

THE MANCHESTER UNITED OPUS

Midi Edition



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The Manchester United Opus was the first Opus to celebrate a football team, a paragon of sport. It captures the soul of Manchester United, its electrifying spirit, enduring traditions, and rich heritage like never before.

Its 33cm by 33cm format that weighs 15 kg takes the reader on an intimate journey into the club's unique essence. From the thunderous chants of the Stretford End and the hallowed turf of Old Trafford, to its legendary players and iconic moments — every page invites you to explore and embrace the spirit of Manchester United.

As Manchester United strides boldly into the future, this Opus not only honours its storied past but also celebrates the vision and evolution shaping its next chapter.





The Manchester United Opus Midi Edition:

- Over 500 pages, printed in high definition on luxury 200gsm silk paper
- 33 by 33 cm, weighing 15kg
- Hand-bound by master craftsmen in red buckram
- Presented in a bespoke hand-made clamshell case
- Adorned UNITED embossed on the cover
- Price €299

THE MANCHESTER UNITED OPUS

The Midi Edition

Manchester United. The name alone evokes a cascade of memories and emotions: of roaring crowds at Old Trafford, red shirts billowing under floodlights, legendary goals, historic triumphs, and a legacy forged in grit, glory, and unwavering passion. But Manchester United is more than a football club; it is a global phenomenon, a symbol of resilience, ambition, and unity that has transcended generations and borders.

The Manchester United Opus was born from a conversation — a spark of inspiration that ignited the imagination of the Opus team. Collaborating with players past and present, club historians, managers, fans, curators, photographers, and designers, OPUS set out to create a work worthy of the club's towering legacy. Every contributor — from editors and researchers to archivists and stylists — poured their expertise into crafting a definitive tribute that would both educate and inspire.

Along the way, we uncovered forgotten photographic archives and lovingly restored them to their original brilliance. We unearthed rare memorabilia and iconic artefacts, reproduced in ultra-high definition to tell a story unlike any other — a story of triumph, tradition, and the unbreakable spirit of Manchester United.



