

BBC SPORT

EURO 2004 ON THE BBC





Euro 2004 on the BBC

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Euro 2004 TV schedule

Group A	Group B	Group C	Group D
Portugal	France	Sweden	Czech Republic
Greece	England	Bulgaria	Latvia
Spain	Switzerland	Denmark	Germany
Russia	Croatia	Italy	Netherlands

Sat June 12	BBC	Portugal v Greece (5.00pm)
	BBC	Spain v Russia (7.45pm)
Sun June 13	BBC	Switzerland v Croatia (5.00pm)
	ITV	France v England (7.45pm)*
Mon Jun 14	ITV	Denmark v Italy (5.00pm)*
	ITV	Sweden v Bulgaria (7.45pm)*
Tues June 15	ITV	Czech Republic v Latvia (5.00pm)
	BBC	Germany v Netherlands (7.45pm)
Weds June 16	BBC	Greece v Spain (5.00pm)
	ITV	Russia v Portugal (7.45pm)*
Thurs June 17	ITV	England v Switzerland (5.00pm)*
	BBC	Croatia v France (7.45pm)
Fri June 18	BBC	Bulgaria v Denmark (5.00pm)
	ITV	Italy v Sweden (7.45pm)*
Sat June 19	ITV	Latvia v Germany (5.00pm)
	BBC	Netherlands v Czech Republic (7.45pm)
Sun June 20	BBC	Spain v Portugal (7.45pm)
	BBC	Russia v Greece (7.45pm)*
Mon June 21	BBC	Croatia v England (7.45pm)
	BBC	Switzerland v France (7.45pm)*
Tues June 22	ITV	Italy v Bulgaria (7.45pm)*
	ITV	Denmark v Sweden (7.45pm)*
Weds June 23	ITV	Netherlands v Latvia (7.45pm)*
	ITV	Germany v Czech Republic (7.45pm)*

* highlights on BBC One

Quarter final 1: Thurs 24 June	Winner A v Runner-up B (7.45pm)
Quarter final 2: Fri 25 June	Winner B v Runner-up A (7.45pm)
Quarter final 3: Sat 26 June	Winner C v Runner-up D (7.45pm)
Quarter final 4: Sun 27 June	Winner D v Runner-up C (7.45pm)
Semi final: Weds 30 June	Winner QF 1 v Winner QF 3 (7.45pm)
Semi final: Thurs 1 July	Winner QF 2 v Winner QF 4 (7.45pm)
Final:	Sunday 4 July (7.45pm)

Quarter final and semi final ties to be scheduled after group stage
 BBC has first pick of quarter final and semi final games

Final live on BBC One



Behind the scenes of the BBC TV coverage

BBC TV coverage

BBC TV on-air team

Presenters:

Gary Lineker
Ray Stubbs (Highlights/Interactive forum)
Mark Bright (606)

Studio experts:

Alan Hansen
Peter Schmeichel
Ian Wright
Peter Reid
Steve Bruce
Jamie Redknapp
+tbc

Commentators:

John Motson
Barry Davies
Steve Wilson

Roving reporters:

Garth Crooks
Damian Johnson
Hazel Irvine
Dominic Cotton
Ivan Gaskell

Co-commentators:

Mark Lawrenson
Mick McCarthy
Joe Royle
Mark Bright

Never mind Euro 2004 –BBC executive football producer Phil Bigwood is already thinking about the next World Cup.

It's a measure of just how much planning is involved in getting a major tournament on air and providing the extensive coverage and expertise that's come to be associated with football on the BBC.

"Broadly speaking it's 18 months to a year out when you start planning, and then in the last six or seven months it gets more intensive," explains Phil in a rare quiet moment between planning coverage of Euro 2004 and more imminent FA Cup and UEFA Cup matches, and jetting off to Berlin to start preparing for the 2006 World Cup.

He's now well into the intensive phase for Euro 2004 and there's plenty to get organised.

"We've got two bases in Portugal, effectively," he says. "The highlights and *Football Focus* will come from the Broadcast Centre in Lisbon, and all the live games will be presented from the various stadia. We'll need to go out about a week before the actual tournament starts to finalise plans and to do various visits to stadia to make sure that everything's in place."

Once the tournament begins it'll be non-stop for Phil, the director of all the live games, Editor Paul Armstrong and their team, so the more they can prepare in advance the better.

"There are matches every day for the first 17 days of the tournament and, although we haven't got all of them live, there will be various sections of programming to produce each day," Phil explains. "The TV truck has got to move around the various venues in Portugal overnight to get to the next ground for the next morning to be ready. The broadcast compound closes at ten o'clock on the



Behind the scenes of the BBC TV coverage

morning of each game; we're not likely to finish till 11 or midnight the night before at the previous stadium, so they're going to have to travel overnight to get to the various venues. It's quite a challenge for the BBC Resources team, led by Steve Goodey and Tony Bate.

"Two rigging crews will go in to put in the cabling. They piggy back one another, so that when the truck turns up, it plugs in, and hopefully off we go," he elaborates.

"It's a pretty relentless month, but because there is such a team atmosphere it works. It's very much a team thing – that's one of the things we pride ourselves on. There's 50 plus people working in each other's pockets for a month so you all become reliant on everyone else, whether it be technical staff or production. Hopefully this team ethic benefits us on air and we get slick programming.

"It is a wonderful thing to work on and I have to say I'm looking forward to Portugal as much as any tournament I've ever worked on."

And of course if England do well, it makes the BBC team's job that much more enjoyable.

"It does make a huge difference," Phil agrees. "In pure programme terms there's not a lot of difference for us because we'll still do the live games in the same way with the same preparations. We're committed, come what may, to broadcast programmes all the way through to the Final. Obviously though when England are involved there's much more of a buzz about it. While England keep going there's such a level of excitement and expectation around it. The whole country gets behind the team and the level of anticipation goes through the roof."

Not that Phil and the team see too much of it while the games are actually on... "It's difficult because we're at these fantastic occasions, these great matches, but even though it sounds

very glamorous the majority of us are stuck in the car park in a truck looking at TV screens!" he laughs.

It's Phil's job to make sure viewers at home get the best possible coverage of a game – not always as easy as it sounds when you're taking someone else's pictures.

"Contractually we have to take the host broadcaster's match coverage and graphics," Phil explains. "The only thing that I can do differently is to cut in a few of my own shots and put on a clock with the BBC ident. We have three match cameras to pick out extra shots, which I will cut in to the host pictures – for the England match for example we will get quite neutral coverage so I will cut in extra shots of, say, Sven or Beckham, to give the coverage more of an English slant."

Taking the host's coverage has caused another headache for Phil, who's already anticipating a few complaints from viewers with widescreen televisions.

"The hosts are only offering the match coverage in 4x3 [the standard TV picture format], hence widescreen viewers will have black bars down the side of their picture for all the games, as happened with the last World Cup in Japan. It's unfortunate but there's absolutely nothing we can do about that because that is what is generated by the hosts," he sighs.

Of all the channels who are taking the Euro 2004 coverage worldwide, it's really only the British ones – both the BBC and ITV – who regularly broadcast in widescreen, therefore it seems that we'll have to wait a while longer for the first-ever widescreen football tournament. The good news is that all the rest of the BBC's coverage will be available in widescreen – any studio coverage, features etc will be free of those annoying black bars. There'll be comprehensive coverage of the



Behind the scenes of the BBC TV coverage

tournament across BBC television from the unrivalled team of Gary Lineker, Alan Hansen, Mark Lawrenson, Peter Schmeichel, John Motson, Barry Davies, Steve Wilson, Ray Stubbs, etc – with added benefits such as the tri-media *606* comment show, presented by Stubbs and Mark Bright, available simultaneously on interactive TV, Radio Five Live and at bbc.co.uk. The BBC will also attempt to bring the viewers closer to the action by using numerous roving crews around Portugal, bringing the latest news from the various national camps and hopefully giving a sense of the excitement at Europe's premier football tournament.

One thing Phil's hoping will happen is some last-minute drama... hopefully involving England!

"I look back to the 2002 World Cup qualifiers and when David Beckham scored his injury time free kick against Greece to send England to the World Cup it caused us to think very quickly!" he admits. "We'd planned this full 30-minute end of the programme about what we were going to do as England hadn't qualified automatically, and then one goal in injury time and we had to rip it all up and start again... More of the same would be great!"

If it means another England victory then Phil would be happy to fly by the seat of his pants again and add to his store of favourite work memories.

"I was the programme director for Germany 1 England 5 which was a great highlight, and I also did the UEFA Cup final when Liverpool beat Alaves 5-4. Those couple of things stick in the memory," he says.

But whatever happens at Euro 2004, Phil's hoping he might be able to catch up on a bit of sleep in between matches.

"I've got a ten-month-old baby boy, so this will be an absolute joy!" he jokes.



BBC Radio coverage

BBC Radio Five Live coverage

Five Live on-air team

Presenter:

Mark Pougatch

Commentators:

Mike Ingham

Alan Green

Jonathan Pearce

Simon Brotherton

John Murray

Ian Brown

Conor McNamara

Expert summarisers:

Terry Butcher

Graham Taylor

Chris Waddle

Jimmy Armfield

Gordon Strachan

Alan Curbishley

Gavin Peacock

Roving reporters:

Nigel Adderly

Ian Dennis

Alistair Yeomans

Richard Burgess

Charlotte Nichol

News reporters:

Peter Allen

Gordon Farquhar

Jill Harrington

Comprehensive coverage

- Live commentary from every game (some on Sports Extra when there is a clash)
- Only radio team based in England's hotel for exclusive access to all the team news, reports and interviews
- Live coverage of England press conferences
- Roving reporters covering news from other nations' camps
- News reporters covering news stories, fans' issues etc
- Daily inserts into regular Five Live programmes with news, interviews, updates, gossip etc throughout the day
- Interactive 606 after 7.45pm games from 10pm
- Five Live's regular interactive elements – phone calls, emails, texts, letters – will feature in programming throughout the tournament for listeners' Euro 2004 views, stories and on-the-spot experiences



Five Live – your Euro 2004 station

Every kick of every game – and a lot more besides. Interviews, news, press conferences, action and reaction will fill the airwaves on BBC Radio Five Live throughout Euro 2004, making the station *the* place to be for Euro 2004.

