

Sir Alex Ferguson retires as Manchester United coach

10th May, 2013



The most successful football coach Britain has ever seen announced his retirement on Wednesday when Sir Alex Ferguson called an end to his 26 years in charge of Manchester United, one of the world's footballing powers. Sir Alex is perhaps the most successful coach in any British sport. He brought unparalleled success to his club, winning 38 trophies during his reign. In a statement he said: "The decision to retire is one that I have thought a great deal about and one that I have not taken lightly. It is the right time. It was important to me to leave an organisation in the strongest possible shape and I believe I have done so." He added: "I must pay tribute to my family. Their love and support have been essential."

Twitter said the news of Sir Alex's retirement received four times more mentions than news of the death of Margaret Thatcher last month. The top names in football were quick to pay homage to the legendary manager. David Beckham tweeted: "Without him, I would never have achieved what I have done in my career...I am truly honoured to have been guided by the greatest manager in football." FIFA president Sepp Blatter tweeted: "His achievements in the game place him without doubt as one of the greats." UEFA president Michel Platini described Ferguson as a "visionary" who "has made a massive contribution to football". His successor has an exceedingly tough act to follow.

Sources: *The Guardian* / *The Daily Mirror* / *BBC*

Writing

Soccer is the best game in the world, although many people disagree. Compare and contrast soccer with a sport of your choice.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

successful / retirement / footballing powers / trophies / reign / pay tribute / essential / tweeted / legendary / achieved / visionary / contribution / greats / tough act to follow

True / False

- The world's most successful soccer coach retired on Wednesday. T / F
- The coach won an amazing 26 trophies in 38 years. T / F
- The coach said that it was the right time for him to retire. T / F
- The coach paid tribute to the essential role played by his family. T / F
- Sir Alex's retiring saw more tweets than Margaret Thatcher's death. T / F
- David Beckham said Sir Alex was the second greatest manager ever. T / F
- FIFA's president said Sir Alex is one of soccer's greats. T / F
- The article said his successor would be a hard act to follow. T / F

Synonym Match

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------|
| 1. announced | a. without equal |
| 2. in charge of | b. unquestionably |
| 3. unparalleled | c. crucial |
| 4. lightly | d. extremely |
| 5. essential | e. managing |
| 6. homage | f. mentored |
| 7. guided | g. huge |
| 8. without doubt | h. respect |
| 9. massive | i. made public |
| 10. exceedingly | j. carelessly |

Discussion – Student A

- Who has been your greatest guide / coach?
- In what sport would you like to be a coach?
- Which team or player would you like to coach?
- Who are your top three sporting greats?
- Is doing a sports coaching degree better than doing a business degree?
- What would a "visionary" do in football?
- Is soccer / football the world's greatest game?
- What questions would you like to ask Sir Alex Ferguson?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. called an | a. one of the greats |
| 2. He brought unparalleled | b. tribute to my family |
| 3. I have thought a great | c. times more mentions |
| 4. I must pay | d. act to follow |
| 5. Their love and support | e. success to his club |
| 6. received four | f. deal about... |
| 7. pay homage | g. end to his 26 years in charge |
| 8. ...without doubt as | h. to the legendary manager |
| 9. made a massive | i. have been essential |
| 10. an exceedingly tough | j. contribution to football |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you hope to achieve before you retire?
- What do you know about Sir Alex Ferguson and Manchester United?
- What does it take to be a successful coach?
- Do you have what it takes to be a good coach?
- Who do you think is the greatest ever coach?
- Which is the better word, coach (USA) or manager (UK)?
- How amazing is it Sir Alex led one of the world's top teams for so long?
- What is essential for you to be successful?

Spelling

- nodcnaeu his retirement
- He brought lprleadaenlu success to his club
- 38 shrptoie
- In a nsemetatt he said...
- pay ietrubt to my family
- Their love and support have been tlseienasa
- four times more enosmnit
- the ngyeelard manager
- His cnhtveseaeim in the game
- made a massive rcntbuoiotni
- His usossrce
- an ydnilgecxee tough act to follow

Answers – Synonym Match

1. i	2. e	3. a	4. j	5. c
6. h	7. f	8. b	9. g	10. d

Role Play

Role A – Soccer lover

You think walking is the best sport in the world. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their sport. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): baseball, tennis or cycling.

Role B – Baseball lover

You think baseball is the best sport in the world. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their sport. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): soccer, tennis or cycling.

Role C – Cycling lover

You think cycling is the best sport in the world. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their sport. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): baseball, tennis or soccer.

Role D – Tennis lover

You think tennis is the best sport in the world. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their sport. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): baseball, soccer or cycling.

Speaking - Sport

Rank these and share your rankings with your partner. Put the best at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------|
| • football / soccer | • cricket |
| • baseball | • wrestling |
| • cycling | • basketball |
| • tennis | • archery |

Answers – True False

a	F	b	F	c	T	d	T	e	T	f	F	g	T	h	F
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.