The Manchester United Midi Edition



The most vibrant story telling through captivating photography

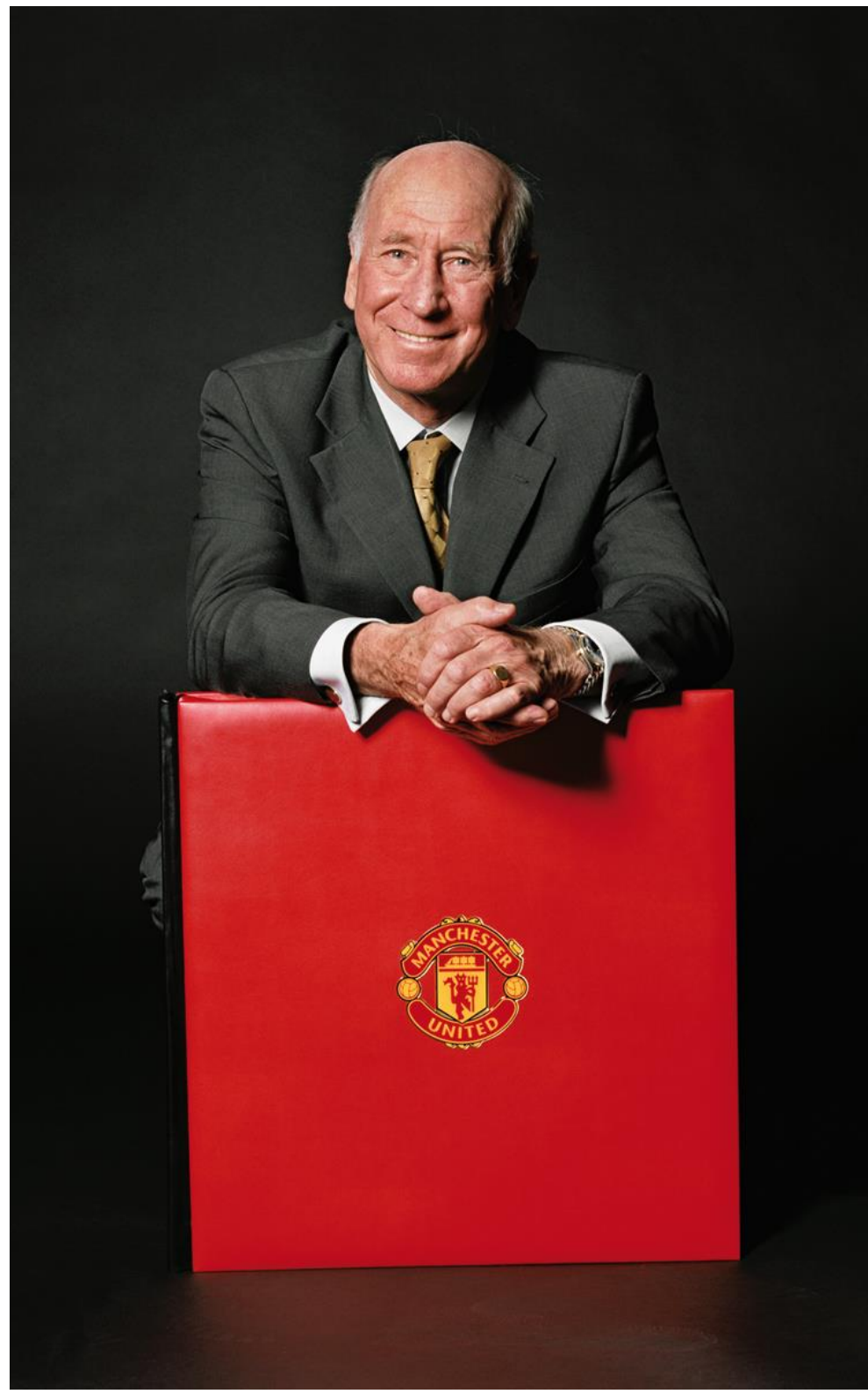
The magic of Manchester United is vividly captured through the lenses of the club’s most gifted photographers. Each image in this book stands as a testament to their sharp eye for detail and profound connection to the spirit of United. Through their visionary perspectives, readers are transported to electrifying match days, behind-the-scenes moments, and the architectural majesty of Old Trafford — creating an experience like no other.

Their photographs do more than illustrate; they breathe life into the legacy of Manchester United, offering a visual symphony that enhances the rich narratives within. Their masterful composition and artistic flair invite readers to see the club not just as a team, but as a living, breathing legend.



The Book of Dreams - Inside The Manchester United Opus
Soccerbible











RONALDO

The United number seven that has developed a certain mythology over time. And no wonder. For nearly 20 years, only three men wore it: Bryan Robson, Eric Cantona and David Beckham, a succession as celebrated as any in football. Thus, when Beckham left Old Trafford for the Bernabeu in the summer of 2003 and the news leaked out that the number seven was to go to an 18-year-old who'd spent just one season in top-flight Portuguese football, there was a sense of anticipation among United's faithful. This seemed to be a risk, even for a manager as keen to promote youthful talent as Sir Alex Ferguson.

Within five minutes of his debut in August 2003, however, all such doubts about Cristiano Ronaldo evaporated. As he showed and danced his way past the Italian Wanderers defence, his feet moving so quickly that the opposition players wouldn't even have caught him if they'd had a slo-mo replay, Old Trafford knew it was witnessing the arrival of a natural heir to their most iconic shirt number. So enthralled were the fans with their new recruit, so enthused were they by his tackling, that within seven months they'd voted him United's player of the season.

