



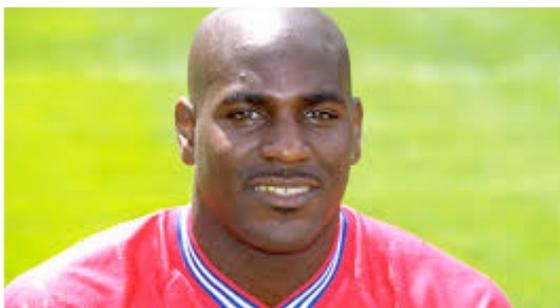
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**LIFE  
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# THE BEST IN THE WORLD

**F**ootball has often been described as the beautiful game. Liverpool FC have certainly celebrated that beauty in the way they have played the game these past two years. Champions of Europe in 2019, with an unforgettable 4-0 win over Barcelona in the semi-final, on an evening of pure excitement at Anfield. Champions of the world 2019, beating Flamengo of Brazil in the final in Qatar. Champions of England 2020, partly due to an unbeaten run of 44 league games, spanning January 2019 to February 2020. Incredible successes, but how was all this achieved?



Guiding that success has been manager Jurgen Klopp. He has earned a stellar reputation for building teams who play fast, exciting and entertaining football. His start in football management came at the age of 34 at Mainz 05 in Germany, where he had spent his entire playing career. He took Mainz from the bottom of the second tier of German football and led them to promotion to the Bundesliga for the first time in the club's history. Seven years at Borussia Dortmund followed, where he lifted silverware five times, breaking several records on the way to two German League titles. Then in 2015, In his first press conference



as Liverpool manager, he stated his intention to win major trophies for Liverpool within four years. True to his word, the Champions League, UEFA Supercup and World Club Cup trophies came to reside in the Anfield trophy cabinet in 2019.

That was not his only noteworthy statement on his first day in English football. At that first press conference as Liverpool manager in 2015 he also said, “We have to change from doubters to believers. Now.” Belief is something that is deeply important to Klopp. Not only in terms of belief

being a necessary element of the winning mentality in sports, Klopp speaks openly about his belief in Jesus Christ as being central to all he does and achieves in life. “To be a believer, but not to want to talk about it - I do not know how it would work! If anyone asks me about my faith, I give information. Not because I have claim to be any sort of missionary. But when I look at me and my life - and I take time for that every day - then I feel I am in sensationally good hands. I find it a pity if other people lack this sense of security - although they don’t know



it, of course, because otherwise they would probably look for it.”

He has managed some of the best players in the world, such as African Footballer Of The Year Mo Salah and four times Bundesliga top scorer, Robert Lewandowski. Players who are idolised around the world. However, Klopp believes the greatest person in his life is not someone who has ever played the beautiful game.

“The most important person the world has ever known is Jesus Christ. This guy comes into the world with a clear mission and it’s not exactly a walk in the park. He took all our sins on his head and let them nail him to the cross, for us. For me as

a Christian, that’s the most decisive thing that ever happened, obviously, because it changed everything. It has taken a long time for that good news to spread across the globe and admittedly mistakes were made along the way, but I live in the present day. It is the greatest thing that has ever been accomplished. There’s no way we could ever do it and we don’t have to as he has done it for us. That’s a huge, huge comfort.”

Klopp is loved by all of his players. Some of the key, world class players delivering success on the pitch for Liverpool FC also hold the same key, personal beliefs as their manager. Goalkeeper Alisson Becker added to his successes with Liverpool by



