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Tell Him He's Pele

Phil Shaw

**"TELL HIM
HE'S PELE
...AND GET HIM BACK ON"**

The Funniest Football Quotes Ever

Phil Shaw



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1: 'Fleas in your pants': The players

When the captain said there was a problem at the back I thought he meant me and Steve Bould.

Tony Adams *after an Arsenal flight was delayed*

When Arsene first came to Arsenal, we called him Clouseau and then Windows because of those boffin's glasses.

Tony Adams

Dennis Bergkamp is such a nice man, such a tremendous gentleman, with such a lovely family. It's going to be hard for me to kick him.

Tony Adams *before facing his club colleague for England v Holland*

For me [being told AC Milan were interested] must be something special. It's like a boy being told Beyoncé is looking for them.

Emmanuel Adebayor

I no speak England very very well mate.

Anderson, *Brazilian midfield player, on MUTV*

The manager said I can have Monday off.

Darren Anderton *after scoring for Bournemouth in his last game before retiring*

Maybe if there was a bomb in the dressing room and four players broke their legs then I might get to play.

Leon Andreassen, *out-of-favour Fulham midfielder*

We needed Winston Churchill and we got Iain Duncan Smith.

Anonymous *England defender on Sven-Göran Eriksson's half-time talk against Brazil in the 2002 World Cup*

Q: What car do you drive?

A: Two Mercs and a Porsche.

Ade Akinbiyi *in a Crystal Palace programme interview*

I'd compare myself to Zinedine Zidane – a humble guy who just happened to be the best.

Nicolas Anelka

Italy turn up in Armani suits looking the dog's bollocks and we arrive in bright green blazers and dodgy brogues.

Phil Babb *on playing for the Republic of Ireland at the 1994 World Cup*

If we hide behind clichés we'll be dead and buried by January.

Darren Barr, *Falkirk midfielder*

England did nothing in the World Cup, so why are they bringing books out? 'We got beat in the quarter-finals, I played like shit, here's my book.' Who wants to read that? I don't.

Joey Barton

I'm one of the old guard. When I started playing you could kick owt that moved.

David Batty

At the end of Howard Wilkinson's team talks we'd be thinking, Eh?

David Batty on life at Leeds

When Charlie Cooke sells you a dummy, you have to pay to get back in the ground.

Jim Baxter

Ginola sold me three dummies and I was out of the game so long I had time for two hot dogs. To make it worse, he was polite to me after the game.

Darren Bazeley, Wolves defender

Of course I've been to Wembley before - for the greyhounds on my stag night.

Dave Beasant, Wimbledon goalkeeper, before the FA Cup final

What he said to us rang true, though his mouth sometimes loses contact with his brain.

Dave Beasant on Dave Bassett

Alan Ball and me didn't see eye to eye, and it had nothing to do with his being 5ft 3in and my being 6ft 4in.

Dave Beasant

Glenn Hoddle said I had no future at Southampton and agreed to sell me to Crystal Palace. Apart from that we got on great.

James Beattie

You can't compare me with Ruud van Nistelrooy. Maybe I could beat him at arm-wrestling.

James Beattie

At Real Madrid we all kiss each other before we go out. Playing for England against Jamaica, Aaron Lennon was going to replace me. I leaned forward to kiss him but then thought, Nah, better not.

David Beckham

INTERVIEWER: Would it be fair to describe you as volatile?

BECKHAM: Well, I can play on the right or in the centre and occasionally on the left.

Beckham in an early TV interview

There's no one to blame – they're just individual mistakes.

David Beckham

If I ever get round to doing a book, the title will be *Don't Google Me*.

Craig Bellamy on his colourful past

I've wanted to play in pink boots since I was little. The only way anyone can top me now is to play in diamond-encrusted boots.

Nicklas Bendtner, Arsenal striker

I understand nothing when Rio [Ferdinand] and Frank [Lampard] are talking. They speak Cocknik.

Eyal Berkovic at West Ham

Is there anything I'd like to change about my life? I took a penalty against Chelsea in 1971 and Peter Bonetti, the

f***er, he saved it! I wish I'd sent it the other way.

George Best

Well, I suppose that's the knighthood f****d.

George Best *awaiting sentence in 1984 for assaulting a policeman*

Beckham can't kick with his left foot. He can't head a ball, can't tackle and doesn't score many goals. Apart from that, he's all right.