Named after Ronaldo Reagan, Cristiano Ronaldo dos Santos Aveiro hails from the island of Madeira, a place so hilly that you have to be good at controlling a ball just to stop it rolling away into the sea. The prodigy moved to the Portuguese mainland when he was just 15 in exchange for a new kit for the island team, and by 17 he was flying down the wing for Sporting Lisbon. It was Carlos Queiroz who tipped off Alex Ferguson to a player of such rich potential, though the boy's dad was receiving phone calls from scouts almost as soon as he could walk. And after United played a friendly to inaugurate Sporting's new stadium (it had been built for Euro 2004), the clamour to sign him from other quarters within United became deafening.

"On the flight back from Portugal," Fergie remembers, "all the players were coming up to me and saying: 'Gaffer, you've got to sign that

kid, he was just incredible.'" So Ferguson did sign him, though not before Sporting had raised the asking price to £12.24 million. Not a bad return on a set of shirts.

What the United manager got for his money was almost the complete article. Big, muscular and brist, Ronaldo is built like a modern rugby union flanker. All that physique to the most nimble feet outside of the Royal Ballet and you have some prospect, particularly as he's almost as good in the air as he is on the ground. What's more, he is brave and not remotely fazed by the close attentions of the Premiership's hard men; he never fails to want the ball, never hides when the going gets tough, never goes missing in times of crisis.

In short, Ronaldo is a man for the big occasion, as he proved in the FA Cup final at the end of his first year in Manchester, when he tormented Millwall with his extraordinary range of flamboyant skills, scoring twice and inspiring a slew of "David Villa?" T-shirts.

During that first term, the United management had to work hard to eradicate a youthful tendency to overindulge in his step-overs, not to mention a penchant for the theatrical whenever he was tackled anywhere near the opposition penalty box. But even though the English language and an understated dress sense have so far proved beyond him, on the football field he is a prodigious learner. In subsequent seasons at Old Trafford he has become more of a team player, a better crosser of the ball, more adept at bringing colleagues into play. And all this without for a moment forgetting how to do a variety of step-over that the former United manager Ron Atkinson christened the "ballet step".

