



PENGUIN READERS

David Beckham

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'Who is a famous English footballer?' Ask people this question and they usually answer, 'David Beckham!' People in every country know his name. Twelve years with Manchester United, four years with Real Madrid and captain of England for 58 games. And now he is taking football to the United States. He is playing for LA Galaxy in Los Angeles. He is always in the newspapers and on television. There is a new story about him every week – about his family, his advertisements and, of course, his money. Many people love him; some people don't. But David Beckham is a very famous footballer.

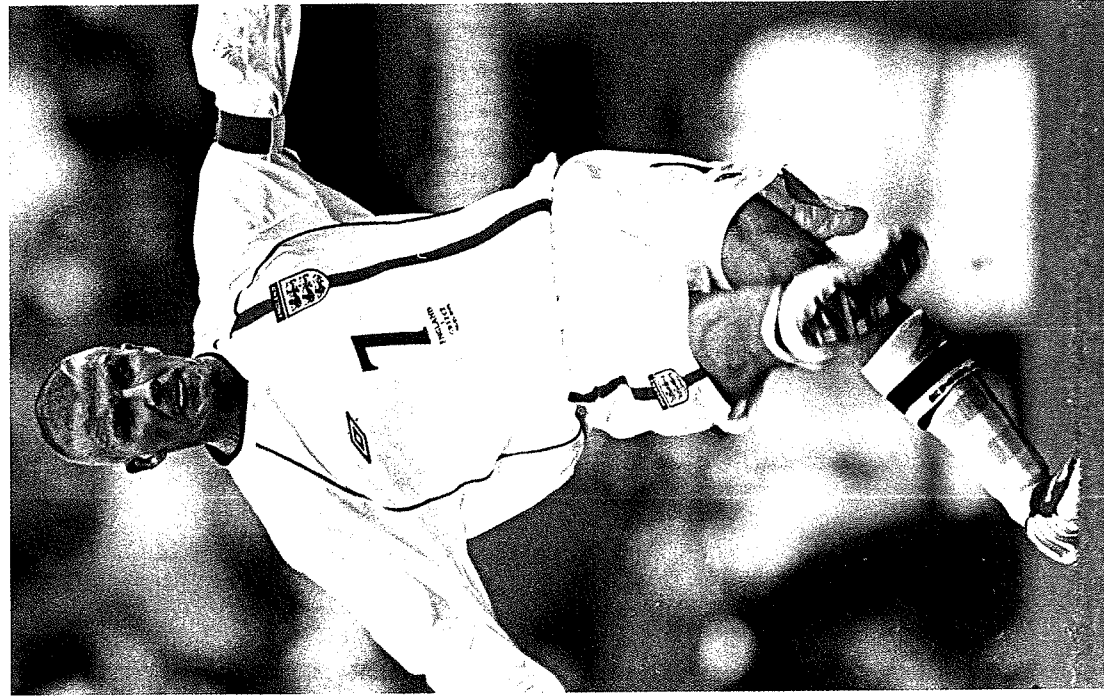
Good Days and Bad Days

It is October 2001. England is playing Greece in the World Cup. * The England fans are very quiet. They are unhappy because Greece is winning. The score is Greece 2 – England 1.

Suddenly the referee stops the game. England have a kick. The Greek players stand in front of their goal. A tall young England player takes the kick. The ball goes up and to the right. Then it goes down and to the left – and the ball is in the goal. The score is England 2 – Greece 2. England are going to the World Cup finals! The England fans are very happy. Now they are shouting for that young player, David Beckham.

Every newspaper has the same story: 'David Beckham does it again!' It is a very good day for him.

* World Cup: Every four years many countries play in this football competition.

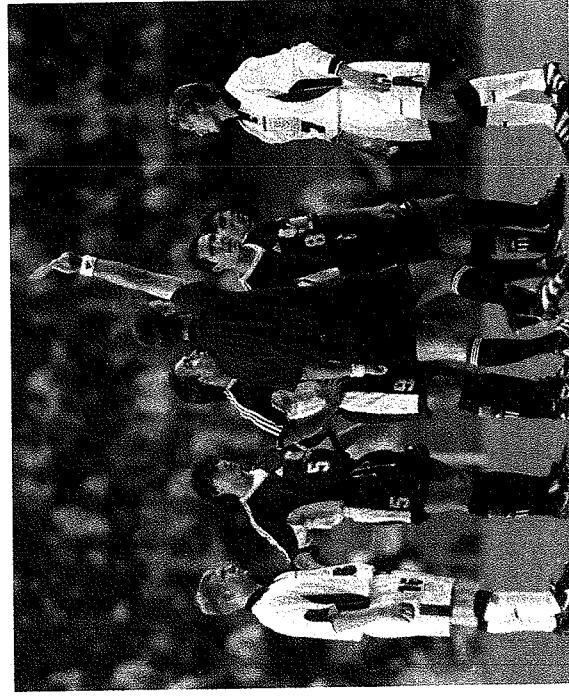


A tall young England player takes the kick.

