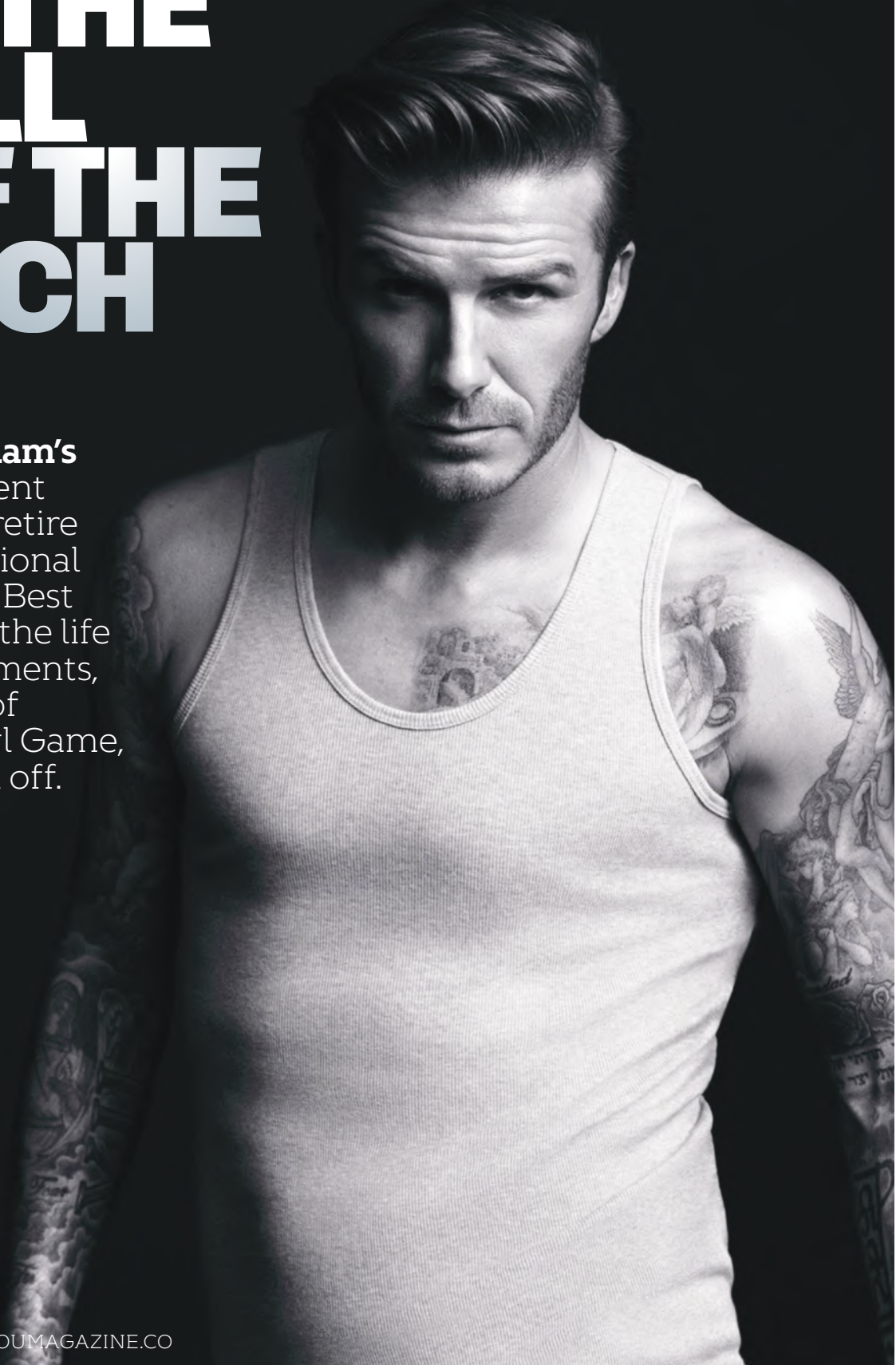
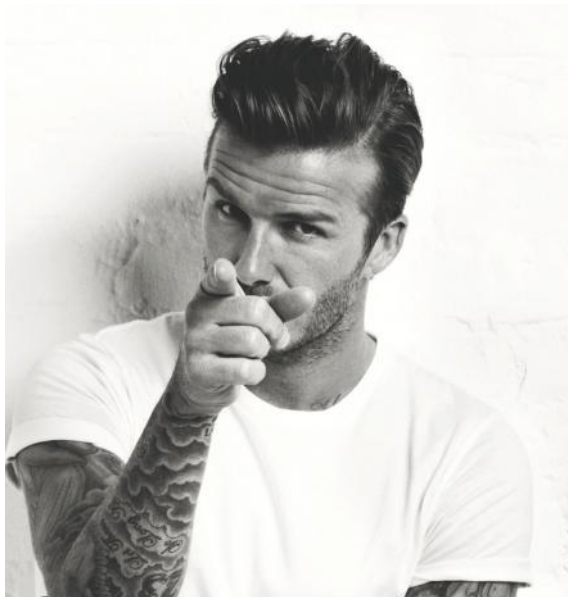


