



Sanchez makes his La Liga bow against Valencia

NO HAND? NO PROBLEM...

Real Zaragoza's one-handed striker, Alex Sanchez, on dealing with his disability, being a role model and playing in goal

You've just made your first-team debut for Zaragoza against Valencia. Are you surprised at how quickly things have happened?

No, it's something I've been working towards. A few of the first-teamers are out with injury so it's understandable the coach has turned to players like me in the reserves.

You were born with just one hand. Has that held you back at all?

Quite the opposite. I started playing when I was five and then I played for a local team before joining Zaragoza. It's not something I've ever focused on and it hasn't restricted me. There are no such things as limitations, only the ones you want to put on yourself.

Has it made you even more determined to succeed?

No. I've always wanted to make a career in football and that's what's always driven me.

What response have you had from your team-mates?

Everyone's been great. The first-team players have made me feel part of the team. The transition's been really easy and I'm very grateful to them for that.

Does your disability affect the way you play?

No. I'm a centre-forward and it's never been an issue on the pitch. I even play in goal whenever I have a kickabout with my mates!

Have you had any comments from opposing players?

I have, but it's no big deal. All the same, people know it's something you shouldn't joke about and the older I've got the less problems I've had.

Do you feel as if you're a role model for handicapped people?

Obviously that's not something I set out to be but if I can be an example for others to follow and I can help other kids achieve things, then great. We played Malaga in the cup the other week and a handicapped kid came up to speak to me. It was a lovely moment. I think I was more excited about it than he was.



Try this...

CLEATSKINS

Here at FFT Towers, we don't really like the idea of wearing our mud-caked, sweat-stained football boots to the pub. Yet it seems many Sunday League style icons (you know, the type who insist on wearing their replica shirt over their coats) think otherwise. That's the only way we can explain the launch of Cleatskins: a slipper-style rubber mould that slides on the underside of your football boots, transforming them into all-terrain "street shoes".

"We created Cleatskins to help athletes enjoy their favourite sports stylishly while saving time and money," says Rik Kay, president of Cleatskins (they call boots 'cleats' in the US). "They improve mobility and safety on concrete." Yes, with these bad boys (\$24.95) you're less likely to do yourself a mischief while walking down the street in your studs. As you do.

Find out more at cleatskins.com



NAMING AND SHAMING

It was recently discovered that Fabio derives from the Fava bean and Capello is the Italian for hat, making the Italian Don a 'beanie hat'. After this hilarious discovery, we had to find out what the names of other football folk mean...

WAYNE ROONEY

In terms of social standing, Rooneys are in the bottom four percent. Wayne Rooney literally means 'the wagon-building descendant of the champion'. Broadly speaking, an underachiever.

BOBBY CHARLTON

Robert means famous, Charlton is the poor inhabitant of a town, making the knight of '66 a famous peasant.

PETR CECH

Petr from Peter 'the rock' and Cech from Czech, or 'from Bohemia'. So Petr Cech means 'Bohemian rock', or, alternatively, 'Freddie Mercury'.



TERRY VENABLES

Terry Venables translates literally as 'the who has power over the tribe at the hunting ground'. Useful for matches against Wimbledon in the early '90s.

KEVIN DOYLE

Handsome and beloved dark stranger. A kind of Irish Batman.

JAVIER ZANETTI

Javier Zanetti means 'bright little John', making the Argentina and Inter stalwart either one of Nottingham's finest merry men or a well-kept public convenience. You decide.

CESC FABREGAS

'The Frenchman from Barcelona'. Explaining both why Arsene Wenger signed him and why the cheese-eating surrender monkey hasn't won anything for four years.

JIMMY BULLARD

'He who supplants the baldy'. Bullard derives from the hairless patch on a monk's head. Expect Real Madrid to swoop for the 'new Zidane' any time soon.

DAMIEN DUFF

Literally 'to tame the dark'. Like Darth Vader, but with more niggly groin strains and ankle injuries.

DARREN HUCKERBY

Great knob settlement. Say no more.