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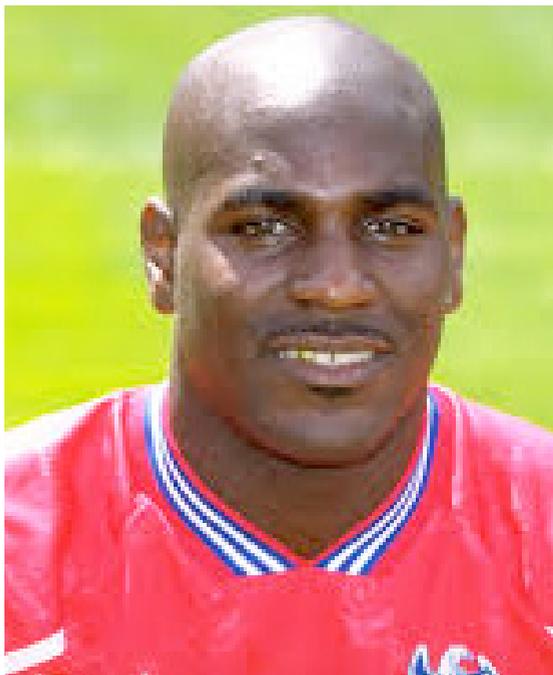


winning the Copa America with Brazil in 2019, conceding only one goal in the tournament. He was also the recipient of World Goalkeeper of the Year award that year. When asked about all his success in 2019, he said “I don’t feel lucky, I feel blessed and grateful for what God is doing in my life and in my family life. I’m not religious, I’m a follower of Christ. When we talk about religion, it’s very much tied to traditions and factors that somewhat tarnish the rich history of Christianity. Jesus is much more than religion.”

In January 2020, Allison had the privilege of baptising Liverpool and Brazil team mate, Roberto Firmino, in his swimming pool. Baptism is a public confession of faith in Jesus Christ and

repentance, which means turning away from our former sinful life and living a new life of forgiveness and love, in a new relationship with God. Just before being immersed in the water, Firmino said: “Jesus is love, I can’t explain it... It is enough to trust, to believe in Him, and experience the Holy Spirit.” Firmino later shared the video of his baptism with his 13million followers on Instagram, expressing: “I give you my failures and I will give you my victories as well. My biggest title is Your love, Jesus! ‘Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.’ A new time.” ■

# LOVING LIFE AFTER FOOTBALL

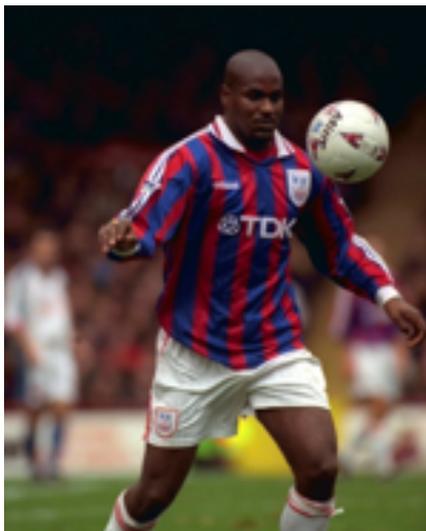


**T**ransfer fees of £millions are commonplace in English football now with the Premiership being the richest league in the world and the Championship the fifth richest league in the world. However, back in 1994 a piece of history was made when over £1million was paid for a teenage football player for the first time.

Bruce Dyer grew up in east end of London. He loved football and started training with Watford at the age of 13. He almost gave up football at 15 when his group of 'friends' got him into music, drinking and girls. Instead, he moved away from home to concentrate on football and Bruce signed his first professional contract at the age of 16. He made his first team debut at 17 and by the age of 18, he had played 38 games and scored 9 goals in the second tier of English

football, prompting Crystal Palace to sign him for £1.25million. By the age of 19 he was playing in the English Premiership, the best league in the world and playing in the England-U21 team with the likes of Rio Ferdinand, Frank Lampard, Jamie Redknapp and Robbie Fowler.

"My dream was to see myself on Match of the Day, buy a Mercedes convertible, buy myself a house and buy my mum a house. I had achieved all that in my teens. Then my life started to spiral out of control after that, as I fell into a depressive state. I didn't understand it as I had all that I thought I wanted, but there was something missing. I looked for it in drink, drugs, women, music and the club scene, but it made me feel more empty inside."