George Best

Is Rooney as good as me? Don't be silly!

George Best

When I was having my long goalless run [at Manchester United] people told me that if I'd shot John Lennon, he'd still be alive today.

Garry Birtles

Being at United was a culture shock for me. Even the loos had gold taps.

Garry Birtles

I was told they never used a ball in training at Barnsley, the theory being that we'd be hungrier for it if we didn't see it all week. I told the manager that come Saturday, I probably wouldn't recognise it.

Danny Blanchflower

It's our new tactic - we equalise before the others have scored.

Danny Blanchflower, *captain of Northern Ireland at the 1958 World Cup finals*

Blimey, the ground's a bit different to Watford. Where's the dog track?

Luther Blissett at San Siro on joining AC Milan from Watford

David Wheeler comes in with these autograph books and asks players to sign. I say: 'Go away, I'm your colleague now.'

George Boateng, Middlesbrough team-mate

I must admit I have a dressing-room curiosity over Beckham. I want to see if he is equipped as he is in the underwear adverts.

Marco Borriello, Milan striker

John Byrne says his hair is natural. He must be using natural bleach.

Paul Bracewell, Sunderland team-mate

George Graham said just two words to me in six months at Leeds – you're fired.

Tomas Brolin

Gazza gave me three souvenirs – two fat lips and his shirt.

Steve Brown, Wycombe Wanderers player, after defeat by Middlesbrough

You score goals as a kid. Then you grow up stupid and become a goalkeeper.

Gianluigi Buffon, Juventus and Italy keeper

People say I'm eccentric because I go to bed with my goalkeeping gloves on, but I find people who blow £300 at

the bookies eccentric.

John Burridge, *aged 46 and still playing for Blyth Spartans*

When you come to a place like Barcelona you think, Bloody hell, I wish I was back in England.

Terry Butcher, *Ipswich and England defender*

When the seagulls follow the trawler it's because they think sardines will be thrown into the sea.

Eric Cantona *to the media after escaping a jail sentence*

I'm glad there will now be two good-looking guys at Real Madrid. I've felt so lonely in such an ugly team.

Roberto Carlos *after David Beckham's arrival*

Mourinho is the funniest thing to come out of London since Del Boy and Rodney.

Jamie Carragher

You couldn't turn off the floodlights until Nobby [Stiles] had gone home because he needed to find his contact lenses after the game.

Sir Bobby Charlton

Someone said you could write Barry Fry's tactical knowledge on a stamp. You'd need to fold the stamp in half.

Steve Claridge

Me and Joe [Cole] went to a restaurant in Mayfair. The only other time I've been there was on a Monopoly board.

Peter Clarke, Southend player, on dining with his friend Cole before their FA Cup meeting

I never saw Razor hit Robbie in the airport, just the trail of blood going through the green Customs exit.

Stan Collymore on Ruddock v Fowler after a Liverpool trip abroad

INTERVIEWER: Which do you prefer, Rangers or Celtic?

ALFIE CONN: Spurs.

Alfie Conn interviewed on a TV documentary – Conn played for all three

Fergie showed me a picture of Uli Stielike before the final and I didn't think, World-class player. I thought, He looks like Basil Fawlty.

Neale Cooper, former Aberdeen midfielder, on their 1982 Cup-Winners' Cup final win over Real Madrid

Everyone was down the pub, drunk, the night before the FA Cup final. Probably what won us the Cup. That, and taking me off after an hour because I was delirious.

Alan Cork, ex-Wimbledon striker, recalls their shock victory over Liverpool

Matt [Busby] was the eternal optimist. In 1968 he still hoped that Glenn Miller was just missing.

Pat Crerand, Manchester United player under Busby

If I played for Scotland my grandma would be the proudest woman in the country, if she wasn't dead.

Mark Crossley, English-born goalkeeper, on being touted for Scotland

Paolo Maldini can say he has done it all now.

Peter Crouch on AC Milan's visit to Fratton Park, Portsmouth

I've played my last match, scored my last goal and elbowed my last opponent.

Martin Dahlin, Sweden striker, announcing his retirement

In the film *Kes*, Brian Glover thinks he's Bobby Charlton. Ron [Atkinson] is like that - he thinks he's the best five-a-side player at the club.