Five Live Planning Editor Rob Hastie and Executive Football Producer Caj Sohal are in charge of getting the tournament on air for Five Live. For them, planning began almost as soon as the last World Cup was out of the way.

“We started looking at this two years ago,” agrees Caj. “We went out to Portugal for the first time about 18 months ago, and then again in June and December. There have also been meetings with our European broadcasting partners that have been going on for the past couple of years. It’s a big deal for UEFA because logistically, as you can imagine, with that many people and that many games even though it’s quite a compact country it’s still a huge operation.”

At that very first meeting they were able to find out where Five Live’s commentary positions would be for all the games and what costs were involved so they could put together a budget. “We knew we wanted to cover every game live so it was a question of what else did we want to do and how much of it would be possible,” explains Rob. “It’s been complicated slightly by the fact that it’s also an Olympic year, plus part of the tournament clashes with Wimbledon, and there’s also the British Grand Prix and Test Match cricket on at the same time as well as the usual summer sport.

“And we had to put on hold to some extent plans for coverage outside of the games until we knew how many of the British teams would qualify, so it was really after we knew that that the planning intensified.”

That planning included putting together two broadcasting teams, one based in northern Portugal, in Lisbon, and one based further south in Porto. This makes it easier for them to share the games out between them and minimise travelling.

“We have venue producers who go out beforehand and set up the technical stuff for all the games,” explains Rob. “As we’re broadcasting all the games live on Five Live, we’ll already be set up for the knockout stages and don’t have to worry – wherever England end up (hoping that they get through the group stage of course!) we will already be in place, so we won’t have any last-minute panics.”

Even Five Live’s “Team England” – football correspondent Mike Ingham, reporter Nigel Adderly, expert summariser Terry Butcher, reporter/producer Charlotte Nichol and the team’s engineer – can relax in the knowledge that if England do qualify from their group, they’ll stay in Lisbon for their next game whether they are winners or runners-up.

Which is lucky, as the Five Live team won’t have much time for packing – they have a fuller schedule than the players, with morning training to watch, the daily press conferences (which will be broadcast live into Five Live’s lunchtime or early afternoon programmes) to attend and interviews to conduct.

Mike Ingham and Nigel Adderly will also be popping up on Five Live’s shows throughout the day during the tournament to give listeners all the news, updates and gossip from the England camp, with their various other colleagues reporting on the goings-on from around the country. Ian Dennis, for example, will be with the French squad during the first phase to get all the news and interviews with



England's main Group B rivals. And Five Live's excellent contacts with European broadcasting colleagues will be invaluable for exchanging information and finding out what's really going on behind the scenes with the other teams.

"We're anticipating massive interest," admits Rob Hastie. "Even if England don't get that far, the footballing public wants to keep in touch with every game. I remember in 1994 at the World Cup in the US, there was no British team so we didn't broadcast that many of the games live – and we got masses of phone calls from listeners who really wanted to hear Norway v Italy, for example.

"And so many of the teams have players who are based in the Premiership, or who are familiar from the Champions League or UEFA Cup, that that interest seems stronger than ever these days."

It's to reflect that interest that Five Live is offering such comprehensive, in-depth coverage from its peerless team: commentators Mike Ingham, Alan Green, Jonathan Pearce, Simon Brotherton, John Murray, Ian Brown and Conor McNamara; expert summarisers Terry Butcher, Graham Taylor, Chris Waddle, Jimmy Armfield, Gordon Strachan, Alan Curbishley and Gavin Peacock; and reporters Nigel Adderly, Ian Dennis, Alistair Yeomans, Richard Burgess, Charlotte Nichol, Gordon Farquhar and Jill Harrington – not to mention Mark Pougatch, who'll be presenting all the England matches live from the stadia.

"We have an England expertise which is second to none," states Caj Sohal. "We have a former England manager in Graham Taylor; with Jimmy and Terry we have two former England captains; add in Chris Waddle as well and they have well over 100 England caps between them. We've got that breadth of knowledge and experience from the Fifties, when Jimmy was playing, right up to the present day."

Meanwhile, away from the actual match coverage, Five Live's news team plan to give a broader outlook on the tournament. They'll be following the fans and keeping an eye on how they behave – behaviour which is crucial if England don't want to be thrown out of Euro 2004.

They'll also have news on the England team, a fan from each country to give them the lowdown on what's happening with their teams and the reaction from their fans to the results, and on-the-spot coverage of any news stories which may occur once the tournament gets under way.

These reports will be dropped in to programmes throughout the tournament – even before a ball is kicked.

"We kick off in Brian Alexander's programme on the first day of Euro 2004, Saturday 12 June," explains Hayley Valentine who, along with Jon Zilkha, is the executive producer for the news coverage of Euro 2004. "Then Peter Allen will be doing the main inserts into programmes throughout the week.

"We start in Lisbon and then, before England's second game, go down to the south coast which is where a lot of the England fans seem to be basing themselves – possibly already being familiar with the Algarve from holidays – and then go on with them to Coimbra for the second game, then back up to Lisbon.

"But we're very flexible within that and will be able to roam around where the stories are. We have a great new piece of kit we call a wizzycam which means we can go out and about and do things live there and then, without having to pre-record pieces."

As Hayley explains, for a news team Euro 2004 is something of a luxury – at least for the group stages.



“News can hardly ever pre-plan, due to its nature, so the first ten days of Euro 2004 is as much of a doddle as it ever gets for us!” she grins. “We know where England will be for the group stages so we have been able to plan ahead and find venues to broadcast from, and install ISDN lines – which you need for the best quality broadcast – up front.

“And because we obviously also know all the other nations taking part, we’ve been able to make those contacts with the fans so that we’re not looking around in a panic at the last minute for good people to talk to us when we’re out there. Similarly, we’ve already contacted people we may want to talk to, such as security chiefs, our police who are going to the tournament, representatives from UEFA and the FA, so that we know we can get hold of them for comment and interviews if needs be.”

Once the group stages are over, things get a little less predictable for Hayley and her team but, as she says, that’s what news people are used to – and for once, no news could be good news if it means no hooligan trouble in Portugal.



BBC Sport interactive Euro 2004 coverage

Online

The BBC Sport website bbc.co.uk/euro2004 and BBC Ceefax Sport will cover every kick of the 2004 European Championship in Portugal this summer.

Football fans will also have the opportunity to get involved before a ball is even kicked by using the BBC Sport website's Euro 2004 Score Predictor and Squad Selector.

Users can have their say on the 606 messageboards at bbc.co.uk/606 to interact with fans at home, in Portugal, and the rest of the world.

All eyes will be on Sven-Goran Eriksson's England as they look to fulfill the potential shown during the World Cup in Japan. BBC Sport will provide in-depth coverage directly from the England camp in Lisbon.

The site, which launches at the end of May, will feature all the latest news, fixtures, match previews and reports, results, group standings and expert analysis from Alan Hansen, Mark Lawrenson and former England captain Terry Butcher.

Fans can also discover everything they need to know about the hosting of the event with our stadium guides, plus a look back at previous European Championships.

The BBC Sport website will also feature audio highlights from BBC Five Live and photo galleries showing the best of the match action and all the colour and atmosphere of Portugal 2004.

Match OfThe Day presenter Gary Lineker will provide his expert view of the tournament and who are the star players to watch. Download your very own desktop Mini Motty to help keep in touch with the latest news and have fun getting the BBC's top commentator to dance and play keepy-uppy!

For more interactivity, fans can use the Score Predictor to forecast which team will win each group game and work out who will qualify for the knockout stages. And anybody who fancies being a manager can use the Squad Selector to pick their own starting 11 for any of the 16 finalists and email their squads on to friends.

BBCi

Viewers with digital satellite or cable television will be able to access a host of extra services by pressing the Red button on their remote control during games on the BBC:

Press **Option 1** to choose commentary services:

- take the Radio Five Live commentary.
- have the “clean” match audio with no commentary (but crowd noise etc).
- select alternative commentary from David Croft or David Oates, with expert pundit Steve Claridge and input from viewers' text messages and emails; put your question about the game to Steve on the spot.

Press **Option 2** to access the rolling highlights package of the current match

Press **Option 3** for a split screen with the current match action plus match stats –



Interactive services

news/possession percentages/shots/free kicks etc. DSAT viewers only can also have their say by messaging through their Sky remote control.

Interactive forums

After live 5.00pm games, between 7.00-7.30pm Ray Stubbs hosts an interactive forum on BBCi and bbc.co.uk with guests plus fans' comments via telephone, text and email.

After live 7.45pm games, between 10.00-11.00pm Mark Bright (and occasionally Ray Stubbs) hosts an interactive *606* which can be heard on Five Live as well as on BBCi and bbc.co.uk. Fans can express their views as per the normal *606*, via telephone, text and email – the latter two ably rounded up by Izzy Clark.

Text services

BBC Ceefax Sport and Digital Text will provide all the latest news, live match scores, reports, match stats, fixtures and results throughout the tournament.



The experts' verdicts on Euro 2004

We assembled some of the finest brains in football to give them a grilling on the likely stars and results at Euro 2004. This is their verdict...



Okay – who's going to win Euro 2004, and what makes them the strongest team?

Gary Lineker (GL): France. They have the strongest squad, a number of the world's best players and it is hard to see a weakness.

Alan Hansen (AH): France. They have the best players.

John Motson (JM): Italy. They will be determined to make up for Euro 2000 (beaten in the final) and Japan 2002 (disappointing).

Barry Davies (BD): Either Portugal (as hosts) or France (as holders and probably the best).

Mark Bright (MB): France – they have the best players.

Steve Wilson (SW): Spain. They have experience, flair and hunger. It is, after all, about time they won something.

Mark Pougatch (MP): France – all-round skill and strength, and motivation after their World Cup fiasco.

Damian Johnson (DJ): France – the best players, in the best form and a peerless qualification. Japan 2002 should become a distant bad memory.

Simon Brotherton (SB): Italy – they went very close four years ago and now seem prepared to give a freer reign to their attacking talents. A more positive Italy could mean trouble for everyone else.

How do you think England will fare in the tournament?

GL: Through to the knockout stage; it depends how fit and fresh we are. We have not got the strength or depth of France, but if we

keep fit, after France and Italy, I would put us in the next group of winners.

AH: Semi final.

JM: Quarter final at the very least; semi final possibly.

