

CLIVE BATTY



THE
TOP TEN
of everything
England

The Best of the Three Lions
from Adams to Zamora

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TOP 10 ENGLAND TWEETERS

Want to know how Jesse Lingard feels about being recalled to Gareth Southgate's squad? Or how Marcus Rashford's latest anti-poverty campaign is developing? Then you need to follow your favourite England stars on social media site Twitter:

1) Marcus Rashford (@MarcusRashford); 5.5m followers

Sample tweet, 'Write to your MP via the link below, it's quick and easy. We need long-term solutions. The issue of child hunger is worsening.'

2) Harry Kane (@HKane); 3.6m followers

Sample tweet, 'The first time a Three Lions game has been refereed by a woman and it should be the first of many.'

3) Raheem Sterling (@sterling7); 3.2m followers

Sample tweet, 'Great to lead the lads out at Wembley tonight.'

4) Jesse Lingard (@JessieLingard); 2.9m followers

Sample tweet, 'Nothing puts a smile on my face quite like representing my country! Great to be back with the boys!'

5) Luke Shaw (@LukeShaw23); 2.4m followers

Sample tweet, 'Proud to be part of the team. One final push! See you all on Sunday.'

6) Trent Alexander-Arnold (@TrentAA); 2.3m followers

Sample tweet, 'Amazing feeling to be back in an England shirt.'

7) Harry Maguire (@HarryMaguire93); 1.9m followers

Sample tweet, 'Last Euros as a fan. This Euros as a player. Huge honour – can't wait to get started.'

8) Kyle Walker (@kylewalker2); 1.7m followers

Sample tweet, 'You can't buy that winning feeling! Well played boys, a big 3 points towards qualifying for the World Cup.'

9) Jordan Henderson (@JHenderson); 1.7m followers

Sample tweet, 'Harry Maguire has been a colossus for England. Without him, the progress made at the last two tournaments

would not have been possible. To be booed at his home stadium, for no reason? What have we become?

10) Jadon Sancho (@Sanchooo10); 1.7m followers

Sample tweet, 'Top performance from the boys! Always a honour to represent England.'

TOP 10 RIVALS

The countries England love to beat the most:

1) Scotland

The rivalry between England and Scotland stretches all the way back to 30 November 1872 when the two sides met in the world's first ever international match, at the West of Scotland Cricket Ground, Partick, Glasgow. That encounter ended 0-0 but there have been many more exciting clashes since, with arguably the heyday of this passionate derby coming in the 1970s when the annual battle to be Britain's top dog was heightened by differing fortunes on the international stage: Scotland qualifying for two World Cups in 1974 and 1978 while England stayed at home. The intensity of feeling reached fever pitch in 1977 when the Scots won 2-1 at Wembley in the British Home Championship, and their supporters celebrated by storming on to the pitch, digging up the turf and tearing down the goalposts. The most significant match between the two sides since then was won by England at Euro '96, the home fans at Wembley celebrating in a slightly more low-key way with a few rousing bursts of the Baddiel and Skinner hit 'Three Lions'.

2) Germany

Forget the two world wars; purely in football terms the rivalry between England and Germany is on an epic, almost Shakespearean, scale. It all started, of course, with the 1966 World Cup Final at Wembley which England deservedly won, although the Germans felt Geoff Hurst's second goal of his famous hat-trick should not have stood. If they held a grudge, the Germans have certainly used it as a powerful motivating force on numerous occasions, ending Bobby Moore and Co's reign as world champions in 1970, beating the Three Lions on penalties in

tournament semi-finals not once but twice, and thrashing England at the 2010 World Cup in South Africa. However, England have also had their moments during this period, famously tonking the Germans 5-1 in Munich in 2001, beating them 2-0 at Wembley in the last 16 of Euro 2020 and, best of all, triumphing 2-1 in the final of the Women's Euros in 2022.

3) Argentina

England and Argentina have only met 14 times in total, but those encounters have been so littered with controversial incidents that the rivalry between the sides is now considered one of the fiercest in world football. The 1966 World Cup quarter-final at Wembley sparked the bad blood, England manager Alf Ramsey describing the opposition as 'animals' after a brutal clash which saw the Argentinian captain Antonio Rattín dismissed. The South Americans gained revenge in 1986, beating England 2-1 at the World Cup in Mexico thanks in part to skipper Diego Maradona's notorious 'Hand of God' goal. Then, at the 1998 finals in France, they won a dramatic match on penalties after David Beckham had been sent off. Becks, though, got his own back four years later, with the winning goal against Argentina in a group game at the World Cup in Japan.

4) Italy

Right from the start there has been an edge to England-Italy matches, with only the second encounter between the two countries in November 1934 being so violent it was dubbed 'The Battle of Highbury'. England won that game 3-2 and have enjoyed some other good friendly triumphs against the Italians, but it's a different story in competitive matches. In five meetings at the finals of the World Cup or Euros Italy have won three and drawn two – although one of those draws was the final of Euro 2020 which, agonisingly for the Three Lions, the *Azzurri* turned into a victory after a nail-biting penalty shoot-out.

5) Brazil

Although the rivalry between England and Brazil is intense, it is based on mutual respect and is perfectly summed up by the iconic image of Three Lions skipper Bobby Moore and footballing legend

Pelé embracing at the end of their nations' clash at the 1970 World Cup in Mexico. Brazil won that match 1-0 and, disappointingly from an England viewpoint, have emerged victorious in three of the four encounters between the sides on the world stage, with the other being a 0-0 draw at the 1958 World Cup in Sweden. For their part, England have had to make do with just four friendly wins in 26 matches in total, the last coming at Wembley in February 2013.

