

When it was game over, it was difficult to accept': Robert Pires on finding life after football

## Level 1: Elementary / Pre-Intermediate

**Article summary:** The article describes the problems that professional football players may experience when they stop playing and how one player was helped when he met an ex-player who is now a careers expert.

**Time:** 60 minutes

**Skills:** Reading, Speaking, Writing

**Language focus:** Vocabulary

**Materials needed:** One copy of the worksheet per student

### 1. Warmer

- a. The purpose of this activity is to introduce the topic of professional sport. This is a general-knowledge activity, which may encourage some discussion, even argument, among students.

**Key:**

1. True
2. False. *It's not Real Madrid but the true answer is disputed. Sheffield FC in England, is the world's oldest surviving independent open football club: that is, the oldest club not associated with an institution such as a school, hospital or university (founded in 1857).*
3. False. *It is now a stadium in North Korea.*
4. False. *He is English (Jude Bellingham, Real Madrid).*
5. False. *He was 17 years old (Pelé of Brazil).*
6. True. *(Dino Zoff of Italy)*

### 2. Key words

- a. Ask students to do the exercise individually and then compare their answers in pairs or small groups. In the UK, the football season usually lasts from August to May. The word is not used much with other sports, although 'rugby season' and 'cricket season' are used.

**Key:**

- |              |             |
|--------------|-------------|
| 1. retire    | 6. divorced |
| 2. season    | 7. bankrupt |
| 3. career    | 8. teammate |
| 4. advice    | 9. charity  |
| 5. challenge | 10. invest  |

- b. Ask students to work in pairs again, this time to complete the sentences using words from the previous task.

**Key:**

1. career
2. season
3. retire
4. charity
5. bankrupt

### 3. Comprehension check

- a. The answers given are only suggested answers, and students may correctly answer the questions in different ways, e.g., in item 4, they might say, 'career advice' or 'advice about what to do after he retired' or similar.

**Key:**

1. nineteen
2. 1998
3. Villareal
4. advice
5. *because he had no idea what he wanted to do when he retired*
6. 40%
7. *They get divorced.*
8. *charity matches*

### 4. Key language

- a. Ask students to compare their answers in pairs. Then ask them to check their answers in the text.

**Key:**

1. *careers expert*
2. *highest level*
3. *get divorced*
4. *family life*
5. *invest money*

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b. Students use the expressions from task A to complete the sentences.

**Key:**

1. *highest level*
2. *got divorced*
3. *family life*
4. *Investing money*
5. *careers expert*

### 5. Discussion

a. Students discuss the statements related to the article and give their reasons and justifications for each answer, referring to their own experiences or knowledge wherever possible.

### 6. In your own words

a-b. The task could also be done as a homework ask and students could then present their findings to the class.