BD: Anything better than quarter finals a bonus; 2006 more promising.

MB: Hopefully the final.

SW: Semi finals.

MP: Quarter finals.

DJ: Quarter finalists for sure – from there hard to get hopes up too high on previous experience.

SB: If everyone is fit England could go all the way. With a couple of players missing – quarter or semis.

Who's likely to be the top striker?

GL: Thierry Henry.

AH: Henry.

JM: Filippo Inzaghi (Italy).

BD: If it's Henry, the French will certainly win. If it's Pauleta? If it's Owen?..

MB: Henry.

SW: If Spain do well, Raúl.

MP: David Trezeguet.

DJ: Thierry Henry.

SB: Henry.

Which player(s) do you think will be the most influential?

GL: Zidane, Figo and Beckham.

AH: Zidane, Henry.

JM: David Beckham (hopefully), Pavel Nedved (Czech Republic), any of the French players.



The experts' views

BD: The usual suspects: Zidane, Henry, Nedved, Beckham, etc.

MB: Zidane obviously, Couto/Figo of Portugal.

SW: Steven Gerrard, Zinedine Zidane.

MP: Totti and Zidane.

DJ: The usual suspects: Henry, Pires, Zidane, Figo, Beckham.

SB: Nedved, Zidane, Totti. For England Beckham, Owen, Gerrard (the obvious!)

Anyone we may not have heard much of so far likely to make a name for themselves?

GL: Pauleta – he could do well. Rosicky (Czech Republic) and Mr Rooney.

AH: No.

JM: Petr Cech (Czech Republic goal keeper), Kevin Kuranyi (German striker).

BD: Quaresma of Portugal.

MB: Portugal's young midfielder Ricardo Quaresma if he plays.

SW: Any Latvian who scores against Germany, possibly Milan Baros who is not well known outside England and the Czech Republic. Look out for France's Philippe Mexes and Holland's Arjen Robben, who will be at Chelsea next season, and Rafael Van der Vaart.

MP: Joaquín Sánchez of Spain.

SB: Antonio Cassano – if Trapattoni picks him – has been in blistering form for Roma in Serie A. He has a good partnership and understanding with Totti. Still only 21, Cassano become Italy's most famous teenager when moving from Bari to Roma for £20 million. Scored on his international debut last November.

Any particular games you're most looking forward to, and why?

GL: The early games in the group stages tend to be cat and mouse, so I like the latter stages – England v Croatia, as at this stage we are talking a knock-out. Spain v Portugal and Germany v Holland are also highlights for me.

AH: Later stages and knockout stages are the most exciting.

JM: Holland v Germany; lots of previous history.

BD: Just to enjoy what I'm given to see.

MB: Seeing all the stars, Figo, Zidane, Gerrard. It is a big tournament and should bring out the best in them.

SW: The big grudge matches: France v England, Spain v Portugal and Holland v Germany. Any of these would be a great final.

MP: England v France, Spain v Portugal, Netherlands and Czech Republic – two excellent sides.

DJ: Spain v Portugal has a nice ring to it – and all of England's games of course.

Do you have a favourite memory from previous European Championships?

GL: When France won and Motson's incredible commentary when Platini scored.

AH: Euro 2000 – last ten minutes.

JM: Platini's last-minute winner for France against Portugal in 1984 – the best match I ever saw in seven European Championships.

BD: Three in particular: Euro 96 semi-final, England v Germany; Euro 72 Final, Germany v Russia; Euro 2000 semi-final, Holland v Italy.

MB: Going to Euro 96 as a fan. I loved it, well nearly!

SW: Watching Michael Platini's performances in 1984 on TV as a 16-year-old and being at Wembley for England 4, Holland 1 in Euro 96.

MP: Watching Zidane in Euro 2000 against Denmark – mesmeric performance.

DJ: My best and worst memories are from Euro 96. The best highs I can remember following England – and the lowest low, that semi-final v Germany.

SB: England's 4-1 victory over the Netherlands at Euro 96 – a heady mix of a lovely summer evening, the football coming home feel-good factor and England playing some terrific football. It's not very often England play as well as that.



John Motson

He's one of the men behind the microphone whose distinctive voice is regularly heard by millions of football fans. John "Motty" Motson, king of the sheepskin coat, is already preparing for his part in this year's Euro 2004 tournament. He's fired up and eager to get to Portugal.

"I'd like to wait until the end of the Premiership season and after the FA Cup Final to start my preparation, but unfortunately time doesn't permit that," says Motty. "I've been thinking about it during the season, making notes and watching all the friendly matches, trying to build up a picture of the teams taking part."

So how do European tournaments, in Motty's opinion, compare with the World Cup? Some people, he says, have tried to over-simplify it by saying it's the World Cup without Brazil and Argentina.

"I understand what they mean," he adds. "It's a more condensed tournament with only 16 teams taking part instead of 32, so you get to the heart of it slightly quicker. Also, I think to the viewing public, a greater majority of the players will be familiar," he says. "With no disrespect to the teams from Asia and Africa, they're largely unknown to a home audience, whereas you've got quite a few countries in this championship where some of the players play in the Premiership."

Motty has commentated on many tournaments during his career, but the 1984 tournament in France, which England weren't part of, sticks in his memory because there was one really outstanding match where France beat Portugal 3-2.

"It was the semi-final in Marseille, I think, and Portugal were leading 2-1. The match went into extra time and Michel Platini scored the

winning goal in the last minute," recalls Motty. "It was a very dramatic game, one which stands out in my mind. Euro 96 stands out too, as England got to the brink of the final."

Once the tournament begins, a lot of Motty's homework involves watching the matches he's not commentating on, which will be screened on Portuguese television. Unlike the last World Cup in Japan which, says Motty, was one of the most logistically difficult tournaments he's ever had to do, the time factor in Portugal will allow him to do that.

"Some of the games played in Korea weren't even shown in Japan. The Japan World Cup was unique in the fact that it wasn't possible to see the teams you were next going to commentate on, but in Portugal, hopefully the way it's structured, I can top up my pre-tournament homework by watching these teams on television."

A typical day for Motty during the tournament involves last minute preparation, getting to the stadium, reading the day's papers and catching up on all the latest news. Even when he's not commentating on a match, he's still working.

"If I'm not commentating, then I'll make sure I'll be somewhere where I can watch the matches of the day, keeping a note of the line-ups and recording all the things that happen during the games. It's still a working day for me, and I don't expect to have a day off during the tournament. I'm very envious of other people who are able to find the time to go shopping and sightseeing! I didn't have that privilege in Japan, and I don't expect to have it in Portugal either."

According to Motty, this year's "group of death" is Group D, with Holland, Germany, Latvia and the Czech Republic in it.



“It wouldn’t surprise me to see the Czech Republic go through and either Holland or Germany miss out, because I think the Czech Republic are a very underrated side.”

With thoughts turning to England, Motty sees this year’s tournament as a bit of a chequered one for the team, following disappointments in 1988 and 2000.

“I think the nation will be really disappointed if we don’t qualify, of course, and I think people are expecting England to go one step further than in Japan. I’d really like to think that England would get to the semi final. Beyond that you can’t really predict it, because you don’t know who their opponents are likely to be.”

Commentating on the finals of such a huge tournament is a real buzz for any commentator, but for Motty, the finals are something apart from the rest.

“Any commentator worth his salt would want to be remembered for the number of World Cup finals and European championship finals he’s done in his career. You get an FA Cup final every year. I know it has its own special place in the calendar, but for every four FA Cup finals, you only get one of these. The same applies for the World Cup.”

So, does Motty get a chance to have a break at the end of this year’s tournament?

“When we come back from Portugal it’s about five weeks until the Premiership season starts again, and of course we have the return of *Match Of The Day*, something which I’m really looking forward to.”



Steve Wilson

If there's ever going to be a good time to play France, then it's the opening match of Euro 2004 – which could be lucky for England. That's according to BBC TV commentator Steve Wilson, anyway.

“France lost to Senegal in their first game of the World Cup so if you're going to play them it's not a bad thing that it's the first game of the tournament,” he says hopefully. “I don't think England are in the worst group; I would fancy us on paper to beat Croatia and Switzerland, and then that should be enough regardless of the game against France – although I'd rather not lose the opening game!”

But it's a measure of the quality on show at Euro 2004 that Steve is taking nothing for granted.

“All the groups are really hard,” he comments. “And there are some great derby matches in the group stages – Germany v Holland; Portugal v Spain, England v France; they really get the juices going and any one of those would be a fantastic final, so I think that goes to show how good all the groups should be.

“I remember in Euro 2000, even though England didn't do that well, almost every game was really high quality. From a football purist's point of view it was a fantastic tournament because the standard of football was so high, and I think Euro 2004 could be even better.”

And he's optimistic that it will be better for England too. “I actually think we've got a decent chance of making the semi-finals. I think beyond that might be a bit tricky. But I really hope we do well, obviously.”

And not just from a fan's point of view – somehow working on a tournament once England go out is just that bit flatter, he says.

“I can remember in the World Cup we were doing the quarter final between Germany and the USA just after England went out to Brazil. I sat there in the stadium in Korea with Joe Royle, who was summarising for BBC Television, watching England lose, and we sort of sat there and looked at each other and it was actually one of the hardest games that you could imagine doing. We had to say, right we've got to forget that for the next couple of hours and do a good job, no mention of England, we'll concentrate on this game and do it as well as we can, and it was fine – but it was actually really difficult lifting yourself to commentate on another game literally within an hour of watching England on the TV go out.”

But you could say it was a good learning experience for Steve, who caught the journalism bug at university, contributing to the student paper and campus radio and getting down to the final 20 or so out of some five thousand who applied for a BBC local radio trainee course. Though his first job was selling ad space in a publishing firm, he kept up his writing in his spare time, having pieces published in the football weekly *90 Minutes*. It so happened that a friend at the publisher's knew someone at London's Capital Radio and put Steve in touch with him.

“They asked me to go in and do a voice test and I started working for them for nothing that same weekend,” Steve recalls. “Then they started paying me a few quid, then somebody left so they offered me a job – that was 1991, I was about six months out of university.

“I was at Capital until 1997 when I left to go freelance, working for BBC Radio, Sky, TWI and ESPN. Then Five Live offered me a job after about six months, which I took, and then I started doing a few bits of TV.”



