

FONZ

...who watched us play against... didn't have the silverware to back up his played attractive, attacking... of that was down to the... of Jimmy Greenhoff, Jimmy was... of Carrona. He was the catalyst that... a difference. In your own little... moments you do wonder what... have happened. I had limited... with Aberdeen and United and it... with Aberdeen and United and it... disappointing I never won a... title with either.

Is it true you ripped up your contract at Oldham because you couldn't play through injury and thus saved a small club a lot of money?

It is true to an extent. I left United on a transfer in 1983 to join Oldham. They got not pay signing-on fees in those days because they were skint. I signed a two-year deal on £300 a week and they paid signing-on fees, so you would get something on your way out. I was due to get £15,000 when my contract ended. I played for Oldham for most of the games for Oldham but I had a couple of muscle injuries and I didn't want people to think I was going up there for a holiday and so I finished in the March. I tore up the original agreement and did a deal with the club. I took about £4,000 instead of £15,000.

Many fans would put you in their best XI of the last 50 years. Who would you choose to play alongside?

Arnold Muhren, definitely. I loved Ray Wilkins too. If he didn't think that a 40-yard pass would reach its target, rather than give away possession he would play a 100-yard pass. He was a phenomenal player and covered a hell of a lot of ground. The crab nickname was nonsense. Steve Coppell would also be in my team. You go through the teams from March to the present day and there are so many outstanding players, so it is hard to choose. I was a big fan of Jaap Stam. I thought he was immense. I would have loved to have had him playing next to me.

Do you know badges were sold around Old Trafford that used to read 'The Fonz is cool, but Buchan's cooler'?

I heard about it (laughs) - I never actually saw one though!

Do you still play the guitar? (Old Trafford Blues, the B-side to the 1976 Cup final song was penned by Buchan)

Yes actually, yeah. I have got Van Gogh's as for music though. Let's leave it at that.

UNITED SCOTS: Martin Buchan with Sir Alex Ferguson in 2013.



New Manchester United wear the 1976-77 FA Cup, see overleaf

Cooler than the

What is the best moment of your career?

I think going back to Wembley for the FA Cup final in 1977 after the disappointment in 1976. We got a wonderful welcome at Manchester Town Hall from the fans after losing to Southampton and Tommy Doc stood up and said: "Never mind, we'll go back and win it next year." We stopped Liverpool winning the treble too. But getting back to the First Division at the first attempt was possibly my proudest moment. When we were relegated I know for a fact there were a couple of clubs looking to take me from Old Trafford. But I thought I was one of the squad that got this club relegated and I'm going to be part of the squad that gets them back up.

Who was the humblest dressing room prankster?

Lou Macari was the resident wind-up merchant, ably abetted by Ashley Grimes. At the training ground I stripped next to Lou for ten years and there was never a dull moment. I remember him getting Gordon Hill to dress up in his tennis whites for an interview after one match. Gordon was a good tennis player and Lou had phoned up pretending to be from a TV company. Gordon fell for it and came down in his whites with his Wilson racket. It was great.

What is the best atmosphere you experienced?

Old Trafford in the two years we came back after relegation was amazing. We trained there on a Friday morning and you could already sense the anticipation for the game on the Saturday. You felt you could go out and give the opposition a two-goal advantage and still beat them. But two international games stand out as well - first for Scotland against Spain (1-1) in Valencia in a Euro 1978 qualifier. There were over 50,000 screaming Spaniards and the atmosphere was electric. But the best was the Wales against Scotland game to qualify for the 1978 World Cup. It should have been played at Wrexham but Wales moved it to Anfield for financial reasons. It backfired really as it was like a Scotland home game. I'd only been on for 17 minutes after replacing Sandy Jardine at right-back. I noticed there was a lot of space in front of me. The ball was played out to me on the right wing and I managed to knock the ball in and Kenny Dalglish headed it home and that finished them off. It also diffused the arguments about the penalty (Joe Jordan's infamous hand-ball).

Do you think United would have won the League had Tommy Docherty stayed?

Possibly. The confidence was high, but we'll never know. You'd like to think that we would have built on what he had created. Unfortunately he got the sack after the affair with the physio's wife. We had a good side.

Who was your hero growing up?

I wanted to model myself on Franz Beckenbauer on Franz Beckenbauer left but I wasn't that good. At the 1988 World Cup he played in midfield and was impetuous, just fantastic. He even played with his arm in a sling in one game.

Who were the best players you played with?

That's a tough one. I played with Law, Best and Charlton at United. They were the European Cup and League-winning side, but I don't really regard them as part of my team as I joined them too late. Of the team the Doc built, Steve Coppell was the best I played with. He had everything - he had brains, intelligence, pace and was brave. Arnold Muhren was another one. He was at Old Trafford towards the end of my career. He could open a tin of beans with that left foot of his - what a player!

And the best players you played against?

I played against Beckenbauer in 1974 in a friendly before the World Cup. A lad called Pietro Aranzese who played for Juventus also stands out. He was a great centre-forward. He was very fast and strong - a real handful. Helmut Haller was a half of a player too. He was the German midfield player pulling the strings for Juventus. They also had a big centre-back, Sandro Salvadore, who was like a fan after heading the ball away miserably.

What was your favourite goal?

I only scored four for United and the one that stands out was from 85 yards against Everton at Old Trafford in 1976. We were losing 1-0 at the time and it was at the Stratford End. Lou Macari passed the ball to me and as I looked up I could see Jimmy Greenhoff at the edge of the box and I wanted to play it in to his feet, but thought the centre-half might read the pass. I was edging closer towards the goal and the crowd were winding me up to have a shot, so I did, and it went in. George Wood's top right-hand corner. It was my most spectacular goal.

