

THE GREAT



SWITCHEROONIE

Twenty Things I Don't Know (About Football)

I suppose in some ways it was a bit of an unfortunate coincidence that I should get kidnapped on the same day as Benny Spinks.

Of course, whoever kidnapped Benny Spinks got quite a good deal, really, as Benny Spinks is worth squillions in ransom money, as everybody knows.

I, however, am worth about fifty pence in ransom money, as the people who kidnapped me didn't know.

Now why, you may ask, should anyone bother to kidnap somebody who was only worth fifty pence in ransom money, when they could have had Benny Spinks?

Well, the truth of the matter was that the people who kidnapped me thought I was Benny Spinks. Only I wasn't Benny Spinks, as Benny Spinks might have told you, only he couldn't, as he'd been kidnapped too – by somebody else.

Now, you might well wonder how it came to be that any self-respecting kidnapper with a modicum of brain should mistake me for Benny Spinks.

And that's where it starts to get complicated.

Personally, I usually have a little lie-down round about now.

In fact, I think I might go and have one.

I'll get back to you later.

Right.

That's better.

Now then.

It all started with the hairdryer.

As far as I am concerned, there are two periods of history: there is BTHD (Before The Hairdryer) and ATHD (After The Hairdryer).

If it hadn't been for the hairdryer, none of this would have happened, and it wasn't even mine. (The dryer that is, though the hair was.)

Before I get on to that though, I had first better tell you what I know about football, as that will be important for later.

Basically I don't know anything about football at all. Except the following.

Here is the list of *Things I Know About Football*:

- 1) It is played with a ball. (And a foot.)
- 2) There is also a field involved. (And some nets.)
- 3) Twenty-two people take part, two of whom are goalkeepers. (More if you count the linesmen and referee.)
- 4) There is something complicated called the Offside Rule.
- 5) Nobody understands it.

- 6) An awful lot of people are football fans. Many of these are fat blokes who eat pies and quite a few of them are also bald blokes.
- 7) A lot of the pies are pork ones, though some of them are kebabs.
- 8) When you play football, you can win, lose or draw. But even when you draw you can still win or lose due to something called Aggregate.
- 9) Aggregate is like the Offside Rule. Nobody understands it.
- 10) Some footballers are famous and marry pop stars and get paid loads of money. But most of them aren't and don't.
- 11) A lot of people want to be footballers. They want to be the sort who get paid loads of money. Nobody wants to be the sort of footballer who nobody's ever heard of and who doesn't get paid loads of money, as that would be stupid.
- 12) When somebody on your team scores a goal, you kiss them.
- 13) When somebody on the other team scores a goal, you thump them when nobody's looking.
- 14) Football is a game of two halves and each half is forty-five minutes long; when somebody gets tired or injured you can bring on a substitute.
- 15) If his team loses, the manager always feels right gutted. When it wins, he is over the moon. But only at the end of the day.
- 16) The referee has red and yellow cards in his pocket. These are good for playing snap with.