ON THE BALL OFF THE PITCH

With **David Beckham's** announcement that he is to retire from professional football, The Best You looks at the life and achievements, of this hero of The Beautiful Game, on-pitch and off.





One of the world's greatest footballers, fashion icon, sex symbol, "Golden Balls", England football team captain, half of Posh and Becks, loving father and all round decent guy, David Beckham has had a massive effect on the world far beyond his home turf of football.

The association of his iconic brand with a product guarantees to raise its profile, and it's no surprise that clubs have clamoured to sign him as much for his effect on their balance sheets as his particular brand of on-pitch magic.

Counting Tom Cruise, Katie Homes and Elton John among his friends, Beckham remains a loving family man, dedicated to the happiness and safety of his wife and four children. He is a truly international figure and is often called the world's most famous footballer.

So how did he achieve this amazing life? And where did he come from?

Born in 1975 in Leytonstone and growing up in Chingford, David Beckham had a very ordinary beginning.

His dad, Ted, a heating engineer, instilled in him his passion for football. "As soon as I could walk," David says, "he made sure I had a football to kick." Growing up happy and safe with his hairdresser mum

MAIN PICTURE
With smouldering good looks and a very talented right foot, Beckham makes success look easy

ABOVE AND BELOW
David Beckham had loads of experience in front of the camera

Sandra, his dad and extended family allowed that passion to flourish.

Ted also planted the dream of being a professional footballer. Both parents loved Manchester United and they often took him to Old Trafford to watch United games. No surprise that from an early age, David was telling everyone, "I'm going to play football for Manchester United."

As a boy David played football above his level with kids twice his age at Chase Lane Park, near his school.

"I don't know if it was because I was good or because they could kick me up in the air and I'd come back for more, but they always turned up on the doorstep after school."

His dad recognised his talent and when David was around 8 years old, he sacrificed his own playing to coach his son, taking David for midweek training at Wadham Lodge, a neglected old ground near his home. David recalls:

"...the changing rooms were pure Sunday League: mud on the floor, really dingy lighting and the water dribbling out of cold showers. Then there was the smell of the liniment that players used to rub on their legs. It would hit you as soon as you walked in. There were floodlights – just six lamps on top of poles – but at least once every session they'd go out and somebody would have to run

and put coins in a meter that was in a cupboard just inside the changing room door."

His dad's coaching was unrelenting: "After everybody else had finished and was in the social club, I'd stand on the edge of the penalty area and chip a dead ball towards goal. Every time I hit the bar was worth 50p extra pocket money from my dad that week. And just as important, a pat on the back."

Also at the club, David joined in the five-a-side sessions his father played in – meaning that again he was playing above his level. This instilled resilience as well as enthusiasm.

"I was so excited to be out there playing with the rest of them – these grown men – that I took whatever I had coming. Dad warned me that I had to be prepared to get a bit roughed up now and again. If he'd been running around telling people not to tackle me all evening, it would have been pointless me being there in the first place."

His dad made sure David enjoyed the play, and allowed him to develop his style. This is an important factor – David loves football because it is associated with that great emotional reward – of being able to be who you truly are.

All the while David kept his eyes focussed on what he wanted. "What kept me going was the idea that, eventually,



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At their wedding, David was terrified of giving the groom’s speech, and he describes himself as “shy” when younger



I’d get the call I’d been waiting for ever since I’d first kicked the ball” – to play for Manchester United.

When the call came, David was ready. He was talent scouted by Manchester United at 14 years old. It was a dream come true.