And now his “few bits” have expanded so much that Euro 2004 marks a new era for Steve. “I’m moving off radio completely after the end of the domestic season to do *Match Of The Day*,” he explains. “As time has gone on I prefer doing TV so I’m pleased, although I really enjoyed doing Radio Five Live.”

But though he’ll only be working on the BBC’s televised games at Euro 2004, he’s still preparing as comprehensively as ever.

“My preparation has really started now in that even though squads haven’t been named, if you see a Portuguese player or a Dutch player or a Spanish player doing something in the Champions League or UEFA Cup tie, or read about them in their domestic league, you make a note of it. Then when the coaches name their final squads I really kick into action full-time and I will find out as much as I can about each player, and information such as the country’s previous history in internationals against the countries they are going to play in the tournament.

“I do everything on computer and I like to, as much as possible, have it done before I get there so that once there I’ve got time to go and watch training sessions, go to press conferences and things like that, and not have to worry too much about the nitty gritty of who Portugal’s left back plays for and how many times he’s played for his country.”

And Steve’s research has really fired him up for Euro 2004.

“I’ve been looking at the website to look at the stadia and things like that, and they look fantastic. From what I’ve seen so far they’ve done a really great job of getting the grounds together and I’m sure the organisation is going to be really good. I have covered a few games in Portugal and they are pretty fanatical, so I think the atmosphere in the grounds should be really good as well.

“I have to say the overall experience of doing a tournament like this is fantastic. It’s really hard work but it is great fun. I try and kid my wife that I don’t really enjoy it but I do!”

Though this time Steve really does have mixed feelings about leaving the country for three weeks as his wife has just given birth to their second child.

“I’m feeling quite bad about it,” he confesses, though that’s the lot of a sports journalist. “My daughter’s three and I missed her first and third birthdays because of the African Nations Cup,” he continues. “I’m lucky in that my wife is very supportive of my career and is also a football fan – she doesn’t support the same team as me, but in a tournament she supports England obviously. I obviously miss home and it’s asking a lot of my wife but she’s very good. At least she knows where I am!”



Mark Pougatch

Five Live presenter Mark Pougatch has mixed feelings about England having France in their Euro 2004 group. On the one hand, Mark reckons it's a tough call because France are his tips for the championship. But on the other hand, at least he'll get to see them play.

"I watched all three group games with France at Euro 2000 and they were just unbelievable," he recalls admiringly. "Zidane in particular; I remember watching him play against Denmark and thinking this guy was like a ballet dancer with a football at the end of his toe. He was mesmeric, just sensational, and because it was a small ground we were quite close so you could really see how good he was – his balance, his ability, his technique, his control, his vision. To see him in the flesh that close up; I remember thinking this guy is on a different planet."

And despite – or rather, because of – France's disastrous World Cup in 2002, Mark reckons they're the team to beat this time round. "I do think they'll win; they've got the best team, the best players and they know that after what happened in the World Cup that everybody is looking at them, they've got to deliver," he says. "I think they'll be unbelievably determined, absolutely gunning for it because of the World Cup. If you look at their team they are terrifying. I look at England v France and I'm absolutely petrified. I think if we get a draw there that will be a great result, I really do."

And even with something from the France game, the hard work's not over, with Switzerland and Croatia also in Group B. "There's no duff team there, no margin for error," says the 36-year-old Londoner. And that's the mark of the European Championships; every match is extremely tough, even in the group phase.

"Because obviously the World Cup has to reflect global football you inevitably get two or three teams you know aren't going to do anything, or provide much of a match for anybody; you never get that in the European Championship," says Mark. "In a way you could argue they are stronger than the World Cup because European football is so strong – just add in Argentina and Brazil and it could look like the World Cup. In fact the group stages are probably better than the group stages at the World Cup."

Which could go some way to explaining England's dismal record in these championships – in recent times they have never qualified from the group phase, apart from when the tournament was held in England.

"Let's face it, we have an appalling record," grimaces Mark. "Apart from the one that was held here our record is diabolical. but Euro 88, 92, 2000... absolutely shocking, the lot of them."

Though he reckons we will at least make it out of the group this time round, it's as much the way England play as the result that he'll be looking for.

"When England went out of the World Cup it was so deflating because they went out in such a limp way. I'm not expecting them to win, but if they give it a really good go that's what you ask for – like Italia 90, like Euro 96."

It also makes his job more enjoyable, as he'll be presenting from all of England's matches as well as the opening game, the Lisbon semi-final and the final itself. In between times he'll be flitting between the England and France press conferences and sending reports and feature back for broadcast on Five Live – and of



course keeping an eye on the other teams in the tournament.

“I want to watch Totti, I want to see just how good he is because, everyone goes on about him; I want to watch Zidane – I know that’s an obvious thing to say but we don’t see him every week; I want to see Nedved because he was European Player of the Year; there are some really good young Dutch players, like Robben who’s going to Chelsea, Van der Vaart who’s at Ajax; and there are a couple of players in the Spanish side – if he plays, Reyes, he’s looked really good for Arsenal, and Joaquín Sánchez of Real Betis,” he says with obvious relish.

And he shows equal enthusiasm for the names in Five Live’s own Euro 2004 team.

“We’ll have people who’ve played in these things, Terry Butcher and Chris Waddle; they’re always a font of great stories. Then we’re going to get some managers, Gordon Strachan and Alan Curbishley, which is great – we know them anyway because we interview them and talk to them regularly.

“So you’ve got a nice mix – you’ve got us, the commentators, the journalists; then you’ve got people we know really well already like Terry and Chris who we’ve used for five or six years; then we’ve got people we know a bit but we don’t know them socially. Everyone mucks in together and it’s great fun!”

And from his times there on holiday, he reckons Portugal will provide the perfect setting for a great European Championships. “I like the climate, I like the seafood... the people are quite laid back, they love their football, it’s just a great package,” he grins.



Mike Ingham

If you want to know what Beckham had for breakfast or how long Sven spends in the pool, then Mike Ingham's your man.

Not that he's defecting to the tabloids – it's just that Five Live's football correspondent will be living cheek by jowl with the England squad during Euro 2004 so will be privy to that sort of detail. The Five Live team have exclusive access to England as the only radio station based in their luxury hotel just outside Lisbon, giving them the inside track on what's happening in the England camp – though Mike will be more interested in who's on the treatment table than what's on the dining table.

"We're fairly privileged in that Five Live have a foothold in the England hotel which is going to be the most security conscious hotel they've ever had, but it means we can do stuff with players at given times so that's an advantage," Mike explains. "We do get very good access – we'll set up a studio there so it's easy for the players or management to pop in and give their reaction after watching Switzerland v Croatia, for example."

The only downside in that for Mike himself is that it means he'll be spending much of his time in the hotel with the team. "I'm in a bit of a vacuum with England, my European championship is completely dictated by them really," he says. "I am staying for the whole time but I don't, early on, get to commentate on any of the games apart from the England games. Obviously I watch them on the box, but because the England schedule is fairly relentless – it's play a game and then press conferences, press conferences then play a game – it doesn't give me any scope to commentate on any of the other matches so I

don't get the same breadth of experience as say, Alan Green or Jonathan Pearce will get – not until later on anyway."

He's hoping that doesn't mean he'll miss out on what he expects to be the colourful atmosphere of Euro 2004.

"Portugal has got a great football tradition," he enthuses. "The Portuguese really get up for it so I think that this tournament will be incredibly colourful. The last World Cup and European Championships were both in two countries, so this one will be more concentrated too, and it's in a more passionate and vibrant footballing country."

Mike's another who considers the European Championship to be a World Cup in all but name – "just without Argentina and Brazil, quality wise" and that there are no easy games – so England can't afford to relax at all.

"England's problem very often has been they get themselves up for what they think is going to be the really big game – like at Euro 2000 the German game was the one that everybody was looking forward to and England beat Germany, but they flopped in the other two games. My worry would be that they will put all their eggs into the French basket because that's going to be the big match and then they could take their eye off the ball in the other two against Switzerland and Croatia," he says.

But if England do progress Mike thinks England are in with a shout of winning. "The difficulty with forecasting is that once you get past the group stage it can become a bit of a lottery with penalty shoot-outs, but I think they are in there with France, Italy, Portugal and possibly



Holland as potential winners,” he says cagily. “And there is nearly always one surprise team. If you look back at World Cups and European Championships, Turkey finished third in the last World Cup which was never on the agenda, Denmark won the championship in 92 against expectation, the Czechs got to the final at Wembley which wasn’t expected, Croatia got to the World Cup semi finals too... I’m not sure necessarily that they’ll be a surprise team because they qualified so strongly, but the dangerous outsider this time would probably be the Czech Republic and I think they could easily eliminate either Holland or Germany from their group, so that would put the cat among the pigeons.

“But it’s all down to availability really. If England get their top eleven out on the pitch they are in there with a chance, but I think there are certain guys – Gerrard, Campbell, Owen – who they cannot afford to be without.”

But it’s another England star that Mike is watching out for. “The player I’m looking forward to seeing most of all, actually, is one of our own and that’s Wayne Rooney. He’s such an unknown quantity at international level – I can see parallels between him and Gascoigne at Italia 90, I can see him making the same sort of impact, so he’s probably the player I’m looking forward to seeing most of all.”

Other players Mike will be keeping an eye on include Luis Figo, in his home country and possibly playing in his last big tournament; Pavel Nedved of the Czech Republic, the European Footballer of the Year; and rising star Zlatan Ibrahimovic, the Swedish youngster who recently scored a cracking goal against England. And then, of course, there are the Premierships stars to look out for.

“One thing that’s changed dramatically about the European Championships since it started is that so many of the players are now playing in

the Premiership,” Mike says. “There are so many club rivalries now. Half the French team are Premiership players – it’s great in a sense, it gives the tournament an extra dimension. You’re struggling to find any country that hasn’t got some Premiership player in it.”

But it’s what happens off the field that will ultimately have the biggest say in how much Mike enjoys the Euro 2004.

“All the tournaments I’ve followed overseas have been absolutely hijacked by the loonies – 88, 92, and 2000, when England came very close to getting thrown out of the last tournament,” he frowns.

