

BROADCAST LEGEND JIM ON BOOZE PERILS

AND HIS CRAZY LIFE AT SKY & TALKSPORT

'I'm not quite as insane as I was'



MEETING LEGENDS: With Pele top left, with a few years in between, and with Anthony Joshua, above, and John Terry, below



White & yellow

JIM White has become Sky Sports' face of transfer deadline day when the clock ticks towards 11pm and the late deals get announced. As he rounds up the day's trading, he does so wearing his now famous yellow tie. "In the early days of transfer deadline day, Sky chose a yellow strap on the

bottom of the screen so yellow became the identifiable colour," says Jim. "That has stuck. And that is why van drivers wind their windows down and ask 'how's the yellow tie?' "The last time I interviewed Fergie he asked, 'Where's the yellow tie?' I had one for him in my pocket, he loved it."

SHOW TIME: Jim has a rest. Left, with Hayley McQueen during Sky's deadline day coverage

Jim White Voice of sport THE MIKE WARD INTERVIEW



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Klopp at Liverpool... that's a great marriage

LUNCHTIME at last and talkSPORT's Jim White is taking a well-earned breather, another three hours of frenetic, fan-driven radio under his belt.

"It's been quite a morning," he tells me. It's not over a welcoming pint that we've met for our chat, however, but at a sunny spot just a corner kick's distance from the station's London studios. Two reasons. First, Jim's due back on air at 5pm, this time on Sky Sports News, the channel where, besides being the famous face of transfer deadline day, he has a regular evening presenting slot. And second, he hasn't touched a drop in seven years. "I was getting to the stage, aged 52 or 53, where I couldn't recover from a hangover," he tells me. "And I couldn't have just one drink, I needed six. My temptation was to go mad - and I did, on a regular basis. "Those days have gone, and I'm so pleased. Your life improves immeasurably. And it's good knowing I can go for a nice meal with Katie (Jim's architect girlfriend, 37) and not be a basket case sitting opposite her." That's not to say,

mind you, that this proud, affable Glaswegian's passion for sport has diminished. Although strictly neutral, club-wise (despite regular accusations to the contrary from Celtic and Rangers fans alike), he freely admits he's lost his rag at times over his national side's misfortunes. "I was on holiday in Minorca last summer," he recalls, "watching Scotland v England, the World Cup qualifier, on TV. It's 2-1 to Scotland, I'm leaping about - and then, unbelievably, in the dying moments, Harry Kane equalises. "I smashed a glass, I threw it right across the room! Luckily, Katie was outside or she might have copped it." **Amazing** It's clear Jim White is first and foremost a fan. He shows me his phone, chock full of selfies, snapped with some of sport's biggest names. There's Jim with Anthony Joshua ("a bright man, kind of statesmanlike"), Jim with Luis Suarez. Jim with Pele (two pics, taken decades apart). Yes, his orbit is mostly football, and he admits it tends to dominate our sporting culture. "But the appetite for it is incredible," he points out. "Whenever I'm recognised in the street, which is every day, it's always by football fans." When he does turn to other sports, golf and NFL figure high on his list. But are there any he just doesn't get? "Yes, cricket," he chuckles. "I still don't get how a five-day Test can end in a

draw - or a one-day game be decided by the Duckworth-Lewis method." As for English football's future, he says new champions Manchester City will dominate for some time, closely followed by Spurs and Liverpool, both managed by men he respects enormously. "Pochettino at Tottenham, he's got time for people. He's meticulous, respectful. I love the guy. "And Klopp at Liverpool, that's a great marriage. "But other stories emerge all the time. Burnley, for example. How on earth can they do what they've done? Amazing. Sean Dyche is fantastic. And your boys at Brighton, Mike. Wonderful. What a fantastic season." So how does Jim rate England's World Cup chances? "I need to be careful here, don't I? I'm very friendly with Steve Holland, Gareth Southgate's number two. I'd like him and Gareth to do well. They work hard. They're great students of the game. "I think England'll do all right. Quarter-finals, maybe even the semis. But I don't see them being finalists." As Jim prepares to head off to Waterloo Station, then onwards to Sky, I suggest this routine must get knacker at

times, given the energy he puts into everything. He admits that, yes, it can take its toll. "I don't mind telling you, Mike, I hit a bit of a brick wall last year. "As you say, it's all or nothing with me, and I'd been going flat out. Then one night, in the bath, I noticed my left ankle and right wrist were swollen. Turned out Jim had a kidney problem. "I've been on a programme of steroids ever since. Still working flat out, just maybe cutting down the odd day. "But that was a marker for me, a warning shot. "August, September, I was taking something like 16 pills in the morning. But now I'm down to about two. "So I'm not quite as insane as I was!" He adds: "Sometimes, to relax, I've got to get away. I go to Spain and America quite a bit. I like to get out of it and just not listen to who beat who or who's done what. "I'm getting to realise there's more to life, to appreciate nice things and nice people - never more so, with poor Ray Wilkins passing away recently. I hope Ray appreciated I was a good pal. "I'm trying to get more of a grip on life, a sense of balance. "Having said that, it all starts again tomorrow - and you just do it."

I hit a bit of a brick wall last year



Pictures: TIM MERRY

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