

LEV YASHIN (USSR)

Lyova Ivanovich Yashin was born on October 22 1929 in Moscow, to a family of factory workers. In 1942 and still 12 years of age he went to work as a turner at the "Krasnyi Bogatyr" tool factory in Moscow. His first football coach was Ivan Shubin from the factory's junior football team where he started playing in 1944. In 1949 he was invited to join the Moscow Dinamo club, where he eventually played 22 seasons.



Lev Yashin played his entire career for Dinamo Moscow sports club (from 1949 to 1971) winning the football league championship of the USSR five times and the Soviet Cup three times. He first appeared in the starting line-up of Dinamo on July 6, 1950, and spent his entire career there - transfers between the top clubs were greatly discouraged, especially for Dinamo since it belonged to the Soviet Interior Ministry. (He was officially listed as a police officer.)

While he played his first senior match in 1950, he didn't become the regular goalkeeper for Dinamo until 1954. In the meantime he represented the Dinamo workers club's ice hockey team and won the USSR ice hockey championship in 1953 as goalkeeper.



Lev Yashin made an unprecedented contribution to the game and set the modern standard for goalkeeping. He was a courageous player and a great athlete - and was among the first goalkeepers to command the entire penalty area, which he did with unmatched confidence and reliability. Most notably, he confronted the common attitude of catching the ball, inventing various ways of simply kicking it away from the penalty area when required. He was equally impressive on the goal line with stunning reflexes and agility that made him peerless in his era. He is credited with saving a staggering 150 penalty kicks.

In 1954 Yashin debuted for the Soviet national team (which he represented 78 times), and with which he would win the gold medal at the 1956 Olympic games and the 1960 European Championship. As a member of the USSR team he played in three World Cup finals (1958, 1962 and 1966). He even made his fourth trip to the World Cup finals in 1970 as the third-choice back up and an aide. Yashin is credited for four clean sheets out of 13 games played in World Cup finals. In 1971 in Moscow he played his last match for Dinamo Moscow against a team of European stars.

One of his most memorable performances was the 1963 FA Centenary match when he appeared in the 'Rest of the World XI' against England at Wembley Stadium and made a number of the breath taking and almost unbelievable saves. He was known all over the world as the 'Black Panther' for his distinctive all-black strip, acrobatic saves and agility, and was feared by his opponents.

In 1963 Lev Yashin became the only goalkeeper to win the European Footballer of the Year Award. Eusebio, who is Portugal's greatest ever player and a contemporary of Yashin's, described him as "the peerless goalkeeper of the century".

Yashin's FIFA testimonial match was held at the Lenin Stadium in Moscow with 100,000 fans attending, and a galaxy of football's superstars played, including Pelé, Eusebio and Franz Beckenbauer. For a short time he coached minor league



and youth teams in Finland. But he was enticed back to the USSR and was made head of the Ministry of Sport's football department, and later he became vice-president of the Soviet football association.

In 2000 FIFA polls placed Yashin in the "Century XI" team, and also named him 'World Goalkeeper of the Century'.

Lev Yashin died in March 1990 of complications caused by surgery. He is remembered as a brilliant goalkeeper and a true sportsman. On his death, the Soviet news agency Tass described him as "the most famous Soviet sportsman ever". As a tribute to his outstanding goalkeeping skills, FIFA established the 'Lev Yashin Award' for the best goalkeeper of the World Cup finals.

Lev Yashin's career statistics

326 games played for Dinamo Moscow main line-up

78 international matches (72 goals conceded)

13 caps at the World Cup finals (4 clean sheets)

FIFA 'Rest of the World XI' appearances (1963 vs. England, 1968 vs. Brazil)

FIFA testimonial match (1971)

270 career clean sheets

150 career penalty kick saves

FIFA 'World-Keeper of the Century'

FIFA 'Century XI' team membership (2000)

GORDON BANKS (England)

Gordon Banks was born in Sheffield on the 30 December 1937. Considered by many to be the greatest goalkeeper of all time, Gordon Banks will forever be remembered for his save from Pele's header during the 1970 World Cup Finals. Yet those who saw Banks play knew he was capable of repeating such a feat on a cold December afternoon when all that was at stake was two points. He wasn't just great - he was consistently on top of his game and a Banks' mistake was very rare indeed.