But David Beckham remembers a day in 1998. He is twenty-three years old. He is in France and the game is against Argentina. Again, he is playing for England in the World Cup. But that day is going to be a very bad day for him.

An Argentinian player suddenly runs into him and he falls down. The Argentinian, Simeone, stands near him. He is smiling. David is young and he is angry. He kicks Simeone lightly with his right foot.

The referee comes quickly. He has a red card in his hand. It is the end of the game for David Beckham. Now England only have ten players. The ten men play well, but Argentina win.



The referee has a red card in his hand.

That was David's first red card, but the newspapers all had the same story: 'England can't win the World Cup now, because David Beckham is an angry little boy.' It was a very unhappy day for David. He doesn't like remembering it.

But it was an important day too. Now he knows. An angry player is not a clever player. These days David plays well and he doesn't often get angry.

The Schoolboy Footballer

On 2 May 1975, David Beckham came into the world in Leytonstone, in London. His father and mother, Ted and Sandra Beckham, were big football fans. Every Christmas little David had a new football and a new football shirt from his father. It was always a Manchester United shirt. The family lived in London, but his father was a very big fan of 'the reds'.

David wasn't very good at school. Schoolwork wasn't interesting or important to him. But he liked playing football. He played with a ball every weekend and every evening after school, usually with friends or with his father. His father played football too and he was a good teacher.

David was small and thin then, but his legs were strong. He liked running very quickly with the ball at his feet. He did long kicks and short kicks, again and again, every day.

In 1986 he was eleven years old and he was a good little footballer.



David was small and thin then.

One day there was an advertisement on television for a competition. It was a football competition for schoolboys at the Bobby Charlton Football School.

'Can I try the competition?' David asked his father. 'You're very young,' his father said. 'The boys in this competition are usually big and strong, and fifteen or sixteen years old. But you can try. Why not?'

His father went with David to the football school. The people there smiled because David was small and thin. But then they started the competition – long kicks, short kicks, running with the ball. And David won. Then those people asked, 'Who is that boy?'

'His name's David Beckham,' David's father smiled. 'And one day he's going to play football for Manchester United and England.'

The Red Shirt with the Number Seven

David played football at school. He also played football for Chingford and Essex, places near his home.

At thirteen he went to a football school for boys at Manchester United. He went there every summer holiday. At sixteen he stopped going to school and three months later, in July 1991, a man from Manchester United came to Ted Beckham's house.

'Your son is a good young player. We'd like him for Manchester United,' he said.

At sixteen years old, David was a boy player for Manchester United. In 1992 the boys won an important competition, and in September that year David played his first game for Manchester United against Brighton. He was seventeen.

In the early years with Manchester United, David was young and he was sometimes angry. But after the red card in the game against Argentina, he stopped getting angry. Today newspapers and fans sometimes say bad things about him or about Victoria and his children. Then he gets angry. But not often in a game.

In September 1996, David played for England for the first time. After that he played for his country many times and in November 2000, in a friendly game against Italy, he was the new captain.

He played well for Manchester United too, and in 1999 they won three big competitions. The first two were English football competitions. Then they beat Bayern Munich and won the European Cup. It was a very good year for 'the reds'.



After November 2000, David was captain of England.

'Posh and Becks'

The year 1999 was very happy for David too. That year he married Victoria.

In 1996 and 1997, the number one girl singers in Britain were the 'Spice Girls'. There were five of them. They sang and they danced. They were famous in many countries.

One day some Manchester United players watched the Spice Girls on television. One of them said, 'There's the girl for you, David. The girl with the yellow hair.'

'No,' he said. 'The dark girl with the long legs, that's the girl for me.'

And he was right. Her name was Victoria Addams, or 'Posh Spice'.

At about the same time, one of the Spice Girls had some cards with photos of footballers on them. She and Victoria looked at the cards.

'Who do you like?' she asked.

Victoria looked at the pictures again.

'This man,' she said. 'I like this man.'

Her friends remembered. It was a photo of David Beckham.

