



GIANT-KILLING Hamburg blew their chance to make the promotion play-offs in Germany's second tier, after a 5-1 mauling at home to Sandhausen on the final day

GAMES THAT CHANGED MY LIFE

OWEN HARGREAVES



Bayern Munich 2 Real Madrid 1

May 9, 2001 Champions League semi-final

"I was 20 – until then, everyone had seen me as this Canadian kid who had come from the academy and cost less than a bread roll. I was playing against Luis Figo, the most expensive player in the world at the time. Before the game I thought, 'I'm in trouble here', but you get onto the pitch and it's just football. The most powerful thing I ever experienced in a match was when I took the ball off Roberto Carlos and ran by him. This light went off in my head, like, 'Wow, you can do this'. It changed my career and it made me think, 'I belong here'."

England 0 Portugal 0 (1-3 pens)

July 1, 2006 World Cup quarter-final

"At the time, people in England didn't get to see me play much, because I was in the Bundesliga and often coming on for only 10 or 20 minutes for England. I was in the squad but got loads of stick, and I remember sitting down with 10 Sunday journalists who grilled me about why I was in the side. I told them, 'With the utmost respect, if you guys had done your homework, you wouldn't ask that question. But because you haven't seen me, I accept it'. The World Cup gave me the platform that I had at Bayern. When I played against Portugal, everyone said, 'You did really well'. In the mixed zone after that game, the journos kind of gave me a round of applause. People in England saw me in a different light after that."

Man United 1 Chelsea 1 (6-5 pens)

May 21, 2008 Champions League final

"We had such a great team, the best I ever played in. Sir Alex Ferguson told us, 'This group has the potential to compete for every title this season'. When the final went to penalties, we'd all practised, but you're only confident until you get up there. It definitely didn't help that Ronaldo missed just before me – I thought, 'Oh cheers, Cristiano! You've got to think positively. Physically it's an easy exercise to kick a football from 12 yards, so I tried to trust what I was used to doing... and smashed it in the top bin.'"

Man United 2 Wolves 1

November 6, 2010 Premier League

"I was blessed to have so many incredible moments on a football pitch, but when I returned from my knee injury, I knew I was never going to get back to where I was. Even though I had some issues, I really wanted to play against Wolves and get through 45 minutes, which would have been a start. But I had to come off after 10. That moment was significant, as it showed me how far away I was. I realised, 'I can't reach that level, I can't be that guy any more'. When everything is taken away from you, it's very humbling."

Chris Flanagan

Owen is a pundit for BT Sport, home of the Bundesliga



"SIT DOWN, FIDO!"

Footballers are turning to dogs to help safeguard their homes

There are two things in life that really deter a burglar: Duncan Ferguson, or a huge dog.

In recent years, football's leading stars have increasingly found themselves the targets for criminals – not least thanks to a fixture list that generously tells potential burglars when they'll be away from home.

Sadio Mané's house was ransacked while he played for Liverpool in the Champions League, while Belgium's Jan Vertonghen and Romelu Lukaku have also been robbed. Dele Alli was at home when thieves struck, held at knifepoint as they stole watches and jewellery in May.

Ferguson twice took on crooks who tried to loot his residence, and twice he won. But not everyone can live with Big Dunc.

Instead, Raheem Sterling, Marcus Rashford, Paul Pogba, Jack Grealish and others now own guard dogs. A number of companies specialise in training and selling the canines, including Wales-based A1K9. They have dealt with Premier League players and sold five to Dave Whelan (right), Wigan's owner when they won the FA Cup.

"Would you fancy going through a window if there's something on the other side with 42 teeth smiling at you?" asks Charles Wall, A1K9's top trainer.

"If one of my dogs sees potential violence for its owner or family,

it's going to engage without any commands. A German Shepherd will go from being asleep to being able to work in a couple of seconds.

They'll hear a person 30 yards down the drive." However, stereotypes of a snarling mutt tied up with a big chain are long gone. These dogs are intended to be part of a family, and won't show their 'other' side unless needed.

"Typically, within a week I get a call saying, 'It's like they've always lived here,'" says Wall. "But if they engage, they'll take anyone clean off their feet. You're talking about 35 kilos of dog hitting you at 30mph, chest high."

A top dog can cost £50,000: Wall's clients have also included Dubai royalty and Russian oligarchs. He had to turn down an unnamed legend, though (but was prepared to reveal it was an ex-England captain who played in LA).

"Their PA wanted to speak on their behalf, but if I can't deal with the person who's going to have the dog living with them, I won't do it," insists Wall. "I want to make sure I'm supplying a dog that is adequate for their needs. You've got to train the client, so they know all the commands and feel comfortable with the dog."

"I've had young players who have had the money, but my question is, 'Do you have the time for the dog?' A protection dog is not for everyone."

Chris Sweeney