Bruce had succumbed to depression and anxiety. He was self medicating through substance abuse and tried to mask his feelings by absorbing himself in a party lifestyle. This only made his situation worse. His football, relationships and health were suffering. He was broken and looking for answers. "At that time, my brother became a Christian in prison and the transformation in his life blew me away when he got out. He had purpose, joy and lived to make other people's lives better. The change in him and the quality of life he was living was incredible. And here I was, selfishly living to please myself and feeling empty, hurting, all alone and struggling to keep it together. I decided to give my life to Jesus and my life changed for the better, forever. The desire for drink, drugs and womanising left me. I was a new creation, full of life. And so happy."

Bruce went on to play for England-U21s 11 times, scoring 4 goals. In his club career he scored 119 goals in 469 games. Today, he is married

to his wife Janine and they have four children. Together, they run a company called Love Life, which helps to build up communities through sports, teaching, events and festivals. "The greatest challenge for a footballer is life after football. You lose your identity and direction in life. Many experience broken relationships, addiction and debt. Jesus has filled my life with love, peace, joy and a real sense of who I am. He has given me great purpose and I have answered the calling on my life. I work in schools and prisons to help people make the best of their life and introduce them to the one person who can help them live life to the full, Jesus Christ. The greatest thing anyone can do in life is give their life to Jesus, discover who they were created to be and live out the calling in their life. That's where you find love, blessing, peace, joy and real purpose. It is the greatest life and I would recommend it to anybody and everyone." ■



# THE GREATEST COMEBACK IN THE HISTORY OF SPORTS?

Nelson Mandela once said that his greatest regret in life is that he did not become boxing heavyweight champion of the world. That title is one of the most iconic and respected achievements in sport. It is the dream of so many and achieved by so few. Is the story of the current world heavyweight champion the greatest comeback story of all time?

Tyson Luke Fury was born in Manchester in 1988, to Irish parents, John and Amber. He was born three months premature and weighed 1 pound (450 g). His father named him Tyson after the then heavyweight world champion Mike Tyson, as his son showed he was a fighter by clinging on to life. John said, "The doctors



told me there was not much chance of him living. I had lost two daughters in the same way who had been born prematurely.” Now standing at 6’9” tall, Tyson Fury is a two-time heavyweight world champion. He has held the WBC, The Ring magazine, and lineal titles since defeating Deontay Wilder in February 2020; previously he held these titles after defeating Wladimir Klitschko in 2015.

Overcoming the odds of survival from a severely premature birth was not his greatest comeback. His journey to regaining his world heavyweight title is hard to believe, yet true. Seven years after turning professional, Tyson set up a match with the world champion Klitschko in Germany in 2015, which

Fury won by unanimous decision. It was a tremendous achievement, defeating the longest reigning heavyweight champion in history, Klitschko, who had successfully defended his titles 23 times. However, just 10 days later, Fury was stripped of his IBF world title as he was unable to grant a fight with the IBF’s mandatory challenger, Vyacheslav Glazkov. It was the catalyst, amongst other pressures, for Fury to suffer from mental health issues which led to alcoholism, extreme weight gain (9 stone in a year!) and recreational drug use. In 2016, Fury vacated the WBA, WBO, and IBO titles. He said “ I’ve not been in a gym for months. I’ve been going through depression. All the money in the world, fame and glory, means nothing if you’re

not happy. I'm seeing psychiatrists. They say I've got a version of bipolar. I'm a manic depressive. I don't even want to wake up. I hope I die every day. And that's a bad thing to say when I've got three children and a lovely wife isn't it? But I don't want to live anymore. And if I could take me own life – and I wasn't a Christian – I'd take it in a second. I just hope someone kills me before I kill me self. I'll have to spend eternity in hell." Harrowing words from a man in a dark place. Depression and anxiety have been the number one reason for visiting a GP in the UK since 2004. The impact it was having on the world heavyweight champion shows that these mental health issues can severely impact anyone.