First capped at the age of 25, Banks was the first England goalkeeper to play more than 33 times and the first to keep more than ten clean sheets. During his career he established a number of records at international level for England that remained until Peter Shilton came onto the scene.

But Shilton was unable to capture all of Banks' records. Banks still holds the England record of seven clean sheets in a row, which was finally ended by Eusebio's late penalty in the semi-finals of the 1966 World Cup, and he played in 23 consecutive internationals without defeat from 1964-67. And of course, he is still the only English goalkeeper ever to win a World Cup Winners medal.

However, Banks' success on the international stage was not mirrored domestically. He seemed destined to finish on losing side in Wembley Cup finals until finally winning the League Cup with Stoke City in 1972. He twice played on the losing side of the FA Cup Final with Leicester City during the 1960s.

He didn't have much luck with injury either. He missed a vital World Cup Quarter Final against West Germany in 1970 when he was struck down by a bad bottle of beer of all things the night before and his career was brought to an untimely



end after he lost an eye in a road accident. He turned to coaching before temporarily resurrecting his career in the North American Soccer League.

Club Appearances:

Chesterfield:	1955 – 1958	26 games
Leicester City:	1959 – 1966	356 games
Stoke City:	1967 – 1972	246 games

Internationals

Under 23:	2 games
Full Appearances:	73 games
	703 total

Also played for Fort Lauderdale Strikers in the North American Soccer League 1977-78

DINO ZOFF (Italy)

Was an immensely focused and composed goalkeeper, he was great inside the box and magnificent on the line. Zoff was not very tall for a goalkeeper, not the best mover yet he made spectacular saves on many occasions.

Dino Zoff was nineteen years old when he made his debut in Serie A for Udinese on September 24th 1961. Upon moving to Mantova, he became more widely known, playing 93 league appearances at his new club. But it wasn't until he came to Napoli that the young man from the north really made a name for himself. At Napoli he reached the final of the Italian Cup in 1972 and made in all 143 Serie A appearances.

Zoff's big break was to come and in 1972 he moved to Juventus, where he won all his titles. At Juventus, he made his first major record, playing 330 all league matches in his 11 seasons at the club. During his time with Juventus, he took part in 6 scudettos, two Italian Cups and a UEFA Cup. He missed one major title, the European Cup (Champions League). Both in 1973 and 1983, Juventus lost in the final of the competition.

Zoff's first international call up came in 1968, when he was called to face Bulgaria in the European Championship quarterfinal. In the previous encounter between the two teams Italy lost 3-2 and Coach Feruccio Valcareggi replaced the first choice goalkeeper with Dino Zoff. There was no complaint from the coach about Zoff's performance when Italy won 2-0. Italy went on to win the Championship with Dino between the posts.

But Zoff was still not guaranteed a place in the Azzurri. In the World Cup of Mexico '70, he shared his duties with Enrico Albertosi. The latter was the first choice keeper and Dino watched the tournament from the bench. Italy finished 2nd. In



1972, the Azzurri were eliminated in the quarter final of the European Championship and Albertosi's days as Azzurri goalkeeper were over. It was time for Zoff's 11-year domination.



From September 20th 1972 he conceded not a single goal for 12 international caps. Zoff's performance did not go unnoticed and he was that year runner-up in France Football's annual award for best footballer.

Dino had great expectations for the upcoming World Cup, but already in the second match of the tournament, he conceded a goal vs. Haiti. His 1142 minutes of international caps without conceding a goal is to this day a record. For Italy 1974 was a terrible World Cup, winning only one match.