“It is obviously now much harder for people who are intent on causing trouble to travel, but I’m reluctant to tempt fate,” he adds. “It doesn’t take too many people to ruin it for the vast majority and because of all the past experiences we’ve had, that is my biggest apprehension – that you’ll get an element of people who aren’t even going to go to the games, who’ll just go somewhere like Faro and cause problems.”

It’s no coincidence that his happiest memory from any European Championships was at the trouble-free Euro 96, held in England.

“The night England beat Holland at Wembley 4-1, that’s the best I’ve seen England play since the 1970 World Cup in Mexico,” he recalls. “It was also, significantly, the one tournament where we were just reporting on football and nothing else.”

BBC presenter/commentator/summariser biographies

Gary Lineker



Gary Lineker is England's second-highest goalscorer with 48 strikes in 80 appearances for his country.

Born in November 1960, he made his name as a forward with local club Leicester City, and had already made his England debut before joining Everton in 1985. After one successful season (30 goals in 41 games), he was signed by Barcelona and helped them to win the Spanish Championship, Cup and Cup Winners' Cup between 1986 and 1989. After his stint in Spain he returned to the UK with Tottenham Hotspur where he won the FA Cup in 1991.

His place in the affections of English football fans was cemented by his Golden Boot-winning performance at the 1986 World Cup Finals in Mexico. And at the 1990 World Cup in Italy, his goals propelled England to the semi

finals where they were beaten by Germany in a penalty shoot-out. Gary retired from international football in 1992.

He brought the curtain down on his illustrious playing days with the Japanese club Nagoya Grampus 8 before launching a second career in broadcasting.

He hosted *Gary Lineker's Football Night* for BBC Radio 5 and *Sunday Sport* on the re-launched Radio Five Live. Gary joined the BBC's TV team in 1995, appearing on *Match Of The Day*, *Sportsnight* and *Football Focus*. He worked on the BBC's coverage of the 1996 Olympics, and took over as the regular host of *Football Focus* in the 1996/97 season.

He presented highlights programmes during Euro 96, and hosted both live and highlights coverage of the 1998 World Cup Finals in France. In August 1999, he took over the *Match Of The Day* hotseat following the departure of Des Lynam and anchored the BBC's coverage of Euro 2000 and the 2002 World Cup.

A keen golfer, cricketer and snooker player, for several years Gary was also a team captain on BBC TV's irreverent sports quiz *They Think It's All Over*. He and his wife Michelle have four sons.

Alan Hansen

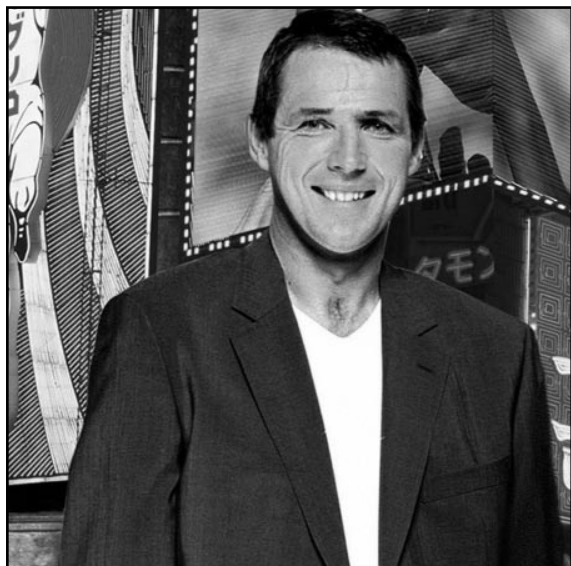
Alan Hansen is one of the most successful British footballers of all time, with 17 major honours to his credit.

During his 14 years at Liverpool, he won seven Championships, three European Cups, two FA Cups, four League Cups and one League Super Cup. He is the only person to have won all of



Biographies

the honours available at club level at least twice and captained the Liverpool side to a historic double in 1986. He was also capped 26 times by Scotland.



Born in June 1955, Alan began his career at Partick Thistle in 1973, making 108 appearances before his move to Merseyside in 1977. He made 621 appearances for Liverpool, captaining the team between 1985 and 1990. A knee injury ended his playing career in 1991.

Alan worked for Sky as a football analyst for one season before joining the BBC's *Match Of The Day* team in 1992. His keen tactical understanding of the game quickly made him a firm favourite with the viewers; those insights into the strengths and weaknesses of teams and individual players have won him a reputation as one of TV's finest football pundits.

BBC football documentaries he has presented include *The Sack Race*, *The Football Millionaires*, *Football's Foreign Legion*, *Football's Dream Factory* and *Football: Against The Wall*.

A keen golfer (he has a handicap of 4), Alan has also presented *The Magic Of The Masters*, a BBC programme on the history and traditions of the US Masters.

Also a busy columnist on various publications, Alan lives in Southport with his wife and two children. His other interests include tennis and the theatre. Before embarking on his professional playing career, Alan was awarded a place at Aberdeen University to read History.

Mark Lawrenson



Former Liverpool defender Mark Lawrenson has become a fixture alongside Ray Stubbs in the *Football Focus* studio, and he continues in his role as a match summariser for BBC Radio Five Live.

Born in Lancashire, Mark began his career at his hometown club, Preston North End, and also played for Brighton and Hove Albion before Bob Paisley paid £900,000 to bring him to Liverpool in 1981.

Mark won a host of major honours with Liverpool before an Achilles injury brought his playing career to a premature end at the age of 30.

His partnership with Alan Hansen is still regarded by Liverpool fans as the club's best-



ever central defence pairing, and he was capped 39 times by the Republic of Ireland. At the end of his playing career “Lawro” managed Oxford United and worked alongside Kevin Keegan as a defensive coach at Newcastle.

He has been a regular BBC football pundit since 1997 and was a central figure in the 1998 and 2002 World Cups and Euro 2000.

He has also embraced the internet revolution, hosting *Lawro’s Live Chat* on the BBC Sport website every Saturday throughout the football season.

Peter Schmeichel



Peter Schmeichel made his name as a world-class goalkeeper with Manchester United.

Internationally capped for Denmark 128 times, he won Euro 92 and reached the World Cup quarter finals in 1998.

Born in Gladaxe, Denmark, Peter started his career at Hvidovre IF before moving to Brøndby, where he attracted the attention of Manchester United’s scouts.

Peter arrived at United in the summer of 1991 in a £600,000 deal and immediately made an impact at Old Trafford. The Dane’s shot-stopping skills and authoritative presence between the sticks helped United become the dominant force in English football.

He collected five league championships and three FA Cups during his eight-year stint at Old Trafford. But his finest moment came when he captained the side in their 1999 Champions League final against Bayern Munich in Barcelona. A dramatic victory in the Nou Camp sealed a historic treble in his final game for the club.

He left the English game in 1999 to join Sporting Lisbon and had an immediate impact, helping them into the Champions League. Peter returned to the Premiership with Aston Villa and played one season for Manchester City – where his son is a youth goalkeeper – before retiring at the end of last season.

Ray Stubbs



Ray Stubbs has carved a successful career in sports broadcasting after playing professional football with Tranmere Rovers FC.



He joined Tranmere from school and was on the club's books for five years before switching to an administrative role with the club. He then spent three years with BBC Radio Merseyside as a reporter and presenter.

In 1986, Ray moved to BBC Manchester as an assistant producer, working on a number of sports including snooker, darts and bowls, as well as *A Question Of Sport*. He also worked as a producer, reporter and presenter on BBC Two's investigative series *On The Line*, a series which saw him go to Italy in 1990 to report on England football fans at the World Cup Finals.

Later that year, Ray began working as a reporter on *Grandstand*, *Match Of The Day* and *Sportsnight*. He reported from the Irish camp during the 1994 World Cup in America, and was the BBC's reporter-in-residence in the England camp during Euro 96 and the 1998 World Cup in France.

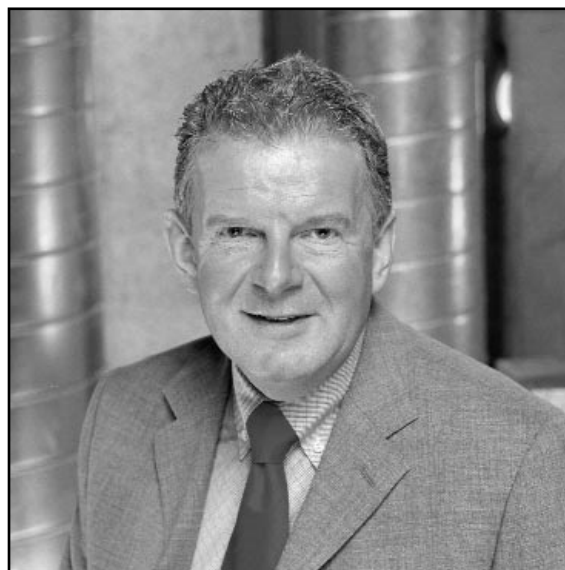
He also co-hosted coverage of the 1998 Winter Olympics and co-presented coverage of the 1998 Commonwealth Games. Ray covered the last two World Cups for BBC Sport as well as the European Championships in 1996 and 2000. Ray now presents *Final Score* each week and is the regular presenter of the BBC's snooker and darts coverage. Ray is part of the *Grandstand* presentation team and took over as the regular presenter of *Football Focus* from Gary Lineker. He is also an occasional presenter of *Match Of The Day*.

John Motson

John Motson has been a member of the *Match Of The Day* team for nearly 30 years and is regarded by many as the voice of football.

The son of a Methodist minister, "Motty" joined the *Barnet Press* newspaper as a junior reporter at the age of 18. He later moved to the *Morning Telegraph* in Sheffield where he first covered league football. A short freelance

spell with BBC Radio Sheffield was followed by a move to network radio in 1968, where on Radio 2 (then BBC Radio's main sports station) he became known as a presenter of sports programmes as well as a commentator on football, tennis and boxing.



It was when Kenneth Wolstenholme left BBC Television in 1971 that 26-year-old John was taken on as a junior member of the *Match Of The Day* team. His contributions to that programme, *Grandstand* and *Sportsnight* have been regular and varied in the quarter of a century since. Between 1979 and 1994, John was the BBC's voice on 29 consecutive major cup finals – FA Cup, World Cup and European Championships. He completed his 30th assignment at this level with the final of Euro 96 and recently covered his 100th England match.