From this lowest point came the greatest comeback in the history of sports. In December 2016 Fury tweeted, "I've had a nightmare 2016, done a lot of stuff I'm not proud of, but my promise to you is I'll return in 2017." After a long legal battle to have his boxing license reinstated and after more than two years of inactivity, Fury lost 9 stone in weight and won a couple of fights to prove himself before he challenged for the WBC heavyweight title against Wilder. The title fight was controversially scored as a draw, with many believing Fury won. Fury's strong performance against Wilder, including recovering from a heavy knockdown in the final round, earned him Comeback of the Year from The Ring and numerous other awards. Wilder is the most fearsome puncher in boxing. When Wilder connected with full force two punches to the head of Tyson, Fury lay on his back, motionless, for five seconds. Wilder, for his part, was already celebrating,

knowing that no human being could get up from a knockdown like that. As Wilder said in the post-fight press conference, "I literally seen this man's eyes roll into the back of his head. Only God knows how he got back up." How, then, did Fury manage to get back up? In his own words, "How did I get up from the knockdowns? I had a Holy hand upon me tonight and that brought me back." The Holy hand that Fury mentioned was the supernatural power of God that he and every other Christian can experience through their relationship with Jesus Christ. "I'm a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. I'll say that no matter how many people that offends. I'll say it. My life and my recovery from knockdowns, substance abuse and mental health issues shout the message of grace, forgiveness, redemption and new life. If there's redemption for Tyson Fury, there's redemption for each and every one of us in Jesus."

Fury won the rematch in February 2020 by technical knockout in the seventh round, with a breath taking performance, which many experts have described as the best performance by a British boxer in history. Afterwards Fury said, "I feel I have a story to tell, a massive one. The stuff I've been through, depression, mental health problems. It can help and inspire others. From 18 stone to 27 stone and back to 18. From a clean living man to drugs and alcohol and back to the heavyweight world champion again. I hope the legacy and story I leave behind will help others in the future of what to do and not to do." Since his return to the ring and his strong performance against Wilder, Fury has been dubbed "The People's Champion" due to his open and

honest discussion about his mental health struggles. He is currently an Ambassador for the former British world champion Frank Bruno's mental health charity, The Frank Bruno Foundation. Fury donated his £7 million purse from his first match against Wilder to charities to build homes for homeless alcohol and drug addicts in the United Kingdom. "I don't really have much use for it, I'm not interested in becoming a millionaire or a billionaire. You can't take it with you so I might as well do something with it and help out people who can't help themselves."

His story is inspiring. His life is extraordinary and his accomplishments will be talked about for generations to come. What advice would he like to give you to get the best out of your life? "The most important thing I can tell you is believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. Jesus loves me and he loves you too. All you have to do is repent of your sins and you will be forgiven. For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, so that those who believe in him will not perish, but have eternal life. Jesus is the way, the key, the only way into heaven."

Tyson Fury became a born-again Christian when his Uncle Ernest, a Pentecostal Preacher in Congleton, Cheshire, led him through a sinners prayer. If you would like to accept Jesus into your life and receive the free gift of eternal life, then pray this simple prayer out loud:-

"Dear God, I come to you in the name of Jesus. I now realize that I have a choice to make about my life. I believe



that Jesus died for me, shed His blood to wash away my sins. I believe that He rose from the dead, making a way for me to have fellowship with you. I turn my back on the life I have lived without you and repent of my sins. I choose to follow Jesus from this moment on. I ask Jesus to be Lord of my life and to live in my heart. I thank you, Almighty God, that you love me, have forgiven me and have accepted me as your child. Right now, I am a new creation, born of God. Thank you Heavenly Father. Amen."

When you have made this very important decision and taken this step of faith, we want to say congratulations and give you some help on your new journey. Please contact us at [George@bmf-uk.com](mailto:George@bmf-uk.com) so we can send you further helpful information to enable you to fulfill your full God-given potential in life. You can also find more life stories, videos and information at [www.bmf-uk.com](http://www.bmf-uk.com) and [lifestotriesatlunch.com](http://lifestotriesatlunch.com) ■



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