

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

Level 3: Advanced

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. Note that the word 'navigate' in the headline means 'find your way' in this context. The expression 'hang up your boots' originates in sport and evokes the image of a footballer, for example, hanging up his or her boots on a hook on the wall and never playing again.

Key:

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| 1. transition | 7. miss out |
| 2. hang up your boots | 8. dressing room |
| 3. cross your mind | 9. pundit |
| 4. challenge | 10. charity |
| 5. bankrupt | 11. passionate |
| 6. declining | 12. stubborn |

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

Key:

1. hang up their boots
2. bankrupt
3. miss out
4. stubborn
5. transition

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 1, they may say 'because it was in his blood', 'because it was a big part of his life' or similar.

Key:

1. because it meant everything to him
2. advice on how to change your career
3. because they are focused on playing football
4. because he had no idea what he was going to do when he retired from football
5. They get divorced.
6. Their physical health declines, they miss their friends and their family life is affected.
7. He's a TV pundit and he acts as an ambassador for Arsenal.
8. He asked if he could train with Arsenal.
9. It makes him feel alive.
10. He thinks they are impressive.

4. Key language

- a. Students could be asked to do this exercise individually and then compare their answers in pairs. Note that *at hand* means *available*.

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Key:

1. *to, with*
2. *at*
3. *on*
4. *in*
5. *to*
6. *in*

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

Key:

1. *come to an end*
2. *come to terms with*
3. *plan in advance*
4. *at hand*
5. *a (huge) effect on*
6. *believed in*

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.