  
 Sweden (Host) 1.9 and 4.0  
 .....

1962 Brazil (champion) 3.9 and -0.8  
 Chile (Host) 3.2 and 1.8  
 .....

1966 England (champion and Host) 1.4 and 3.0  
 .....

1970 Brazil (champion) 6.5 and 9.7  
 Mexico (host) 2.9 and 5.2

.....  
 1974 Germany (champion and host) 9.5 and 4.7  
 .....

1978 Argentina (champion and host) 0.0 and 5.6  
 .....

1982 Italy (Champion) -0.3 and 1.5  
 Spain (Host) -0.6 and 0.5  
 .....

1986 Argentina (Champion) -0.9 and -2.4  
 Mexico (Host) -2.2 and 0.6  
 .....

1990 Germany (Champion) 3.3 and 1.3  
 Italy (Host) 2.4 and 0.9  
 .....

Mean	Median
3.6 and 3.5	3.6 and 3.1
2.2 and 3.2	2.1 and 3.5

There seems NOT to be a “champions” effect on GDP. GDP growth rates rise for the winners in half the cases, and fall for the winners in the other half of the cases. However, there may be a “host country effect.” In 7 out of 10 cases, the GDP grows faster after the event than before (by about 1 percentage point per year, on average). Although the 0.25: Percentage growth in the German economy attributable to the World Cup finals, And the Institute of Economic Research found that the World Cup Finals boosted the German economy by 0.25%. Maybe hosting the cup boosts the economy because of spending by tourists. Maybe it boosts the economy due to new construction as the country prepares to host the Cup.

Maybe it's just chance.

**BEAGLING:** A wonderful way to take some exercise and meet the right sort of people.

Or

Evil, vermin, scum. If there were any justice in the world it would be the beaglers who would be put under lock and key and force-fed cigarettes.

**BEARDS:** W. G. Grace's record for the longest beard in sport is unlikely to be broken any time soon.

**BECKHAM, DAVID.** The Beckhams have three fridges, one of which, on David's orders, is exclusively used for salad. 'David is so from another planet,' says his wife Victoria. 'I mean what is he like.'

→ Stats

First Car: Ford Escort.

Chocolate bar eating while Victoria giving birth to Brooklyn: Lion bar.

Miles run in average game for Man United: 8.8

Shirt number worn at Real Madrid: 23

Language in which his 'Vhictoria' tattoo written: Hindi. ('English would be tacky,' he explained)

**BIG RON'S HALF-TIME TALKS:** *A manager renowned for being ten years ahead of his time when it came to half-time talks as Dean Saunders recalls: 'So it's half time at the Villa and we were having a bit of a disaster, Big Ron would follow the players on with his boiling head on and say, 'sit down everybody'. The door would open and in comes Renee one of half of the famous Renee and Renata*

*and Ron says to the lads, 'sit down and just have a look at what passion really means!' Renee would then stand there singing Nessun Dorma with his face turning purple, and while this is going on I'm trying to tell Ray Houghton which runs I'm planning for the second half and Ron looks at me with an icy stare and puts his finger to his lips. And then at the end of the song he says, 'that is what passion is about. Now get out there and show those supporters what you are made of!'*

*And this wasn't just a one-off. He tried Robbie Williams singing, Stan Boardman telling jokes.....no wonder he never won anything at the Villa.'*

*(see also Big Mal, Big Sam and Big Avram)*

**BLATTER, SEPP:** Bespectacled buffoon and administrator who brought the game into disrepute with his daft ideas.

Or

Clear-headed and far-sighted visionary whose thought on women footballer's shorts were ten years ahead of his time (see Martin Peters)

→ Stats

Number of FIFA members who nominated him for re-election in 2007 (out of 207): 66

Job previously held at Valaisan Tourist Board: Head of Public Relations

Job previously held at Swiss Ice Hockey Federation: General Secretary

Has honorary degree from De Montfort University (Leicester)

**BREAKFAST WITH BOSNICH:** *Before his debut, and, so far, only appearance, on the show Mark Bosnich entered*

*the BBC staff canteen and scarfed two bacon baguettes washed down with five cappuccinos and finished off with a large cigar (surely against the rules?) before appearing in the studio, laughing hysterically at anything (including Rawling at his funniest) and knocking back a record 12 litres of water. (see also Bunce)*

**BONDS, BILLY:** If West Ham could field a team of eleven Billy Bonds they would never be relegated. Discuss.

⚡ **Stats**

Number of England Caps: 0

Age on last appearance for the club: 41 years and 225 days.