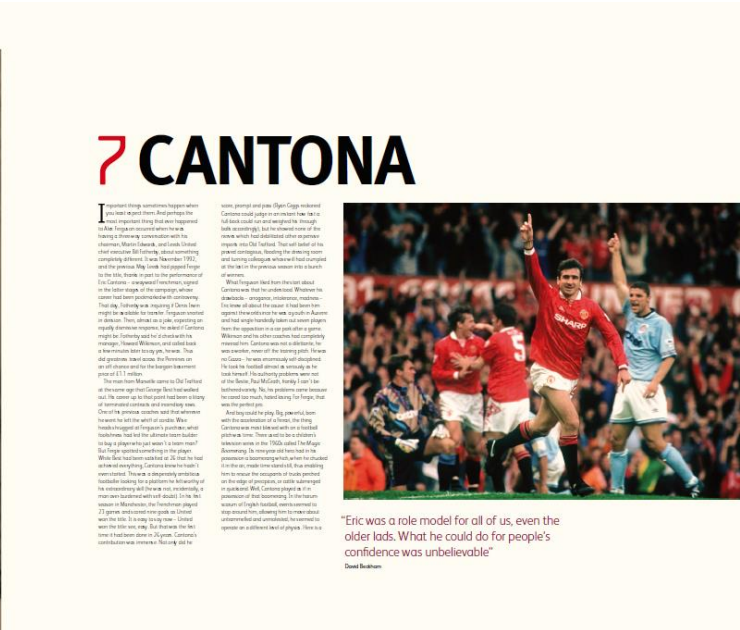
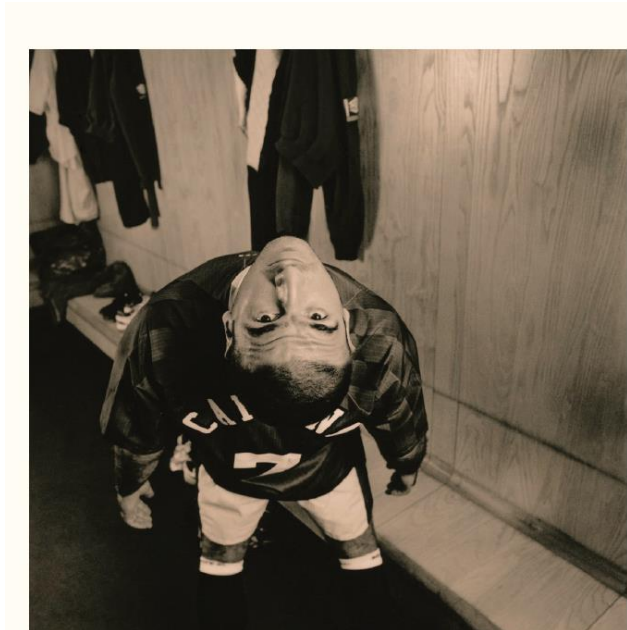
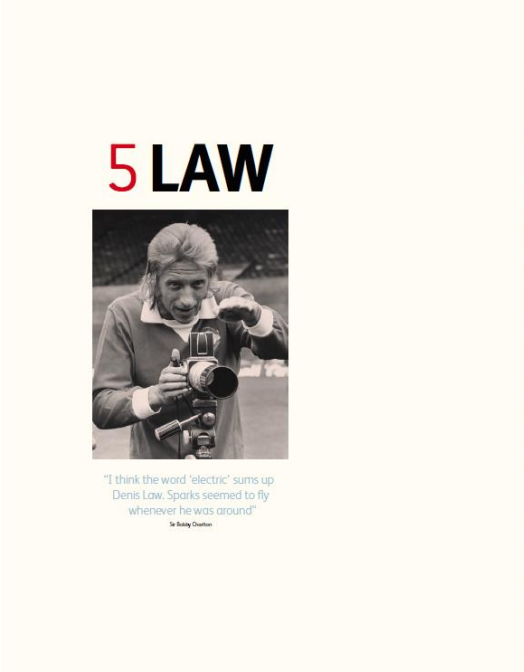
Indeed, as the Portuguese winger has moved into his twenties, that number seven shirt is increasingly seen on the backs of a burgeoning fan base. And if he continues to show such single-minded dedication to improve his game, there are few who would argue with his compatriot Luis Figo's prediction that one day Ronaldo will be the finest player in the world.

'There are few who can argue with his compatriot Luis Figo's prediction that one day he will be the finest player in the world'