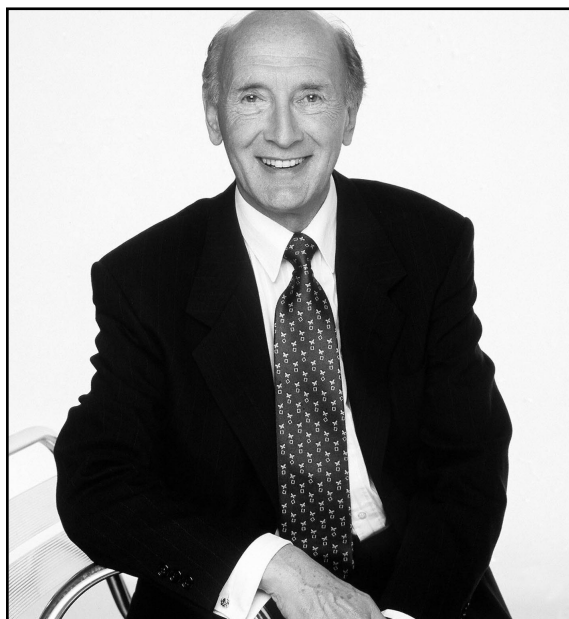
Altogether, John has covered over 1,500 matches at the microphone for the BBC. He has also researched and narrated over 30 football videos and written four books, including *Motson's National Obsession: The Greatest Football Trivia Book Ever*, which was published in 2004. John received his OBE in June 2001.

Away from football his interests are running half marathons, going to the cinema and reading



thrillers. In 1998, he was honoured with his own “audience with” show on BBC One, *The Full Motty*. John was once described by one television writer as a “national institution” to which he modestly replies, “some people think I should be sent to one...”

Barry Davies



Barry Davies was educated at Cranbrook School, Kent, which has also produced two other noted sports commentators – Brian Moore and Peter West.

Barry attended London University before entering the Royal Army Service Corps, and got his first broadcasting experience with British Forces Network in Cologne. He left the Army and joined BBC Radio in 1963, and was also a football correspondent for *The Times*.

Barry did his first television commentary for ITV on Chelsea v AC Milan in 1966 and was chosen as part of the ITV commentary team for the 1966 World Cup. He also reported for ITV on the 1968 Olympic Games, covering a variety of sports.

In 1969 Barry rejoined the BBC and has been one of its leading commentators on football and many other sports including tennis, ice hockey, ice skating, hockey, gymnastics, badminton and the University Boat Race.

He has been involved in many major sporting occasions including the World Cup, Olympic Games, Commonwealth Games and Wimbledon. He also presented the highly regarded *Maestro* series for BBC TV.

Barry commented on the 1994 World Cup Final, the 1995 and 1996 FA Cup Finals, Euro 96, including the semi-final between England and West Germany at Wembley, the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta, 1998 Winter Olympics in Japan, and the 1998 World Cup Finals in France. In January 2000, he commented on *Match Of The Day Live's* coverage for BBC One of Manchester United's games in the FIFA World Club Championship.

His current contract with the BBC will see him cover his 10th summer Games at the 2004 Olympics in Athens, his seventh Commonwealth Games and his 10th World Cup Finals, the highest number attended by a British commentator.

Barry lives in Berkshire with his wife, Penny. Their daughter, Giselle, is Head of Communications for the Jordan Grand Prix Team, and their son, Mark, works for BBC Radio Five Live, BBC News 24 and Betfair.com.

Steve Wilson

Steve Wilson joined BBC Sport in 1998, following seven years as a commentator for Capital Radio. He went to the US to cover the 1994 World Cup while at the London commercial radio station.

Since joining the BBC he has covered the Olympics, the European Football Championships and the World Athletics Championships.



Steve is a regular commentator on *Match Of The Day* and also commentated on the last two African Nations Cups and the first-ever televised Women's FA Cup Final, in May 2002.

Mark Bright



Mark Bright presents *Wright And Bright* with Ian Wright on Radio Five Live (Saturdays, 11.00-12.30pm).

Mark's BBC career includes appearances on *Match Of The Day* as a pundit and reporting from both Belgium and Holland on the European Championships 2000. He has also presented a weekly football show called *Row Z* for BBC Choice and presented the Notting Hill Carnival live for the BBC in 2000.

Mark presented *Monday Night Football* and the *Mark Bright Show* on Radio Five Live during 2000 and began a new interactive football phone-in programme, *Wright And Bright*, on Five Live in February 2001, with his old Crystal Palace team mate Ian Wright. He also has a regular column in *Match Magazine*.

Mark worked for *The Big Breakfast* during the 1998 World Cup and hosted a weekly punditry slot on the show during the 1998/9 season. He co-hosted the programme with Johnny Vaughan in October 1998. Mark has also worked for *Planet Football* on location in Jamaica.

In six seasons at Crystal Palace in a prolific scoring partnership with Ian Wright, Mark had the better average with two goals in every five games, and Sheffield Wednesday paid over a million pounds for his services in 1992. In 1997 he returned to the capital to play for Charlton, helping them clinch promotion to the Premiership in 1998.

Born on 6 June 1962, Mark is married with a son and lives in Middlesex. His other interests include boxing, reading and golf.

Ian Wright

Arsenal's all-time record goalscorer Ian Wright turned to professional football relatively late, at the age of 22. He spent his early days at non-league Greenwich Borough before moving to Crystal Palace in the summer of 1985, where he established a deadly striking partnership with new arrival Mark Bright in the 1989 season, scoring 27 League goals – a Palace record in the higher divisions.



The first of his 33 full international caps came in 1991 before a transfer to Arsenal at a cost of a then club record £2.5m. Club honours at Highbury included winners' medals in the League and FA Cups in 1993 and a European Cup Winners' Cup runners-up medal in 1995 before Arsenal secured the Premiership and FA Cup double in 1997/98.



Two seasons later he moved on to play with his son, England U-21 international Shaun Wright-Phillips, for a short spell at Nottingham Forest. He moved on to West Ham, Celtic and Burnley before retiring in July 2000 to pursue a broadcasting career.

Wright joined the BBC in January 2001, presenting the hit shows *I'd Do Anything*, *Friends Like These*, *Ian Wright – Surviving The Kalahari*, and *Wright And Bright* on Radio Five Live. Ian appeared on BBC One as the subject of *This Is Your Life* on 24 January 2000 and was watched by 9.6 million viewers. He has also guested on top BBC shows such as *They Think It's All Over* and *A Question Of Sport*.

He was awarded the MBE in 2000 for his footballing achievements and remains one of football's most colourful characters.

Garth Crooks



Former Tottenham forward Garth Crooks was the BBC's reporter from the England camp at Euro 2000 and the World Cup in 2002, and he's set to fill that role again for Euro 2004.

Born in Stoke-on-Trent, Garth began his playing career at the age of 19 with Stoke City, moving to Tottenham four years later to form a formidable strikeforce with Steve Archibald. Crooks scored more than 200 league goals and won the FA Cup with Spurs in 1981 and 1982, and the Uefa Cup in 1984.

The following season he joined Manchester United on loan, and then had spells at West Bromwich Albion and Charlton Athletic, before hanging up his boots in 1990.

Having made television appearances while still a player, the switch to presenting was a natural one and Crooks was a match analyst for the BBC during the 1982 and 1990 World Cups.

He also makes regular appearances on *Football Focus* and *Match Of The Day* and covered the recent African Cup of Nations.



Hazel Irvine



Hazel Irvine is one of BBC Sport's most experienced and adept presenters. She regularly presents the BBC's premier sports programme *Grandstand* and is the main presenter of snooker, *Ski Sunday* and the sports bulletins on BBC Television's Six O'clock and weekend news programmes.

Hazel is an integral part of the presentation of annual sporting events such as the London Marathon, Wimbledon, The Open and World Athletics Championships.

Her presentation of major sporting events on the network has included four World Cups, the most recent being Korea and Japan in 2002, four Summer Olympic Games and three Winter Olympics.

Hazel's broadcasting career began in 1986 as a production assistant with Radio Clyde. She moved into sport a year later when she joined Scottish Television as a reporter. Having been

prominent in ITV's coverage of the 1988 Olympics and 1990 World Cup, Irvine joined BBC Scotland in 1990 as presenter of *Sportscene*.

Hazel's enthusiasm for sport stretches beyond her television presentation role. She is honorary President of Dumbarton Football Club Supporters Association, a keen golfer and won representative honours in golf, netball and athletics for Scottish Universities when she attended St Andrews, where she gained an MA Honours degree in Art History.

At the 1999 RTS Awards, she was named Best Regional TV Presenter/Reporter.

Damian Johnson

Damian Johnson is a host on a wide number of news and sport programmes for the BBC.

Born in Hull, he began his broadcast career in 1986, after graduating from Newcastle University and Lancashire Polytechnic, as a reporter and presenter in commercial radio in Sheffield where he covered the Hillsborough disaster.

He worked for BBC Radio Sheffield and Yorkshire Television's news show *Calendar* before joining BBC Leeds in 1989 to work on the evening news programme *Look North*. He became their sports presenter in 1994, following Leeds United during several European campaigns as well as Barnsley's promotion to the Premiership, the emergence of boxer Prince Naseem Hamed and nine summers of Yorkshire cricket.

He hosted several rugby league Challenge Cup draws and presented the leisure and lifestyles show *Out And About*. In 1998, he joined BBC Sport, becoming a reporter for *Match Of The Day* and *Football Focus*.

He has also worked on the sports news show *110%* and football fanzine programme *Row Z* on BBC Choice.



By 2000, he was presenting on News 24 and as sports correspondent for *Breakfast News* while continuing to report for *Match Of The Day* and *Grandstand*. In 2002, he was one of the main reporters on the BBC's coverage of World Cup 2002 in Japan and at the Commonwealth Games in Manchester, as well as presenting on *Sunday Grandstand*. In 2003 he began presenting *Football Focus* and *Final Score*.

Away from work, his interests are food, wine, reading, music and travel. He enjoys most sports and represented South Yorkshire at rugby. Damian lives in Sheffield with his wife and daughter.