In Manchester he was surrounded by exceptional fellow players, including Gary Neville, Ryan Giggs, Paul Scholes, Nicky Butt, Ben

Thornley and Chris Casper. He had no idea that the youth team was special, but Alex Ferguson did, saying: “If we don’t get a first-team player out of this lot, we might as well all pack up and go home.”

David was now among players as excellent as himself. Manchester United won the Youth Team Cup in 1992, and was runner up to Leeds in 1993.

Aged 17, Beckham finally

ABOVE

David is as much of a family man as he is a footballer

BELOW

David and his boys in LA Galaxy gear

got to play in the last 17 minutes of a first team match. “I was so excited I jumped off the bench and cracked my head on the roof of the dugout: a great start to a first-team career.”

In 1994 he scored his first goal for the club in an international against Galatasaray. With humour and modesty he recalls that Eric Cantona came over to congratulate him. “He was having to fight me off in the end. I just wouldn’t let go of him. I’ve scored a goal and I’m celebrating with Eric Cantona.”

In 1996 he was on the team that won the FA CUP and finished top of the league, making Manchester United the only team to win the Double twice.

Then, something special happened. At the opening of the 96 / 97 season, Beckham scored his famous 60 yard goal against Wimbledon from his own half. For him, years of learning to strike the ball hard meant this was just an “ordinary” kick, but it propelled him to stardom. He says of the fame it brought him, “When my foot struck that ball, it kicked open the door to the rest of my life at the same time.”

Beckham’s life since has been fascinating. His marriage to Victoria Adams aka Posh Spice created the most glamorous couple in Britain, possibly the world. Yet their

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first date (after he'd finally plucked up the courage to ask her out) ended in their being thrown out of an abandoned Chinese restaurant when they tried to order drinks without food.

It's a fascinating reminder that excellence at one thing doesn't mean universal brilliance. At their wedding, David was terrified of giving the groom's speech, and he describes himself as "shy" when younger. Beckham was a bundle of amazing footballing talent, but he was also a normal kid growing to manhood.

Along the way Beckham weathered violent storms. During the 1998 World Cup match against Argentina he was largely blamed for England crashing out of the tournament after being sent off for retaliating to a pat on the head by Argentinian player Simeone. His effigy was hung from lamp-posts in Britain, and his face was published as a dartboard by the Daily Mirror. He received death threats against himself and his family, and even found an intruder in his garden early one morning, standing with arms crossed, staring intimidatingly.

Yet Beckham is resilient. In 1999 he helped his side to win the Treble. At the 2002 World

Cup captaining England against Greece, he won the game with a last minute free kick, becoming the darling of the media and the nation. He made 115 appearances for England and captained them for six years.

He was famously cut above the eye by a flying boot from Alex Ferguson in an argument and in the end, after Manchester United and Becks parted company he went on to play for Real Madrid and Los Angeles Galaxy, becoming the highest paid footballer in the world.

That said, Beckham is clear, for him it's not about individuals but the team working together. During the post-Argentina years, and later when he felt picked on and isolated by Sir Alex Ferguson for his "film star" attitude, Beckham relied on the team to lift him during matches.

This is how he talks about family, too, saying that the number one role of a father is his family's protection. Beckham is always aware of the bigger unit of which he is a part, and it's this that makes him such a great team player and a great family man.

Perhaps it's ironic then that the massive jump in merchandise sales to \$600 million at Real Madrid between

” He received death threats against himself and his family, and even found an intruder in his garden early one morning, standing with arms crossed, staring.

2003-2007 was largely attributed by Forbes magazine to this one man's presence. The same effect was noted at LA Galaxy in 2007 when their gate receipts reached record levels, and they were able to negotiate a massive shirt sponsorship deal worth \$20 million – largely thanks to his arrival.

Looking back over the life of the boy from Chingford coached by his dad to strike a ball hard and accurately, what are the ingredients that make him such a star?

Strong emotion is definitely part of the mix. The love he felt for the game as a boy, the tears he shed when the talent scout called for him, the passion he feels on the pitch that sets him on fire all tell of that. His reliance on a team – or a family – to support him is another ingredient. Add to that resilience, too.