Liam Daish, Coventry defender

I got a text message from the FA saying I was in the England squad. It was too intellectual for a footballer to have written it. All the spellings and the punctuation were correct.

Curtis Davies, Aston Villa defender

What a player van Nistelrooy is. Even when he farts he seems to score.

Alessandro Del Piero, Juventus and Italy striker

I thought I had come to a chicken factory. It was also reminiscent of a Chinese women's volleyball team.

Ivo den Biemen, Dutch striker, on life with Montrose

The man who comes to take care of my piranhas tells me he will kill all my fish if I leave West Ham.

Paolo Di Canio

I want the West Ham fans to know that we're going to win something before I finish my career here. Otherwise I will

kill myself.

Paolo Di Canio

How could anyone think the team would be better off without me?

Paolo Di Canio *after being dropped by West Ham*

When I kiss the West Ham badge people say, 'It's because he wants a new contract.' If I wanted a contract I'd come in here and lick the club's arse.

Paolo Di Canio *before joining Charlton*

For an away team to get a penalty at Old Trafford, Jaap Stam needs to take a machine gun and riddle you full of bullets.

Paolo Di Canio

Ray [Wilkins] is very strict on the dress code after being at clubs like AC Milan, where you have to wear a suit in bed.

Danny Dichio, *QPR striker*

Michael Owen has already given me a nickname. It happened quite naturally in training. It's Dioufy.

El Hadji Diouf *at Liverpool*

Wimbledon will take to Wembley. Once you've tried to get a decent bath at Hartlepool, you can handle anything.

Wally Downes, *ex-Wimbledon player, before the 1988 FA Cup final*

Before Molineux was rebuilt, there were cockroaches doing backstroke in the bath.

Keith Downing, *Wolves midfielder*

I like Quentin Tarantino films and stuff like that. There's nothing better than a good bit of violence.

Mark Draper, *Aston Villa midfielder*

I'd like to play for an Italian club, like Barcelona.

Mark Draper

Torres scored three but other than that I kept him pretty quiet.

Michael Duberry, *Reading defender*

My fondest memory of him [Mark Hughes] is his passport picture, which was a Panini sticker of himself.

Michael Duberry on his former Chelsea team-mate

I'm never one to make excuses, but I couldn't see the ball because the floodlights were in my eyes.

Damien Duff

Sam Allardyce knows what the club needs. He's done it at both ends.

Damien Duff when Allardyce was appointed Newcastle manager

I went into the Chelsea dressing room to swap shirts and it was bigger than my house.

Dickson Etuhu, *Norwich midfielder*

Before my Beşiktaş debut they sacrificed a lamb on the pitch and daubed its blood on my forehead for luck. They never did that at QPR.

Les Ferdinand

Danny Mills is the oldest 24-year-old I've ever met. He wears pyjamas, slippers, everything your grandad would wear.

Rio Ferdinand

Gary Neville was captain, and now Ryan Giggs has taken on the mantelpiece.

Rio Ferdinand

When he [Sir Alex Ferguson] starts with the hairdryer treatment on them, I've seen foreign players turn pink and black players turn white.

Rio Ferdinand

I don't drink except when we win a trophy. People must think I'm an alcoholic.

Ian Ferguson after his 23rd medal with Rangers

I don't make predictions. And I never will.

Paul Gascoigne

What's the world coming to when you get fined two weeks' wages for calling a grown man a wanker?

Paul Gascoigne

When Incey was running around with his head bandaged [against Italy], he looked like a pint of Guinness.

Paul Gascoigne

Coping with the language shouldn't be a problem. I can't even speak English yet.

Paul Gascoigne joins Lazio

I won't be doing the flute-playing bit I did in Glasgow. The gaffer has promised to buy me a guitar.

Paul Gascoigne on joining Middlesbrough

I didn't play many games for Middlesbrough towards the end of the season, or at the start or in the middle.

Paul Gascoigne

INTERVIEWER: When do you think you peaked?

GASCOIGNE: In two years' time.

Paul Gascoigne on Soccer AM

Q: Are you feeling your age? What do you feel like?

A: I feel like a kebab and onions.

Paul Gascoigne interviewed

Always seems to be about two stone overweight.

Paul Gascoigne programme pen picture, *Republic of Ireland v England*

[Ferenc] Puskas' left foot was so good he could even juggle the soap in the showers.