One day Victoria went to a Manchester United game in London and there was David Beckham. Later they talked, but David didn't say much to her. He wanted to be her friend, but she was very famous. He wasn't. He was only a footballer. A month later they talked again after a game in Manchester, and then he telephoned her.

After that they were good friends – and after six months they were in love.

But there was a problem. They often went away for their work. David played football and the Spice Girls sang in many countries of the world.

One day Victoria said, 'I'm sorry but we're going to be away from Britain for a year. We're going to visit thirty countries.'

It wasn't a happy time for them. David telephoned Victoria every day, sometimes five or six times.

In July 1999 he married her. It was the big story in the newspapers: 'Football star marries singing star'. After that 'Posh and Becks' were always in the newspapers.

The World Cup 2002: Bekkamu! Bekkamu!

In 2002 the final games of the World Cup were in Japan and Korea. England won their early games with no problems.

The England players arrived in Tokyo before the final games and went to their hotel in a bus. There were a lot of England fans in the streets. They were Japanese people.

'Look,' David said to his friend. 'We've got a lot of fans in Japan. I didn't know.'

'Not us,' his friend smiled. 'It's you. Look at the number seven on their shirts. And listen.'

The people in the streets shouted, 'Bekkamu! Bekkamu!'



A lot of Japanese people are fans of David Beckham.

‘What are they saying?’ David asked.

‘It’s your name,’ his friend smiled. ‘It’s your name in Japanese.’

For David the big day was 7 June 2002. England beat Argentina 1–0, a famous win. David scored the only goal. After that goal the newspapers never talked about the red card in 1998 again (or not very often!).

The World Cup in 2002 was a very good and interesting competition. England didn’t win. Brazil beat Germany in the final game. But England played well.



England beat Argentina, 1–0. David scored the only goal.

Goodbye to the Reds

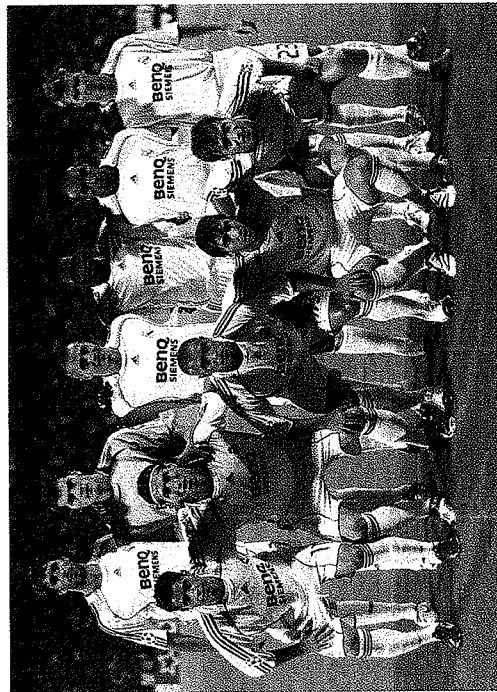
The year 2003 was a very important year for David Beckham. First, Manchester United won a big competition. Then, in the summer, there was a new story in every newspaper: ‘Real Madrid buys Beckham for £25,000,000’. After twelve years with Manchester United, David moved to Spain. His father was unhappy, but the move was good for David. Real Madrid and its players – Zidane, Ronaldo, Roberto Carlos, Raúl, Figo – were famous in every country in the world.

David had a new shirt in Spain, a white shirt with the number 23. He played for Real Madrid for four years.

He played for England too, of course, in those years. In 2006 he was England's captain in the World Cup final games in Germany. Again England didn't win, but they played well. David scored some good goals. Italy beat France in the final game.

Which English footballer played and scored goals in three World Cup competitions? Only David Beckham!

But after the 2006 World Cup, David was unhappy. He didn't want to be England's captain. It was difficult for him because he was in Spain all the time. There were new young players too. 'It's time for a new captain,' he said. He played for England later, of course, but he was not the captain.



David (back, right), with the Real Madrid players

On 17 June 2007, there was a very important final game in Madrid. On that day Real Madrid beat Real Mallorca and they won *La Liga*, the number one competition in Spanish football.

But it was David's final game for Real Madrid too. In August 2007, he said goodbye to Spain and to his friends there. He wanted to play in the United States.

It was a big story in the newspapers. 'Beckham is going to the US of A for five years for \$250,000,000!', they said.

'This is a new thing for me,' David said. 'Americans love American Football. But now I want to make our football famous there too.'