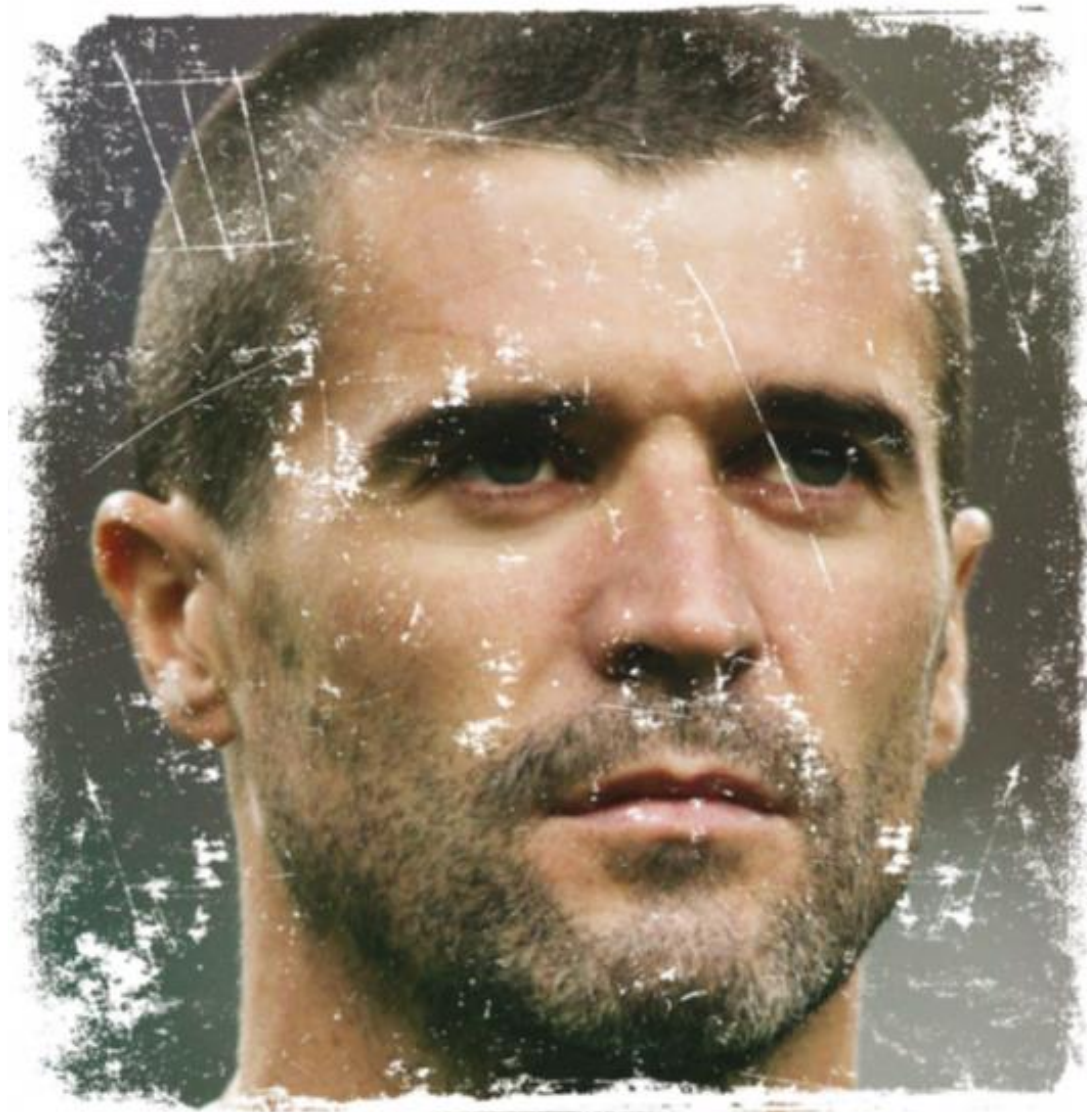


"The Official United Opus is the biggest football book ever produced, but it is way more than just a book. It is a celebration of a football club established by a group of railway workers in 1878 and their incredible journey to the top of world football. It is the ultimate tribute to Manchester United."
Soccerbible









KEANE

"Roy Keane is a super footballer.
He influences his team and the crowd.
He is a football legend"

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9 GIGGS

It was the night of the ball at the University of Toronto in 2005. With 80 minutes to go, asked who he most admired in football, "Tony Danza," the defender replied irreverently. "Spam Grogan. He was my hero as a kid and he's my hero now. No doubt about it. He's the last guy on the club." It was a reference to Wayne Rooney, Sir Alex Ferguson and Paul Scholes.

"Yeah, definitely," Bruce is adamant. "Grogan's different. Mostly due to his lack of 'Groggy'." Bruce is right there: reality, not fantasy. He's been through the deep waters of Celtic, the pain, Damien Duff the man, but no contemporary winger quite shares Grogan's capacity to have a defender back-peddling in such a strong sense; no one has his historian's ability to stand ground.

It's a matter of energy he built with, but no one has quite his mixture of shrewdness, self-awareness, that sense to be caused by happenstance. More than an impression by happenstance in form, Bruce is a man of form. He's a man who knows he has to do his job on British football's finest footballer, by no means Grogan remains composed.