Francisco Gento, Real Madrid colleague in the 1950s

Claim to fame outside soccer: I once put together an MFI wardrobe in less than four days.

Terry Gibson, Coventry striker

If Dennis [Wise] fouls you he normally picks you up, but the ref doesn't see what he picks you up by.

Ryan Giggs

Kenny Dalglish was my boyhood hero. I even named my goldfish after him.

Ricky Gillies, St Mirren player

I may buy a yacht. It's the perfect way to pop back to France for a decent meal.

David Ginola at the London Boat Show

O! A diving lad.

David Ginola anagram posted on the internet

Roy Aitken told Mo Johnston to spit at Glenn Hysen's feet in the tunnel. Mo said he'd probably trap it and play it up the park.

Andy Goram, Scotland goalkeeper, after playing Sweden in the World Cup

Just because I play for England, [manager] Walter Winterbottom thinks I understand peripheral vision and positive running.

Jimmy Greaves in 1960

Playing for England won't faze Carlton [Cole] at all. One of his great attributes is that he doesn't think too much, so I think he'll be OK.

Robert Green, West Ham and England team-mate

My son doesn't think much of me. He's swapped stickers of me for Frank Lampard and Steven Gerrard. And he walks around in an Albion shirt with 'Robinson' on the back.

Jonathan Greening, West Brom midfielder

In the penalty shoot-out [Jerzy] Dudek looked like a starfish with jelly legs.

Bruce Grobbelaar, former Liverpool keeper, after the 2005 Champions League final

Scotland? They're a good team with strong English character.

Ruud Gullit before playing for Holland v Scotland at Euro 92

As a boy I was torn between two ambitions: to be a footballer or run away and join the circus. At Partick Thistle I got to do both.

Alan Hansen

Germany are under three times more pressure than us. I can see it getting to the point where they shit their pants.

Martin Harnik, Austria striker, before the countries met in Euro 2008

The Doc used to tell me: 'Be sure to get your late tackles in early.'

Ron 'Chopper' Harris on Tommy Docherty

You can never say never – unless you say never yourself.

Emile Heskey

I've stopped touching wood. I got splinters and was out for three games.

David Hirst, injury-ravaged striker

I'd only look as fast as Ryan Giggs if you stuck me in the 1958 FA Cup final.

Rick Holden, Manchester City winger

Q: Which sporting event would you pay most to watch?

A: Someone absolutely mashing Prince Naseem Hamed.

David Hopkin, Scotland midfielder, in a newspaper questionnaire

Michael Bridges' nickname is Germ. He always has a cold.

Darren Huckerby on his then Leeds colleague

Ally McCoist is like dogshit in the penalty area. You don't know he's there until the damage is done.

John Hughes, Celtic defender

First I went left, he did too. Then I went right, and he did too. Then I went left again, and he went to buy a hot dog.

Zlatan Ibrahimović on a tight-marking defender

I told Eric he couldn't go to court wearing a shirt unbuttoned to the chest. He said: 'I am Cantona. I can go as I want.' He got 14 days in prison and I thought, Oh my God, it must be the shirt.

Paul Ince

It's not nice going into Tesco and the till girl is thinking, 'Dodgy keeper'.

David James

Before the Man City game, Michael Owen texted me to say I'd better play well because I'm in his fantasy league team. After the game I texted back to say he'd better sell me.

David James after Portsmouth lost 6-0 to City and 4-0 to Chelsea

My mum actually taught me to knit. I knitted my teddy bear a jumper. I couldn't round off, though.

David James

Because I was small, Dad used to make me hang off the banisters for five minutes to stretch me. That was before I could have any dinner.

Lee Johnson, *Bristol City midfielder, on his dad Gary, the manager*

The Football Association have given me a pat on the back because I've taken violence off the terraces and on to the pitch.

Vinnie Jones

When I did a talk at Eton the boys were asking me things like: 'How big are Gazza's balls?'

Vinnie Jones

I'm still on the transfer list but Alex Ferguson has yet to take the hint.

Vinnie Jones

I can't run, pass, tackle or shoot, but I'm still here.

Vinnie Jones *on playing for Wimbledon and Wales*

My pot-bellied pigs don't squeal as much as Ruud Gullit.

Vinnie Jones

For some reason I thought I was signing for Howard Kendall - he was the only Howard I'd heard of.