David and his family now live in Los Angeles. He plays for LA Galaxy. His family live in a big, expensive house. A lot of famous people from Hollywood live near him.

A Family Man

David loves children, all children. He gives a lot of time and money to ill children. In March 1999, Victoria had Brooklyn, their first son. Now the Beckhams have three boys. In September 2002, Brooklyn had his first little brother. His name is Romeo. And in February 2005, the Beckhams had Cruz. They would like a little girl some time too.

David always remembered his time at the Bobby Charlton Football School. It was a friendly place and it was good for his football. For years he wanted to start a David Beckham Football School. In 2005 he opened

the first of his football schools in a big new building in Greenwich, near London. Then he opened a school in Los Angeles too. He wants to have his schools in many countries of the world. A lot of boys and girls can go to them. They can stay in the schools and play there. They can be students of football with very good teachers.



David with students at his football school in Greenwich

David's photo is often in the newspapers and on television, and not only for football. People see him in this coat, in those shoes, with that telephone, and then they want to have those things too. He makes a lot of money every year from advertisements.

People like reading about him, his family, his houses, his cars – his hair. Children in many countries know his name. They play football in his shirts. They want to be famous. They want to be David Beckham.

ACTIVITIES

Pages 1–7

Before you read

- 1 Talk about these questions.
 - a What do you know about David Beckham?
 - b Which footballers from your country do you like watching?

Why?

- 2 Look at the Word List at the back of the book. What are the words in your language?

- 3 Write about these World Cup 2002 games.

- a Germany 1 – South Korea 0
Germany beat South Korea. The score was Germany 1, South Korea 0 ('nil').
- b Brazil 1 – Turkey 0
- c South Korea 2 – Turkey 3
- d Germany 0 – Brazil 2

While you read

- 4 Write the names.
 - a David had a red card in a game against in 1998.
 - b 'The reds' is a name for
 - c David was captain of England for the first time in a game against in 2000.
 - d Manchester United beat and won the European Cup in 1999.

After you read

- 5 Which word is right?
 - a At Christmas, David always had a red / white / black football shirt.
 - b At eleven, David was tall / famous / thin.
 - c In the early years at Manchester United, David was often angry / slow / clever.

Pages 8–14

Before you read

- 6 Talk about these questions.
- Why is Victoria Beckham famous?
 - Where were the World Cup Final games in 2002 and 2006? Which countries won?
 - Where is David Beckham now and what is he doing?

While you read

- 7 Are these sentences right (✓) or wrong (X)?
- David married Victoria in 1999.
 - Germany won the World Cup in 2002.
 - David stayed with Real Madrid in Spain for five years.
 - After the 2006 World Cup, David stopped being England's captain.
 - David's first football school opened in Wimbledon.
 - The name of David's first son is Romeo.
 - David doesn't make advertisements now.

After you read

- 8 Answer these questions.
- What did David, and only David, do in three World Cup competitions for England?
 - Why did David start football schools in many countries?
 - What is David trying to do in the United States?

Writing

- 9 You are David Beckham. You are in Japan for the World Cup Finals in 2002. Write a letter to Victoria in England. Write about the Japanese fans and the game against Argentina.
- 10 Why do children want to be David Beckham? Write about this for a newspaper.

WORD LIST with example sentences

- advertisement** (n) You often see his face in *advertisements* on television.
- against** (prep) We're playing a game of football. The fathers are playing *against* their sons.
- ball** (n) We want to play football but we can't find our *ball*.
- beat** (v, past **beat**) England *beat* Germany in 2002.
- captain** (n) David Beckham is the England *captain*.
- card** (n) Did he hit that player? Yes. It's a red *card*!
- competition** (n) Manchester United play in every big football *competition*.
- end** (v/n) I don't like this game. When is it going to *end*?
- fan** (n) There was a lot of noise from the *fans* in the streets after the game.
- final** (adj/n) After the *final* game, we went home.
- goal** (n) England's first *goal* came very quickly.
- kick** (v/n) He can *kick* well with his left foot, but not with his right foot.
- marry** (n) She *married* my brother and they had three children.
- referee** (n) The *referee* stopped the game early because it was dark.
- score** (v/n) The *score* was England 2 – Greece 2. Beckham and Owen scored for England.
- shout** (v) Please don't *shout*. I can hear you.
- sing** (v, past **sang**) She loves music and she *sings* well.
- star** (n) Tom Cruise is a film *star* and David Beckham is a football *star*.
- win** (v, past **won**) Who *won* the game on Saturday?
- world** (n) People play football in every country in the *world*.