Dominic Cotton

Dominic Cotton started his broadcasting career nine years ago working as a news reporter for the local BBC radio and television services in Devon and Cornwall. He then moved to London to specialise in sport where he was a presenter for the digital TV network Channel 1. Next came a spell as a freelancer which took him to Sky, Channel 5 and ITV as a sports news reporter. He then returned to the BBC where he was first a sports producer/reporter for BBC Breakfast News and then a sports presenter for News 24.

He finally made the move to BBC Sport for the African Cup of Nations in Mali in 2002. The four weeks he spent there putting together features for the BBC Two coverage remain the highlight of his broadcasting career to date. Since that trip he has split his time between News 24 and the BBC football unit, where he works for both *Football Focus* and *Final Score*.

Before training as a broadcast journalist Dominic spent two years trying his luck as an actor, gaining parts in *The Bill* and *West End plays*.

Though born in Tarpooley near Chester, 36-year-old Dominic moved to London aged two and considers himself a Londoner – and even

supports Crystal Palace! The proud father of two little boys – Sam, aged two and Finn, three months – Dominic's other main interest outside work is, unsurprisingly, sport. He still plays football, cricket and golf and he ran the London marathon in 2000 – and is planning to have another crack at it next year.

Ivan Gaskell

Ivan Gaskell has been with the BBC since the Eighties and is a regular reporter on *Football Focus*.

Born and bred in Derby, Ivan began his journalistic career in local radio straight from school, before moving to television as presenter on the regional programme *East Midlands Today*.

Now part of the BBC Sport team, Ivan works chiefly as a reporter on *Football Focus*, *Match Of The Day* and *Final Score*.

The highlight of Ivan's career so far was reporting on the Republic of Ireland's World Cup campaign in Korea and Japan.

A keen footballer and golfer, he's married to Debbie and his spare time is taken up coping with children Aimee, Imogen, Megan and Charlie.

Peter Reid

One of England's brightest midfield talents, Peter Reid played for Bolton and Everton and was capped for England 13 times. Always known as a no-nonsense, committed player, Reid's reputation as a player has followed him into his career as a manager.

During his playing days, Peter experienced huge success with Everton, collecting winners' medals for the League Championship, FA Cup, League Cup (twice) and European Cup Winners' Cup. He was named PFA player of the year in 1985 and he played a crucial role in England's campaign at the 1986 World Cup in Mexico.



His first managerial appointment came at Manchester City. He guided them as high as fifth in the table, but was controversially dismissed by chairman Peter Swales.

Sunderland snapped him up in March 1995, with the team rock-bottom of Division One. Liverpool-born Peter turned the club around to lead them to the First Division Championship the following year, winning the Managers' Manager of the Year accolade in the process.

Sunderland dropped straight back down out of the Premiership, but bounced back to regain their place in the top flight by winning the First Division title by a record number of points in 1998/99. They finished seventh in the Premiership the following season but Reid could not consolidate their success and left the club early in the 2002/3 season. He took over at Leeds in March 2003 and kept the troubled club up, but couldn't strengthen the squad in the summer and after a bad start to this season, he left Leeds last November.

Peter was part of BBC Sport's team covering the 2002 World Cup in Korea and Japan.

Steve Bruce

One of the best players never to play for England, Hexham-born central defender Steve Bruce started his career at Gillingham, spent three years with Norwich City and was bought by Manchester United in December 1987. In his 407 appearances for the Red Devils he won three league titles, two FA Cups, the League Cup and the Cup Winners' Cup.

After leaving United, he played with Birmingham City for a spell before moving into management with Sheffield United. He was unsuccessful with the Blades and moved for a brief period in charge of Huddersfield Town. Bruce then moved to Crystal Palace and after some controversy, he left them to return to Birmingham City in 2001, this time as manager.

He was an immediate success at St Andrews, taking them into the Premiership in his first season, where he has consolidated them into a team now challenging for Europe.

Mick McCarthy

Mick McCarthy made a welcome return to club management in March 2003 when he was named as the new boss at Sunderland, four months after ending his five-and-a-half year term in charge of the Republic of Ireland national side.

Born in Barnsley of Irish parents, Mick made his debut for his hometown club as an 18-year-old in 1977 and became a stalwart of the defence in the Tykes team that won promotion from the old Fourth division to the Second.

He moved on to Manchester City in 1983 and won the first of his 57 Eire caps a year later. Mick later left City for Celtic, helping the Bhoys to the Scottish League and Cup double in 1988, but soon left for a brief spell with Lyon in the French league.

By March of 1990 Mick was back in England, at Millwall, becoming player-manager a year later. After hanging up his boots, he spent several seasons at Millwall before succeeding Jack Charlton as Ireland manager in 1996.

After a dramatic falling out with captain Roy Keane at the 2002 World Cup, Mick led his men to a heartbreakingly unlucky defeat on penalties against Spain in the last 16. He further enhanced his reputation when he joined the BBC's panel of pundits for the remainder of the tournament and added his own Yorkshire wit to the coverage.

Mike left the Irish job after a disappointing start to their Euro 2004 campaign; during his tenure he lifted Ireland from 54th to 13th in FIFA's world rankings.

He is now concentrating on Sunderland's push for promotion back to the Premiership.



Joe Royle

Merseysider Joe Royle has never been short of opinions – a fact which makes him an ideal summariser for the BBC.

The former Everton and Manchester City manager enjoyed a distinguished career as a player and manager. In the process of notching more than 270 appearances for Everton, he helped the club to the 1970 League title. He moved to Maine Road in 1974 and helped City claim the League Cup in his first season.

With six England caps to his credit, Joe's playing career came to a premature end during his time at Norwich as he was forced to quit because of a knee injury.

His managerial football education began shortly afterwards when he was placed in charge at Oldham in July 1982. Royle guided the Latics to the Division Two championship crown in 1990/1991.

In November 1994 he joined Everton for his most successful stint as a manager. Under Joe Everton reached the final of the 1995 FA Cup where they beat Manchester United – the last time an English manager won the trophy.

Joe joined another former club, Manchester City, in February 1998. During his time there the club were relegated and promoted back to the Premiership a season later. But his forthright style eventually cost him his job at Maine Road.

Joe was part of the BBC Sport team in Korea and Japan as a summariser for the 2002 World Cup.

Mark Pougatch

Mark Pougatch presents BBC Radio Five Live's flagship programme, Sport On Five, every Saturday throughout the football season.

He began his career at the BBC in 1992 at BBC Essex, which he joined after freelancing for six months at BBC GLR, having completed a radio diploma course. This followed a Politics degree at the University of Durham. Before taking the helm at Sport On Five on Saturdays, which he began in August 2000, he presented the Sunday edition of Sport On Five for two years.



Mark is also a regular golf voice on Five Live, and has covered the last few Opens. He also covered the Ryder Cup for Five Live and has worked at US Open Golf in recent years. He has worked on many of Five Live's main events including Wimbledon, the Nagano Winter Olympics, and Sydney Olympics. He also has experience as a cricket reporter, having covered the England tour of New Zealand in 1997.

Mark was a regular football reporter before presenting *Sport On Five*, and has worked on World Cup football for both television and radio. Mark commentates for *Match Of The Day* and is a regular on *Football Focus*. His television work has also included the World Darts Championships.

Mark was born in 1968 in London.

Mike Ingham



Mike Ingham is BBC Radio's football correspondent, a post he took on after the legendary Bryon Butler retired 10 years ago. Mike's career began at BBC Radio Derby, and he joined the BBC Radio Sport team 25 years ago.

He presented *Sport On 2* on Radio 2 before becoming a football commentator in 1984. Mike also occasionally presented Andy Peebles' show on Radio 1 in the early Eighties, and is a keen record collector and music fan.

Born in Cheshire in 1950, Mike now lives with wife Lorna in Buckinghamshire with their family.

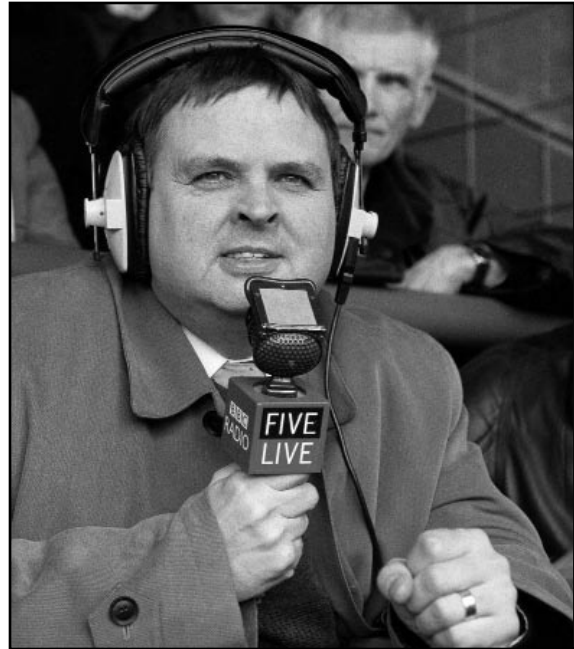
Mike is a Bachelor of Law.

Alan Green

Alan Green is one of BBC Five Live's top football commentators, and a winner of a Sony Award for Sports Broadcaster Of The Year.

Born in Belfast in 1952, Alan attended the Methodist College in his home town before

achieving an honours degree in Modern History from Queen's University. After leaving university he worked in local newspapers until he moved to the BBC in 1975, as a news trainee.



It was in news that Alan began his career, presenting current affairs on both radio and television in Northern Ireland before joining BBC Radio Sport as a senior sports broadcaster. He now estimates that he sees between 100 and 120 matches a season, and has won the admiration of fans for his honest assessments of games and players' performances.

Best known for his uncompromising football commentary, he also commentates on rowing and golf, and was a member of the Sony Award winning Five Live team which covered the last Ryder Cup.

Alan lists "time off" as a current hobby.

Jonathan Pearce

Jonathan Pearce is one of BBC Radio Five Live's top football commentators, having started his career at BBC Radio Bristol in 1979 when his dream of being a professional



footballer was shattered when he broke his leg at the age of 15.



His first match commentary was Bristol Rovers against Exeter City in the League Cup, and he became Sports Editor at the age of 23 at Radio West. In 1987 he moved to London and Capital Radio where he launched Capital Gold Sport a year later.

Jonathan has won several awards for his work including three Sony awards and the Variety Club Radio Person of the Year. He has commentated on over 150 England internationals, three World Cups, four European Championships and over 20 Cup Finals.