Highest basic wage: ££600.

First job on being appointed coach: Painting the dressing-room

**BORG, BJORN:** The first man to win the Wimbledon Gentlemen's Singles and then claim, 'the world is my sauna'.

His former business partner Lars Skarke writes in his book 'Bjorn Borg Winner Loses All': 'Christer told me how he had rubbed his eyes in disbelief as he once watched Bjorn weeping and sobbing naked in the corner of a room. Tennis fans would barely have recognised him as he writhed with his hands crudely tied behind his back. Above him stood a 6 foot tall woman dressed in black leather peep-hole bra, pants and thigh-high leather boots brandishing a thick leather belt.

"You are guilty and now I am going to punish you," she screamed at him as the belt came lashing down on his bare buttocks.'

At which point you expect a waiter to appear and ask, 'Bjorn, where did it all go wrong?' Instead, the text continues with the arguably lame 'Life had changed dramatically since the early days.....'

**SOME RANDOM NUMBERS:**

26,400: Pounds paid at auction for the ball hit by Garry Sobers for six sixes in an over.

16m: US dollars paid for The Green Monkey, a world-record price. The horse has not raced and is no longer in training.

795m: Estimated final bill in pounds for completed Wembley Stadium. The original "fixed" contract was ££326 million

**BOTHAM, IAN:** A knight of the realm on and off the greensward. Once drunk John Arlott under the table in his home in Guernsey, the great commentator not being discovered until tea the following day.

**BRADMAN, DON:** The white Viv Richards.

**BREARLEY, MIKE:** He had a degree in People. A fact never better illustrated than in the famous Headingley Test. Australia only needed 129 to win but did 'The Professor of Philosophy' give the new ball to Bob Willis? Of course not. First, he gave it to Ian Botham and then, to Big Bob's evident chagrin, to Graham 'Picca Dilly and then, as Bob fumed in the outfield to Chris 'Chilly' Old.

Faced by such an attack Australia progressed serenely to

56 for 1. Then, and only then, did Brearley hand the cherry to R.G.D Willis. Incandescent with rage the Warwickshire-man quick responded with figures of 8 for 43. Game, Set and Test to Brears.

Curiously, although the only cricketer of recent times to be a qualified psychoanalyst he has yet to be asked to be 'The Analyst' on Channel 4 or Channel 5 or wherever cricket is shown these days. Perhaps, this is due to an unsuccessful treatment of Ronnie O'Sullivan. The Cue wizard was suffering from one of his periodic depressions and sought help from Brearley. After a mind-numbingly expensive dozen sessions Brears casually asked Ronnie which hand his father had used in clubbing a man to death during a 'handbags incident' in a local hostelry. 'Right,' replied Ronnie. 'And which hand do you use to play snooker?' asked Brears. 'Left,' replied Ronnie. 'Ahhhh,' said the noted psychoanalyst.

Thoroughly confused it was eighteen months before Ronnie compiled another century.

#### Stats

Test Record as Captain: Played 31, won 17,  
drew 10, lost 4.  
Test batting average; 22.88  
Degree: Classics

#### SOME RANDOM COMPARISONS:

More Indian women watched the 2007 Brazilian Grand Prix than British men.

Twice as many people of Lebanese descent live in Brazil (7 million) as in Lebanon.

'You are asking what is more important – Brazil or a US Invasion?' said a Haitian fan in 1994. 'We are hungry every day. We have problems every day. The Americans talk about invading every day. But the World Cup only comes every four years.'

**BULL-FIGHTING:** A wonderful way to take some exercise and (in ital) meet the right sort of people.

Or

Evil, vermin, scum. If there was any justice in the world it would be the bullfighters who would be chased round the ring and poked with tiny swords.