In Argentina '78, the Azzurri were back with 36-year-old Zoff as captain. He was blamed for conceding the deciding goals in Italy's matches vs. Holland and Brazil but Coach Enzo Bearzot could not imagine the Azzurri without their experienced captain.

After 4th place in the World Cup, Italy finished 4th in the European Championship in 1980, but Zoff's place was never threatened.

Dino made up for all mistakes he might have made so far in his career by winning the World Cup in 1982. The tournament started out poorly for the Azzurri, but after the group stage, it was fast forward to the final with West Germany. Captain Dino Zoff held up the World Cup trophy at Santiago Bernabeu in Madrid, being at the time 40 years old.

But Zoff did not quit; he went on playing another season for his club and country. On May 29th 1983 in Goteborg, Italy lost 2-0 to Sweden. It was appearance number 112 for Zoff (beaten to this day only by Maldini), his 93rd while at Juventus, 59th as captain.

Zoff did not manage to stay away from soccer for more than a few months. He returned to Juventus as coach in 1984 and was appointed head coach few years later. Juventus won the Italian Cup and the UEFA Cup in that period and Zoff moved on to Lazio, where he stayed in the years 1990-94. Cragnotti appointed him president, but in the 1996-97 season he returned to coaching. After Eriksson's departure he again became the coach of Lazio.

Zoff's greatest moment as coach came when he was nominated Azzurri coach in 1998. Italy qualified for Euro2000 and, as we all know, lost in the final to France. Dino Zoff, one of the greatest footballers of all time, quit the national job.

Nationality:	Italian
Clubs in career:	Udinese, Mantova, Napoli, Juventus
As coach:	Juventus, Lazio, Italian national team
Matches:	476
Honours won:	6 League titles 2 Italian Cups UEFA Cup European Champion 1968 World Champion 1982
As coach:	Italian Cup (1990) UEFA Cup (1990)



PETER SCHMEICHEL (Denmark)



They don't call him the Great Dane for nothing. He's 6'4" tall and perhaps one of the most talented goalkeepers ever to have played the game.

Peter Boleslaw Schmeichel was born in Gladaxe, Denmark on November 18 1963; he played amateur football in Gladaxe in a variety of positions. He used to love playing up front but his real talent was in goal keeping.

After 3 years of playing, he was snapped up by Brøndby I.F who saw the potential that Peter Schmeichel held. At this point, he became a regular for Denmark's national team where he established a reputation as one of the best.

Unfortunately for Brøndby, Peter's reputation reached England. In 1987, Schmeichel was almost recruited by English club Newcastle United but they considered him too inexperienced for the English league.

In 1991 Manchester United made an offer that could not be refused, £600,000 was handed over to take Peter Schmeichel to Old Trafford and the rest, as they say, is history. He immediately made an impact with United.

Schmeichel was internationally capped for Denmark 128 times, and he was the star of the tournament when Denmark stunningly won the European Championship in 1992.



His saves at critical times in the semi-final against the Netherlands and against Germany in the final elevated him to the status of best goalkeeper in the world.

He also starred for Denmark when they reached the World Cup quarterfinals in 1998.



At Manchester United, his shot-stopping skills and authoritative presence between the sticks helped the Manchester United become the dominant force in English football. Schmeichel collected five league championships and three FA Cups during his eight-year stint at Old Trafford.

Schmeichel finest moment came when he captained United in their 1999 European Champions League final against Bayern Munich in Barcelona. That dramatic victory in the Nou Camp at Barcelona sealed a historic treble in his final game for the club.

He then joined Sporting Lisbon in Portugal for two seasons, and won a Portuguese league championship there in the 1999/2000 season. Schmeichel returned to the English Premier League in 2001/02 with Aston Villa, and played his final season in 2002/03 for the newly promoted Manchester City.

Games	League	292	130 clean sheets
	FA Cup	41	20
	League Cup	17	9
	Europe	41	19
	International	128	