Born in 1959 in Plymouth, Jonathan moved to Bristol at the age of seven. He is still a Bristol City FC fan, but his wife and two small children are Crystal Palace season ticket holders.

Jonathan studied English at Birmingham University. He now lives in Brighton.

Simon Brotherton



Simon Brotherton began his career in Birmingham with Radio WM, joining the BBC Radio 5 team in 1993. He now spends most of his broadcasting year as a commentator for *Match Of The Day* and *Five Live*.

His credits include the 1998 and 2002 World Cups, Euro 96, Euro 2000, the 1998 European Champions League Final 1998 and the 1999 UEFA Cup Final.

In addition Simon has commentated at two Olympic Games (Atlanta 1996 and Sydney 2000), covering a number of events including cycling and boxing. More recently Simon has reported from the 2002 Commonwealth Games in Manchester.

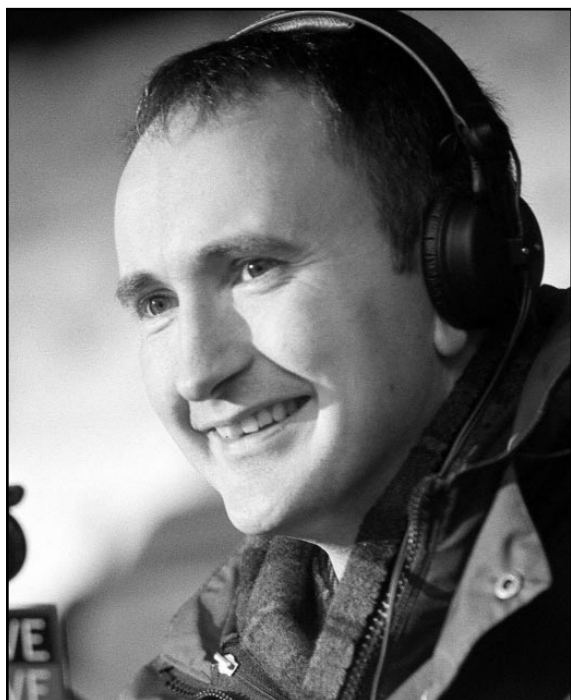
Among Simon's non-football commitments, he has reported at nine Tours de France and has covered boxing for the BBC, including world



title fights involving Lennox Lewis, Naseem Hamed and Frank Bruno.

Simon lives in Hertfordshire with his wife Sharon and their four-year-old daughter, Fleur.

John Murray



John Murray has been a member of BBC Five Live's football commentary team since 1997. He began his career with commercial and BBC regional radio in Cleveland.

As well as the 1998 and 2002 World Cups, John also commentated at Euro 2000. In that tournament, he covered one of the most exciting of all internationals when Spain scored twice in stoppage time to beat Yugoslavia 4-3.

But at the other extreme, Murray also endured an 18-month spell "when every game that was abandoned, I was commentating on!"

He is also a member of Five Live's golf commentary team at The Open and Ryder Cup.

Conor McNamara

Conor McNamara joined BBC Radio Five Live in 2002 as a football commentator and is a regular fixture in the Five Live football team.

His first ever commentary was the FA Cup Final in 1997 for Irish national radio. At the time he was just a reporter, but someone pulled out on the Thursday before the final, and he got the call, and kept the job after that!

In 1998 he did his first commentary on national television for TV3 when the Republic of Ireland played Yugoslavia. He continued to commentate for the station and also took over the presenting role until joining Five Live.

Conor studied at Salford University and has a post-graduate diploma in Business Studies from University College Dublin. He has had articles published in the *Irish Times* and the *Irish Examiner*. He lives in Limerick, Ireland.

Ian Brown

Ian Brown worked on Radio 2's sport output between 1985 and 1988, and returned to the BBC to join Five Live in 1994.

Since then, Ian has commentated on three Champions League finals, two European Championships and the last two World Cups.

He has also worked on international rugby union and world title boxing for the BBC, covering fights involving the likes of Lennox Lewis and Naseem Hamed.

Jimmy Armfield

In a playing career spanning 20 years, Jimmy Armfield represented just two sides – Blackpool and England.

He made his greatest impact on the international stage during the 1962 World Cup



in Chile, when he was acclaimed as the best right-back in the world.

But the England star was to face severe disappointment four years later. Having played in the pre-1966 World Cup friendlies, he was sidelined by injury for the tournament itself. George Cohen took his place in the victorious side.

Since retiring in 1971, Jimmy has had a successful career as a manager, leading Leeds to a European Cup final, and is now a well-respected commentator for BBC Five Live.

He was awarded an OBE for services to football in 2000.

Terry Butcher

Former international defender Terry Butcher epitomised England's bulldog spirit with his tenacious work in defence. The sight of Butcher bandaged and bloodstained after England drew with Sweden to qualify for Italia 90 has become an iconic image.

His expertise in football extends far beyond the 77 caps he won at international level. The ex-England, Ipswich and Rangers defender is currently manager at Scottish Premier League side Motherwell, who he joined as assistant manager. He began his managerial career at Coventry City and also had a spell at Sunderland and in a coaching role with Dundee United.

Terry was part of Five Live's World Cup team in 2002 and is a regular expert summariser on the network's football coverage.

Graham Taylor

Graham Taylor was born in Worksop on 15 September 1944. He played 189 games at full-back for Grimsby Town in Division 3 before

moving to Lincoln City in Division 4 to play a further 150 games before retiring due to a hip injury. He then became the youngest person to qualify as an FA coach at just 21 years of age.

At 28 he became the youngest manager in the league at Lincoln City, who he led to a record-breaking Division 4 Championship. After five years at Lincoln, he left to take over at Watford, who were then also in Division 4. Inspired by Taylor's talent and Elton John's cash, Watford rapidly won promotion to Division 1 in just five years, reaching the UEFA Cup in 1983 and the FA Cup final in 1984.

Looking for a new challenge, Graham joined newly relegated Aston Villa, taking them back to the top flight at his first attempt and quickly earning European football. After the 1990 World Cup he was the natural choice to succeed Bobby Robson as England manager, but after just one defeat in his first 23 games the team had a poor Euro 92 and then famously failed to qualify for the 1994 World Cup.

After a spell at Wolves Graham returned to Watford, winning a Premiership place for the club which they couldn't consolidate. But Graham's prudent management of the club meant that relegation wasn't the financial disaster it can often be and he left Watford in a healthy state when he decided to retire.

But he wasn't yet destined for the quiet life. As well as working on ITV's First Division coverage, he was lured back to Villa as a non-executive director to look into the club's structure and facilities. He was on the spot when the manager's job became vacant and couldn't resist one last shot at management – but says those days are now definitely behind him...

Graham was awarded the OBE for services to football in 2002; the Football Writers' Association Tribute Award for outstanding contribution to the national game in 2002; and was inducted into the Football Association Hall of Fame in 2002.



Chris Waddle

Chris Waddle, a former England International with 62 caps to his name, brings a wealth of top-level footballing experience from his time at Newcastle, Spurs, Marseille and Sheffield Wednesday.

Chris's silky skills illuminated the game for many years, and he bamboozled more than a few defenders in his time.

He clocked up almost 600 appearances in a 20-year professional career and his experience makes him one of the most enlightened pundits at this year's tournament.

Chris was part of Five Live's 2002 World Cup team and regularly contributes his words of wisdom to live matches on the network.

Alan Curbishley

Alan Curbishley first arrived at Charlton Athletic as a player in 1984 when he was signed from Aston Villa. It was the first of two spells at the club for the East London-born midfielder, who also played for West Ham United and Birmingham City.

Curbishley helped the Addicks reach the top flight for the first time in 29 years before he was sold to Brighton in 1987. He returned to Charlton three years later, combining his playing duties with the role of reserve coach. A few months later he was promoted to first team coach and by the summer of 1991, at just 33, had been handed the manager's job at the club, in tandem with Steve Gritt.

Alan assumed sole control of the club in 1995 following the appointment of a new chairman, Richard Murray. Charlton reached the Premiership via the play-offs in 1998, staying for just one season, but bounced back at the first attempt. Since then Alan has made them a

force to be reckoned with, moulding a group of players without any real star names into an effective unit – and making a name for himself as one of the best young managers around in the process.

Kevin Keegan tipped Alan as a future England manager, and it was after his resignation that Curbs was asked to help out with the England set-up prior to Sven Goran Eriksson's appointment. This is his first major tournament as an expert summariser for Five Live.

Gordon Strachan

Gordon Strachan's playing career was hugely successful, both in Scotland and in England. The Edinburgh-born, right-sided midfielder started out with Dundee, but really came to prominence at Aberdeen, where he won two Scottish League titles, the Scottish FA Cup three times, the European Cup Winners' Cup and the European Super Cup.

In 1984 he moved south to Manchester United, where he won the FA Cup before hopping across the Pennines to join Leeds United in 1989. In his first season he helped the club to the old Second Division title and a return to the top flight. Two years later, at the age of 35, Leeds captain Strachan added the 1992 championship to his list of playing honours and was named the Footballer of the Year, becoming the only player to win the award on both sides of the border. Strachan also won 50 caps for Scotland.

He became assistant manager upon arrival at Coventry in March 1995, and took over the hotseat some 18 months later, soon emerging as a real character on the touchline and in the press room with his dry wit – rarely afraid to show emotion or speak his mind.

After Coventry's relegation in 2001, he left the club, joining Southampton shortly after. He



went from strength to strength at the south coast club, earning European football for the Saints, but recently chose to escape the stresses of management and spend more time with his family.

Euro 2004 will be his first major role for Five Live.

Gavin Peacock

Football is in Gavin Peacock's blood: his father, Keith, played over 500 games for Chilton Athletic. Gavin became a professional footballer straight from school, joining QPR in 1984. He also played for Gillingham (where his dad was manager), Bournemouth, Newcastle United and Chelsea. He ended his career back at QPR, retiring at the end of the 2001/2002 season.

Even Gavin's wedding had to be fitted into football. He played for Bournemouth on the Saturday, married Amanda on the Sunday and reported back for training on the Monday morning!

A committed Christian, the Eltham-born midfielder is now enjoying a successful career in the media, working regularly as a summariser for Five Live and reporting on English football for ESPN.

When not working, Gavin indulges in his other big sporting passion, golf.