Less obviously, he has recently revealed he suffers from OCD, needing to put things in neat lines or in pairs. Repetitive dedication to an activity leads to excellence, and you can't help wondering, did OCD feed into his desire to get those kicks absolutely right on the pitch?

These are all ingredients of what makes Beckham who he is. Sprinkle in film star looks and a celebrity wife... these are all factors.

But there is something else, too. David Beckham is authentic. You get the feeling that what you see is what you get.

And what you see is an honest, straightforward guy who sometimes makes mistakes - but also has the most extraordinary skills. That makes for someone special, and someone supremely likeable – and admirable, too.

At The Best You we salute David Beckham – and wish you The Best – whatever you do next! **b**

This article was based on excerpts of David Beckham's book, My Side.

BELOW
The Beckhams enjoy having a day out





A BECKS RETRO SPECTIVE



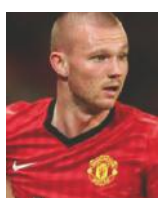
DR. GARY F. RUSSELL
TALENT STRATEGIST

Beckham's strategy means he will go down as the most influential person in popularising football here in The United States. The beginning signs of that strategy are occurring now. We have a couple of new football clubs here that would make you feel as if you're in England. The crowds are singing, the stadiums are great and the advertising has increased because Beckham has made everything cool and hip. Other superstars, like (Thierry) Henry are following his lead and realising that it's a good thing to finish out their careers here. What the world needs to know and is constantly trying to figure out is why is he so good. Why is he so different? What makes him the greatest marketing tool in the world? He's a good-looking lad and he has a beautiful wife, but there must be more to it. There are plenty of people out there who are pretty good-looking, but he has been successful in virtually every sphere – football, fatherhood, corporately, and in his demeanour. Beckham has a brand, so he gives life to anything he touches. His only concern is to carefully choose what it is that he's touching so that he can control the development of whatever it is he's involved in, because he has that magnetism. He is a winner. Now we need to figure out why.



TIM LOVEJOY
BROADCASTER

I spent a few months with David Beckham making a documentary about him after he moved to Real Madrid. It's hard to say a bad word about him as he was a genuinely nice guy with a huge desire to play football. He loved his life, especially his job. He had dreamed about being a big star in football so when he was given the chance he worked hard at achieving the status he desired. Beckham's work ethic has been well documented. While other players went home after training, Beckham put in the extra hours. It clearly paid off as he has had a career most footballers could only dream of. Incredible football career, but I don't think we've heard the last of him.



RYAN TUNNICLIFFE
**FOOTBALLER FOR
MANCHESTER UNITED**

As a youngster growing up supporting Manchester United, David Beckham was one of the players I looked up to. There is no doubt about that. He has had an unbelievable career that I'm sure even in his wildest dreams he would never have anticipated when he first started to play football. One of the things I admire most about him is that no matter how many trophies he won, how many caps he had or how much money he'd earned his passion, his commitment and desire to continually improve never faded. These types of qualities have made him one of the all-time greats of world football.



What makes David Beckham one of the greatest soccer players the world has ever seen? It is an exquisite balance of mind, body, and soul, working in perfect harmony. Beckham's mental strength has been tested on numerous occasions by adversity, including serious injuries, and he describes his red card against Argentina in the 1998 World Cup as the lowest point of his life. He was vilified by both the English press and the fans and was widely blamed for England's defeat. During this time he received numerous death threats, and did not feel safe for over three years. Beckham's humble view of a 'round world', where success at the top is always followed by failure at the bottom, was his solid foundation. He knew that success would inexorably follow failure as long as he remained grounded by the three qualities he considered to be the most valuable. They were belief, strength, and family. An example of his belief is his expression 'impossible is nothing.' His strength flows from his application. One of his previous managers, Alex Ferguson, stated, "David Beckham is Britain's finest striker of a football, not because of god-given talent, but because he practices with a relentless application that the vast majority of less-gifted players wouldn't contemplate." The importance that Beckham places on his family to his success is also legendary. Beckham loves drawing and painting, and it is clear from his interviews that he has highly developed visualisation skills, which are essential for all top athletes. He has over twenty tattoos, and he has chosen them carefully. Each makes a visual statement that resonates deeply with him. They include tattoos relating to his family, and intriguingly, an angel on his right shoulder, with the words 'In the face of adversity.'

