

19th HOLE

Your essential guide to grass roots golf – the true heartbeat of the game



A sporting hero: Stan Anderson

Age no Barrier

Former pro footballer Stan Anderson once wowed the terraces. Now 78, he's made a new name for himself by regularly 'beating his age' at Doncaster GC

How we'd all long for the sporting longevity and success that 78-year-old Stan Anderson has enjoyed. Not content with playing for, and indeed captaining, all three of the North-East's top football clubs in the 1950s and '60s and making the trip to the 1962 World Cup with England, he's now forging out an enviable reputation as a prolific 'beater of his age' on the golf course.

Stan had never picked up a golf club until the late, great Don Revie joined Sunderland in 1956. "I remember him saying, 'How many of you lads play golf?'" Stan recalls.

"I said, 'Never tried it', so he said, 'You can come and caddy for me then'. So I did. They were hitting the ball all over the place and I thought, 'I can do better than that!'"

He then set about proving it, getting down to 2 in just five years. After over 500 appearances for Sunderland, Newcastle and Middlesbrough, he moved into management with Boro in the late 1960s before taking up the reins at AEK Athens in Greece, where golf had to take a back seat for a while. But after returning to manage QPR, Doncaster Rovers and Bolton Wanderers, he finally hung up his managerial boots in favour of his golfing spikes in 1981.

A couple of operations on his legs saw his handicap drift a little, but having regained his strength, he's now in the process of reversing that trend, threatening single figures once more. Along the way he's bettered his age more times than he cares to remember. "Yes, I've been doing it off and on for several years," he laughs. "The first time I shot a 67 at Seaton Carew when I was 68. I got really excited that first time, but it doesn't register so much now I've done it a number of times." Having beaten his former age of 77 four times since October, his recent 78th birthday will surely afford him even greater scope to continue doing so in 2012.