Vinnie Jones *on signing for Howard Wilkinson at Leeds*

It wasn't that I was desperately late with my tackles, just a little slower in getting there.

Chris Kamara *on being a midfield hard man*

I have to watch Willy Wonka before every game. It's been my favourite film since I was a kid and gets me in the right mood for what lies ahead.

Malvin Kamara, *Huddersfield midfielder*

What do you have at Middlesbrough? Golden corner competitions?

Kevin Keegan, *then a Liverpool player, to an opponent during a negative performance by Boro*

At Hamburg you had to get to the dressing-room early to throw your towel on an empty peg.

Kevin Keegan

Personally, I like a hostile environment like the one we [the USA team] found in Costa Rica. Maybe it's because I played for Millwall.

Kasey Keller, *US goalkeeper*

I've known some greedy players - I remember wrestling with Gavin Peacock who's in Christians In Sport, for heaven's sake, when Newcastle had a penalty and I was on a hat-trick - but Bully takes the biscuit.

David Kelly *on Wolves strike partner Steve Bull*

The biggest difference between playing for Rangers and playing for Forfar? About £300 a week.

Stewart Kennedy, *a goalkeeper with both clubs*

I'm not the kind of guy who does the kind of thing I did.
Nobody expected this from me, not even myself.

Kevin Kuranyi, *Germany striker, after walking out on the squad*

I thought there might be eight goals but I never expected we'd get four of them.

Dave Lancaster, *Chesterfield striker, after a 4-4 draw at Liverpool*

Stan Matthews used to put the ball on my centre parting.
They don't do that any more.

Tommy Lawton

Q: Who do you room with and what's his most annoying habit?

A: Des Lyttle. He suffers from bad wind.

Jason Lee, *Nottingham Forest striker, in newspaper questionnaire*

Warren Barton's the best-dressed player I've ever seen. He even arrived for training in shirt, trousers, shoes, and his hair's lovely. We call him The Dog, as in the dog's bollocks.

Robert Lee

If I went upfield for a corner, I'd probably need a taxi to get back.

Jim Leighton *on keeping goal at the age of 41*

Colin [Hendry] isn't happy unless he's been kicked in the bollocks three times during training.

Graeme Le Saux, *Blackburn team-mate*

I'd have parachuted out of a snake's backside to leave Chelsea.

Graeme Le Saux at Blackburn, before returning to Stamford Bridge

[Gianfranco] Zola has always got the English-Italian phrasebook with him. Mind you, that's for him to stand on.

Graeme Le Saux

Throughout my career I've been described as 'cerebral', but I had to look it up in the dictionary.

Graeme Le Saux

The great thing about football captaincy is that when things go wrong, the manager gets the blame.

Gary Lineker as England skipper

I always score one against the Germans.

Gary Lineker on being dismissed for one run batting for the MCC v Germany at Lord's

Bobby [Robson] told me I could score lots of goals for England and put me on the bench for the first time against Wales. It brought me down to earth 20 minutes from time when he said, 'Get warmed up, Garth.'

Gary Lineker

There were plenty of fellas in the fifties who would kick your bollocks off. At the end they would shake your hand and help you look for them.

Nat Lofthouse, Bolton and England centre-forward

Germany are a very hard team to beat. They had 11 internationals out there

today.

Steve Lomas, Northern Ireland captain

My most embarrassing moment was trying to follow Craig Burley's instructions in a Celtic game when he didn't have his teeth in, and getting it hopelessly wrong.

Malky Mackay

We had 51,000 to see us play Partizan Tirana and I think a lot of them came just to see what people from Albania looked like.

Murdo Macleod of Celtic

Sat in the stand, you're powerless to do anything. You've got fleas in your pants.

Florent Malouda on being dropped by France

For this whole being-alive thing, I can only thank the two beards, God and Fidel [Castro].

Diego Maradona as a reformed drug addict

We had an American player, Charlie DaSilva, who was on trial with us so long that the lads christened him OJ.

Chris Marsh, Walsall midfielder

SIR ALF RAMSEY: I'll be watching you for the first 45 minutes and if you don't work harder I'll pull you off at half-time.

MARSH: Blimey - at Manchester City all we get is an orange and a cup of tea.

Rodney Marsh, story of his England career

I did not know of Hull. I know nothing. Maybe with my satellite navigation I could find it. I would have no idea where it is on the map, though.