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Every Northern

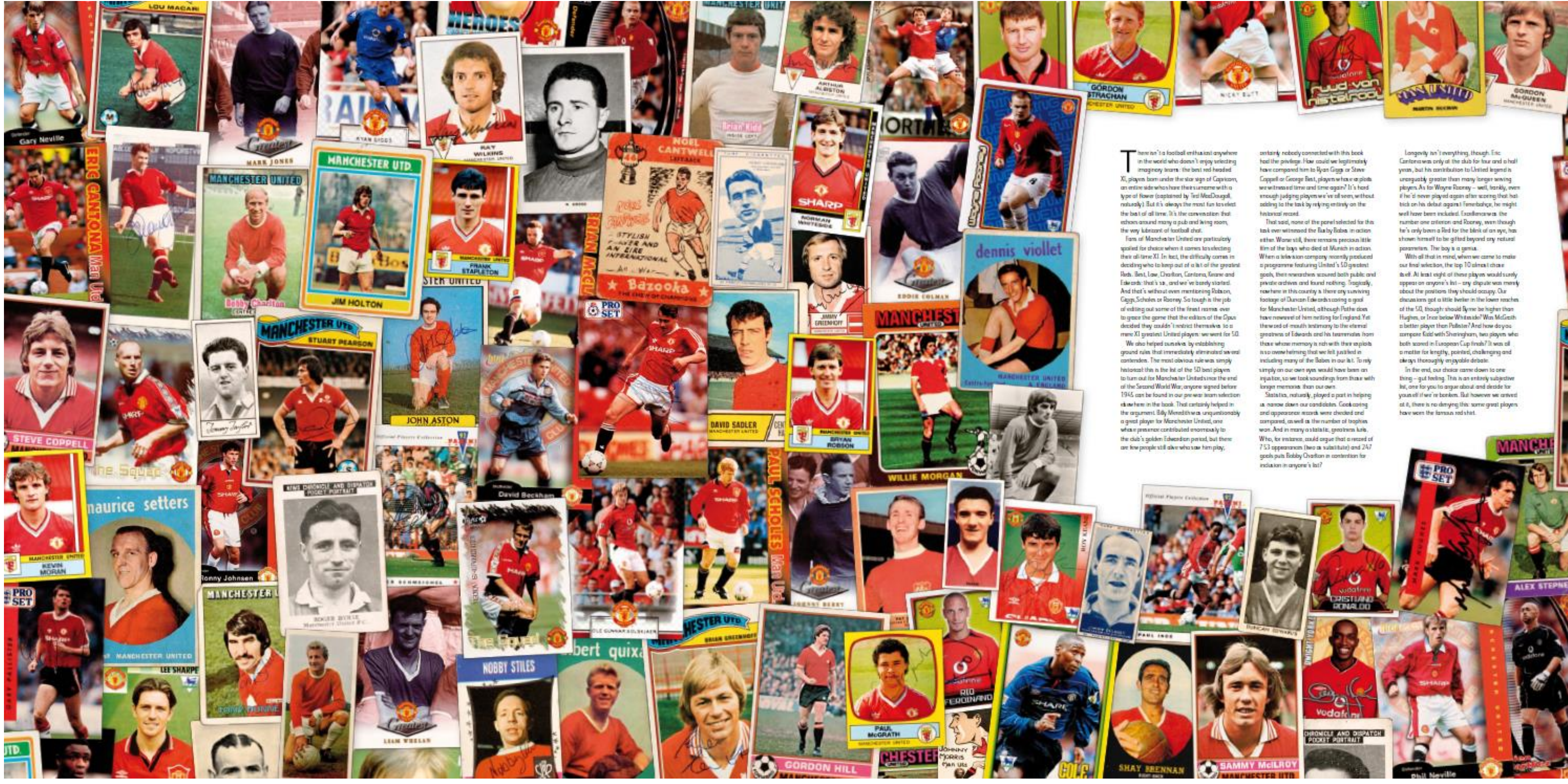


EDW4RDS

"When I used to hear Muhammad Ali proclaim to the world that he was the greatest, I used to smile. You see, the greatest of them all was an English footballer named Duncan Edwards"

Jenny Murphy





There isn't a football enthusiast anywhere in the world who doesn't enjoy selecting imaginary teams: the best red-headed XI, players born under the star sign of Capricorn, an entire side who have their surname with a type of flower (captained by Tini MacDougal, naturally). But it's always the most fun to select the best of all time. It's the conversation that echoes around many a pub and living room, the very lubricant of football chat.

