

Standing in the shadows of Vinny

SPORT

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Employers used to be able to force workers to retire at 65 (known as the Default Retirement Age) but, following a campaign by Age UK, this law was scrapped in April 2011.

This means that you can keep working beyond 65 if you want or need to. However, for elite sportspeople it's their bodies that force them to retire – typically before they reach 40.

Beyond sales and coaching, a sizable portion of athletes try their hand at entrepreneurship, with 10% taking on founder and business owner roles in the wake of retirement. Many of these entrepreneurs lean on their athletic background in their second acts.

It's not a common occurrence, but in some cases, we've also seen ex-players put sports behind them entirely and enter a completely new profession.

Before TV turned successful footballers into millionaires, many retired to run pubs. Bobby Moore opened his own pub in Stratford, London, in November 1976. Phil King, who played in the Premier League with Sheffield Wednesday, has run the Dolphin pub in Swindon since the early 2000s. He's a pillar of the community who helps replace stolen bikes, among other things.

Legendary forward Dixie Dean, who spent 12 years at Everton, helping the club to two league titles and an FA Cup success, scored 349 goals during his time the Merseyside giants, including an amazing 60 in one season. He took over the Dublin Packet pub in Chester in 1957.

Remember when Rio Ferdinand announced plans to enter the world of professional boxing way back in 2018? This was not a joke.

Ferdinand, who enjoyed a near 20-year playing career, winning 81 caps for England in the process, decided he wanted to give the 'sweet science' a go at the tender age of 38, only to be rejected a licence by the sport's governing body.

Since hanging up his boots in 2015, after representing Queens Park Rangers following a trophy-laden period with Manchester United, he's forged a successful media career.

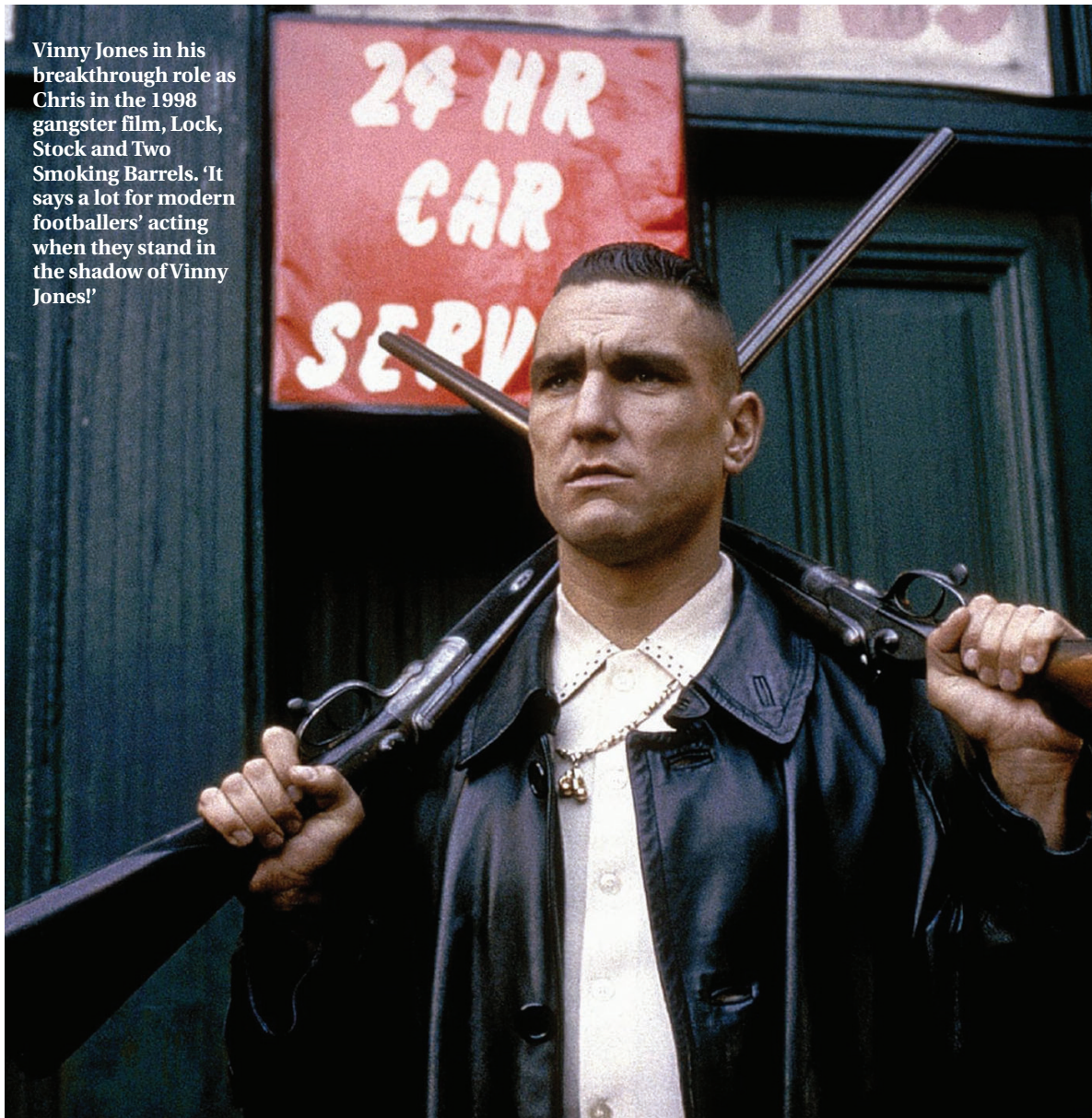
But the competitive itch, that engulfs every professional athlete, doesn't immediately go away. Ferdinand is no different. Despite his failure to crack the world of boxing, many footballers move into another sport once they've called time on the beautiful game.

