

Meeting Captain Marvel



For a man renowned for his all-action style, Bryan Robson is unusually sedate even after breakfast and coffee. The Manchester United legend was on a whistle-stop tour of the country at the behest of telecommunication giants Airtel, whose association with the Red Devils was the reason Robson made the trip to Dhaka. As their CEO Chris Tobit explained, Airtel's deal with United would see them not only offer customers in Bangladesh access to exclusive mobile content but also pave the way to bring more legends of the game along. And decked in the mutual Red of the sponsors and the club he embodies, Robson was in fine form while speaking to The Daily Star's Quazi Zulquarnain Islam, as he dished on scoring the 'fastest' World Cup goal, Sir Alex Ferguson and sharing a century partnership with Clive Lloyd.



DAILY STAR SPORT (DSS): Most people in Bangladesh instantly identify you for scoring that goal against France in the World Cup in 1982. Although you were already quite established at that time, do you feel that was the goal that propelled you into international stardom?

BRYAN ROBSON (BR): Absolutely. I think that goal against France really gave me the confidence to go on and continue with my England career. After having played through the age groups, I had missed most of my U21 career because I had broken my leg in three places. But in 1981 I managed to make the move to Manchester United and had just started getting into the England team. So scoring that goal in that stage really worked well for me.

DSS: Is it true that you initially declined the gift of a gold inscribed Seiko watch for that feat by saying, 'how do you divide one watch amongst an entire England team?'

BR: (laughs) Well to be honest I did not really decline it. I just said that it was a little bit unfair to my teammates since they had been creating the chances for those goals and I couldn't really split that with my teammates!

DSS: ...do you still wear that watch?

BR: Yeah, but it's at home now!

DSS: Despite not playing in an era where the Red Devils were overly success-

ful, you were recently voted as the greatest Manchester United player of all time. How much does that mean to you?

BR: It's a great feeling, especially since it came for the players. To be recognized ahead of people like George Best, Duncan Edwards, Bobby Charlton and the players of the day is a great honour. It meant even more because as a kid growing up all I wanted to do was play football, play for Manchester United and captain my country.

DSS: Not too many people remember a Manchester United without Alex Ferguson. But as one of the few who preceded Ferguson at the club, how different was it playing under him as opposed to say Ron Atkinson?

BR: Well they are very similar in some sense, in that both of them have a palpable passion for the game. When you go into training everyday you can see just how passionate these guys are about football; it's something they love doing and they love talking about. As regards management styles, Ron was more of a 'just go out there and enjoy yourself' kind of person, always encouraging you to express yourself on the pitch. Sir Alex was much more disciplined and organized and he knew exactly what he wanted you to do in the team. But that said, both great managers.

DSS: On the topic of Alex Ferguson, the great man once said that you could "tackle,

pass, control, read the game and had the stamina to execute it all." So do you think you were the complete footballer?

BR: (laughs) Well everyone always said that I was the all-round footballer who could do a little bit of everything. I mean people talk about stamina but it's something I worked so hard on even as a kid when I used to do cross-country and always wanted to win. During the latter stages in games, people get tired and the fitter you are the better you will be and I always worked on that consciously.

DSS: Speaking of better, you famously outplayed Diego Maradona in the Cup Winners Cup in 84 as United got the better of Barcelona. Would you say that was your best game for Manchester United?

BR: (smiles) Everyone goes back to that game because I scored a couple and we won 3-0 and Maradona was part of the opposition. But for me, I always remember the game in 1991 in Rotterdam, funnily enough against Barcelona again when we won 2-1 and Mark Hughes got all the accolades. But I created both the goals and I have always felt that was the best all-round game I have played for Manchester United.

DSS: You have played with some great players but who is the best player you have ever played with at Manchester United?

BR: I would have to say Ryan Giggs particularly for the way he has gone about his career. I saw him as a 6 year old coming into the club and I have watched his career blossom and with him still playing the way he always has, is amazing. But other than that, definitely Paul Gascoigne.

DSS: ...and the toughest, because word has it you were quite tough yourself.

BR: (laughs) Jimmy Case. He was part of the most difficult opposition I have ever faced, Liverpool, and thankfully Sir Alex has finally managed to upstage them!

DSS: Alan Parry once said that 'there is no injury known to man that Robson has not had.' Is that true?

BR: Well let's just say I am thankful that I don't have a plastic hip or knee and I can still play my rounds of golf and the occasional football match.

DSS: Finally... you once shared a century partnership with Clive Lloyd. Please elaborate!

BR: (laughs) Yeah! Lloyd and Farokh Engineer were part of the Lancashire cricket club and there was a charity game on at Old Trafford. I came out to bat and associated in a hundred run stand with Clive, although I was always more of a bowler. This is probably why he got 86 and let me get only 14 of that hundred!

Stay tuned for The Daily Star's one-on-one with Dwight Yorke which will be published tomorrow.

Tevez losing money

Football

AFP, London

Carlos Tevez's long-running dispute with Manchester City has cost the striker £9.3 million (\$14.5m) in wages, fines and lost bonuses, according to reports in several British media outlets on Wednesday.

The Argentina striker has reportedly not been paid his estimated £200,000-a-week salary since the end of November and has been fined £1.2m for gross misconduct over his unauthorised exile in his homeland. Tevez has appealed against the fine.

He is also believed to have forfeited £6m in loyalty bonuses over his repeated requests to leave the club.

The 27-year-old has not played for City since apparently refusing to come on as a substitute during a Champions League game at Bayern Munich on September 27, which saw him fined two weeks' wages for breach of contract.

Juve thump Roma

AFP, Rome

Juventus maintained their unbeaten record in all competitions this season as despite fielding a second string side they overwhelmed a full strength AS Roma 3-0 in their Italian Cup quarterfinal on Tuesday.

Emanuele Giaccherini set them on their way in the sixth minute as the vertically challenged Italian international forward broke the offside trap to score his second goal in as many matches, having hit the back of the net against Atalanta on Saturday.

Veteran Juventus icon Alessandro Del Piero doubled their lead in the 30th minute, the 37-year-old unleashing an unstoppable shot into the left hand corner of Maarten Stekelenburg's goal.

Roma didn't improve their chances of a comeback when they were reduced to 10 men in the 68th minute.

SPORTS POLL

WEEKLY QUESTION

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