Fans of Manchester United are particularly spoiled for choice when it comes to selecting their all-time XI. In fact, the difficulty comes in deciding who to keep out of a list of the greatest Reds. Bert Low, Charlton, Cantona, Keane and Edwards, that's six, and we've barely started. And that's without even mentioning Robson, Giggs, Scholes or Rooney. So tough is the job of editing out some of the finest names ever to grace the game that the edition of the *Globe* decided they couldn't resist themselves to a mere XI greatest United players: we went for 50.

We also helped ourselves, by establishing ground rules that immediately eliminated several contenders. The most obvious rule was simply historical: this is the list of the 50 best players to turn out for Manchester United since the end of the Second World War; anyone signed before 1945 can be found in our pre-war team selection elsewhere in the book. That certainly helped in the argument. Billy Meredith was unquestionably a great player for Manchester United, one whose presence contributed enormously to the club's golden Edwardian period, but there are few people still alive who saw him play, certainly nobody connected with this book had the privilege. How could we legitimately have compared him to Ryan Giggs or Steve Coppell or George Best, players whose exploits we witness at first and time again? It's hard enough judging players we've all seen, without adding to the task by relying entirely on the historical record.

That said, none of the panel selected for this task ever witnessed the *Flakie Babes* in action either. Worse still, there remains precious little film of the boys who died at Munich in action. When a television company recently produced a programme featuring United's 50 greatest goals, their researchers scoured both public and private archives and found nothing. Tragically, nowhere in this country is there any surviving footage of Duncan Edwards scoring a goal for Manchester United, although Pathe does have a renewal of him netting for England. Yet the end of mouth testimony to the eternal greatness of Edwards and his teammates from those whose memory is rich with their exploits is so overwhelming that we felt justified in including many of the Babes in our list. To rely simply on our own eyes would have been an injustice, so we took soundings from those with longer memories than our own.

Statistics, naturally, played a part in helping us narrow down our candidates. Goalscoring and appearance records were checked and compared, as well as the number of trophies won. And in many a statistic, goalscorer Luis Whoo, for instance, could argue that a record of 753 appearances (two as substitute) and 247 goals puts Bobby Charlton in contention for inclusion in anyone's list?

Longevity isn't everything, though. Eric Cantona was only at the club for four and a half years, but his contribution to United legend is unquestionably greater than many longer-serving players. As for Wayne Rooney - well, hardly, even if he's never played again after scoring that hat-trick on his debut against Tottenham, he might well have been included. Ferdinand was the number one criterion and Rooney, even though he's only been a Red for the blink of an eye, has shown himself to be gifted beyond any natural parameters. The boy is a genius.

With all that in mind, when we came to make our final selection, the top 10 almost chose itself. At least eight of these players would surely appear on anyone's list - any dispute was merely about the positions they should occupy. Our discussion got a little livelier in the lower reaches of the 50, though should Flynn be higher than Hughes, or Irate below Whiteside? Was McGrath a better player than Pollack? And how do you compare Kidd with Sheringham, two players who both scored in European Cup finals? It was all a matter for lengthy, pointed, challenging and always thoroughly enjoyable debate.

In the end, our choice came down to one thing - gut feeling. This is an entirely subjective list, one for you to argue about and decide for yourself if we're broken. But however we arrived at it, there is no denying this: some great players have worn the famous red shirt.







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