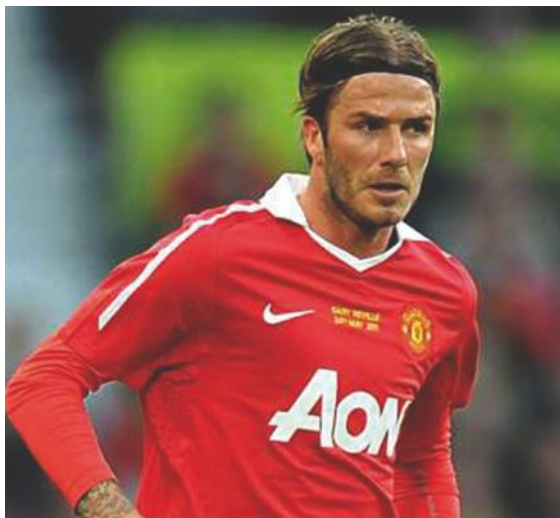
Beckham's career has had more than its share of ups and downs, and my vote for the one quality that that makes him such a special person is the way that he has handled adversity. He has demonstrated role model mastery of the importance of belief, strength, and family to his success.



David Beckham is extremely smart to retire at the top of his game. I believe that by doing so, the strength of his brand has become an even stronger commodity. As a world class, global icon who has carried the British flag wherever he has played, Beckham's brand possibilities are endless. He could continue to take on 'ambassador' roles, as he did for the London 2012 Olympics. He could continue to sign endorsement deals; his latest signings to Sainsbury's, Burger King and Samsung, are examples of this. He could also think about signing a club, putting his name to more academies, launching more charities, entering onto the board of sports committees and association internationally. He could do more partnerships with Victoria with their own clothing lines and fragrances. Equally he could write (or ghost write) another autobiography, produce a movie about his life, star in Hollywood blockbusters, act as an agent or manager for his boys, who are also developing their own brands. There is talk of him exercising his rights to buy an MLS franchise, Times Warner Cable were reportedly trying to lure him to one of their new TV sports networks and of course let's not forget the possibility of a Knighthood. As a brand specialist I think that 'brand Beckham' has only really just started. This move to end at the top is strategic and brilliant. Worth an estimated \$300 million, his next move could prove to see him double that and be noted down in history as one of the greatest sports brands ever.



BECKS AT A GLANCE



FOOTBALLING ROLL OF HONOUR

Manchester United

Six premier league championships
Two FA Cups
Won UEFA Champions

Recognised as "UEFA Club Footballer of the Year" in 1999
Scored 62 goals

LA Galaxy

Two straight championships

Paris Saint-Germain

Won the Championship

England

115 appearances

Scored 17 goals

Captain for six years

Real Madrid

Won Spanish, Super Cup

Spanish League

Championship

EARNINGS

The world's highest paid footballer

Estimated at £30.8 million per annum

Has been in the top 10 paid footballers since 1999
Has topped the list for six years

Recently signed £50m five-year deal as ambassador for Chinese Super League



STYLE

Voted one of the world's best dressed men in:

- Daily Mail
- Metro
- MSN
- Complex.com

Has made numerous statements with hairstyles over the years, including the famous floppy fringe, mini mohawk, buzz cut and ponytail. Watch out for future follicle fun! His clothes have also made a stir, including the famous Sarong and the Alice band on his hair. But Beckham looks cool in a suit or in casual gear, and has been a style icon for men for years.

CHARITABLE INTERESTS

- CHOC Children's
- Comic Relief
- Elton John AIDS Foundation
- FC Harlem
- Help for Heroes
- Malaria No More
- mothers2mothers
- National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
- Peace One Day
- Prince's Trust
- Raising Malawi
- Red Cross
- Sport Relief
- UNICEF
- Victoria and David Beckham Charitable Trust

Beckham donated his entire salary at Paris Saint Germain to charity.

OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

Key role in 2012 London Olympic bid
Delivered the Olympic flame by speed boat to London Olympics
Officer of the Order of the British Empire
UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador
Founder of David Beckham Academy football school

Had the film "Bend It Like Beckham" named after his ability to curve the ball

The only English player to score in three World Cups

FAMILY

Married to Victoria Beckham (aka Posh Spice)
Brooklyn (born 1999)
Romeo (born 2002)
Cruz (born 2005)
Harper (born 2011)