There are a number of great managers who learnt their trade after retiring from a less-than-successful playing career. Sir Alex Ferguson and Jose Mourinho are two of the finest examples of this.

However, there are a number of the world's best coaches that flourished following glistening careers playing the game.

Two of the most popular routes

Vinny Jones in his breakthrough role as Chris in the 1998 gangster film, *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels*. 'It says a lot for modern footballers' acting when they stand in the shadow of Vinny Jones!



are plunging into either coaching or punditry after retirement, with some players also earning their coaching badges while still active.

After retiring from professional football in 2017, ex-Blues midfielder Frank Lampard worked on his coaching qualifications and was appointed manager of Derby County in 2018.

He later joined his old club Chelsea as manager in 2019, taking over from Maurizio Sarri.

Legendary former Liverpool captain Steven Gerrard, likewise, retired from the game playing for the LA Galaxy in 2016 and took up a role coaching Liverpool's Under-18 side before the start of the 2017-18 campaign. The following season, Gerrard was named head coach of Rangers. Prior to the Rangers job, Gerrard also contributed punditry and analysis to BT Sport's football coverage. He eventually moved to Aston Villa, where his run of success ended.

The likes of former England players Phil and Gary Neville, Ryan Giggs and John Terry have also taken up coaching jobs.

Jamie Carragher, meanwhile, decided to take the non-coaching route and went into punditry soon after he called time on the game in 2013. Carragher has since been one

of the most well-known pundits in the game, helming Sky Sports' football coverage alongside former England team-mate and Manchester United rival Gary Neville.

The duo are one of the most recognisable faces in football punditry, with their Monday Night Football coverage a television mainstay – combining expert analysis with their wealth of experience as former professionals.

Derek Redmond was part of the 4x400m relay team that triumphed against the much-fancied Americans in the 1991 World Championship in Tokyo. But perhaps he is most famous for the semi-final of the 1992 Barcelona Olympics. After injuring his hamstring during the race, Redmond decided he still wanted to cross the line as a symbolic gesture. In a moment that would go down in Olympic history, his father Jim joined him on the track and they crossed the line together.

Today Redmond is a motivational speaker with his own business and recently joined psychometric testing provider Thomas International. The company has adapted its employee-testing suite to athletes and Redmond's experience in both fields will prove invaluable for the company's development. Redmond

told Growth Business that "the mindset of the successful sportsman is no different to the successful businessperson".

"For years I've been advocating this through my motivational speaking but I've also been practising what I preach," he said. "Part of my new role as performance director at Thomas is to help others to do the same thing. I'm taking what I've been talking about to other organisations and one has said 'okay, come and do it in our organisation'."

Danny Mills, the former Leeds and England footballer was best known for his uncomplicated defence and short fuse during his playing days. But this overshadowed some impressive achievements within the game. His 19 senior international caps include an appearance at the 2002 World Cup.

These days Mills, as well as being a regular TV and radio pundit, is an advisory board member of equity investment business Enact. He was instrumental in saving the West Cornwall Pasty Company from administration. As well as his business interest Mills made the final of 2012 Celebrity Masterchef and rowed across the English Channel for charity in 2013. He's certainly not taking his retirement

lying down.

Another footballer who has kept himself busy since his retirement is Liverpool fan favourite Robbie Fowler. After a sparkling career with Liverpool, Fowler became a big player in the UK property market. In fact, he started even before his retirement from the game.

His ever-growing property portfolio led to fans singing 'we all live in a Robbie Fowler house' to the tune of Yellow Submarine.

As well as his property portfolio, Fowler's other business interests include Robbie Fowler Sports Promotion and The Macca and Growler Group – a company co-owned with former team-mate Steve McManaman that invests in racehorses.

His various business interests led to Fowler being named on the Sunday Times rich list in 2005. At the time his combined wealth was estimated at £28 million. Today his bricks and mortar housing empire is thought to be worth in the region of £31 million.

Some sports stars just want to keep on seeing their name in lights and look to the 'silver screen' to do so. Eric Cantona, something of an enigma during his playing days, made a seamless transition into the creative arts and to this day is one of the most successful cases of footballer-turned-actor. The ex-France international enjoyed a breakthrough role in 1998's *Elizabeth*, but it was in the 2009 journey of discovery *Looking For Eric* that he really came into his own on screen.

Pele, arguably the most famous face in football history – now sadly no longer with us – was also among the first to step off the pitch and onto the screen with his part in 1981's *Escape to Victory*. Sir Michael Caine and Sylvester Stallone also headline the cast of this football classic, with the late Bobby Moore and Ossie Ardiles making cameo appearances.

Pele added other small acting roles, including that of orphanage worker in *A Minor Miracle* (1983) and soothsayer-cum-football guru in *Hotshot* (1987).

However, in terms of sheer acting volume, Vinnie Jones is undoubtedly the most prolific footballer to have turned his attention toward cinema, racking up more than 60 roles to date.

From the leader of Wimbledon's Crazy Gang to a well-known face in certain parts of Los Angeles, Jones has taken on leading parts in British flicks *Snatch* (2000), *Mean Machine* (2001) and *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels* (1998).

However, not to become type-cast as that old English brute, the 50-year-old has also played Marvel's Juggernaut in *X-Men: The Last Stand* (2006) – complete with cockney accent – as well as villain Brick in DC series *Arrow* (2015).

It says a lot for modern footballers' acting when they stand in the shadow of Vinny Jones!