6) Poland

For the 'Boomer' generation the word 'Poland' conjures up images of eccentric goalkeeper Jan Tomaszewski hurling himself across the Wembley turf to defy the England forwards in a 1973 World Cup qualifier which Sir Alf Ramsey's men had to win to reach the finals in West Germany. However, they only managed a 1-1 draw, sparking a rivalry with Poland in which, in the years since, England have enjoyed the upper hand. Indeed, in 17 competitive meetings between the sides since that dark evening in north-west London, the Three Lions have remained undefeated, notching up 11 wins and six draws. All the same, probably best not to mention the Poles to your grandad.

7) Wales

Apart from in the 1920s and 1930s, when the two sides were evenly matched and won eight games apiece, England have had much the better of their meetings with Wales. However, the men from the valleys are gritty fighters and have often made life difficult for their bigger neighbour, notably in January 1973 when a 1-1 draw at Wembley in a World Cup qualifier contributed to England's failure to reach the finals in West Germany the following year. More recently, the Welsh took the lead against England at Euro 2016 through star man Gareth Bale before eventually succumbing 2-1. Even so, the Welsh had the last laugh, as they reached the semi-finals while England were knocked out by little Iceland in the last 16.

8) Sweden

For a mid-ranking football nation, Sweden have a surprisingly good record against England, incredibly remaining undefeated in 12 encounters over 43 years between 1968 and 2011, a run which included draws at the 2002 and 2006 World Cups and a famous 2-1 win in Stockholm at the 1992 Euros. England, though, have reversed the trend in more recent years, beating the Swedes at the 2012 Euros

in Kiev and then winning the biggest clash between the two nations in the quarter-final of the 2018 World Cup in Samara, Russia.

9) Croatia

Born out of the break-up of the former Yugoslavia, the modern Croatia didn't play an international match until 1990. England locked swords with the proud Balkan nation over two Euros in the next decade, winning an exciting encounter in Portugal in 2004 before being knocked out of the qualifying tournament for the 2008 finals after suffering two losses to the Croats. Worse was to come in 2018 when Croatia fought back from a goal down to win the teams' dramatic World Cup semi-final in Moscow. Gareth Southgate's men then got a measure of revenge later that year, beating the Croats at Wembley in the UEFA Nations League, and they again got the better of Luka Modrić and Co at the same venue in the delayed Euro 2020 tournament.

10) Republic of Ireland

The Republic of Ireland have been a thorn in the Three Lions' side ever since they won 2-0 at Goodison Park in September 1949 to become the first nation from outside the United Kingdom to defeat England on home soil. The rivalry between the two neighbours, though, reached a peak in the late 1980s and early 1990s when the Irish, managed by English 1966 World Cup legend Jack Charlton, were unbeaten in four competitive matches against England, most famously beating the Three Lions at the 1988 European Championship in Germany. After rioting by England fans caused a 1995 friendly in Dublin to be abandoned the two sides didn't meet for another 18 years, but happily three meetings in recent years have been trouble-free.

TOP 10 HARDMEN

The England players who loved getting 'stuck in' to the opposition:

1) Norman Hunter

As one of the toughest players in the game in the 1960s and 1970s, the Leeds defender was known to fans as Norman 'Bites Yer Legs' Hunter. He lived up to his moniker with some crunching

challenges which would often leave opponents writhing on the grass. Hunter was a non-playing member of England's 1966 World Cup-winning squad and appeared 28 times for his country, although his international career is usually remembered for a tackle he failed to make against Poland in 1973 which contributed to the Three Lions' failure to reach the World Cup finals the following year. 'I was a defender and I should have put the ball in the Royal Box,' he lamented afterwards.

2) Wilf Copping

The original Three Lions hardman, Wilf Copping was an examiner who played for Leeds and Arsenal in the 1930s and also won 20 caps for England. A combative midfielder, Copping attempted to intimidate opponents by not shaving on matchdays and liked to say, 'The first man in a tackle never gets hurt.' Dubbed 'The Iron Man', he was one of seven Arsenal players who featured in 'The Battle of Highbury' clash between England and Italy in 1934, earning the man of the match award for a typically aggressive display in the centre of the park.

3) Peter Storey

Dubbed 'the bastards' bastard' by Chelsea hatchetman Ron 'Chopper' Harris, Peter Storey was a tough-tackling defensive midfielder who helped Arsenal win the Double in 1971 and also won 19 caps for England in the latter part of Sir Alf Ramsey's reign. 'The trick was to get in as early as possible, hit them hard, give them a good wallop, make them feel as if they'd been in a car crash or hit a brick wall,' was his own colourful description of his approach to dealing with the opposition. Often in trouble on the pitch, Storey remained a rebel in later life and served several prison sentences for a variety of offences.

4) Nobby Stiles

The diminutive Stiles was an effective destroyer in England's midfield at the 1966 World Cup, his most important contribution to the Three Lions' success coming in the semi-final when his close marking of the dangerous Eusébio was a vital factor in the hosts' 2-1 win against Portugal at Wembley. Earlier in the tournament, Stiles was criticised for a bad tackle which injured

France's Jacques Simon, with some voices at the FA calling for him to be dropped. However, England boss Alf Ramsey defended the Manchester United midfielder, insisting the challenge was mistimed rather than malicious and threatening to resign if there was any interference in his team selection.

5) Stuart Pearce

Known throughout the football world as 'Psycho' for his robust tackles, the Nottingham Forest left-back was described by his former team-mate Roy Keane as 'a man amongst boys'. Pearce, who represented England 78 times, demonstrated mental as well as physical toughness in his international career, recovering from the disappointment of missing a penalty in the semi-final shoot-out against West Germany at the 1990 World Cup to score with spot-kicks against both Spain and Germany at Euro '96.

6) Terry Butcher

One of the bravest players to represent England, Ipswich and Rangers centre-back Terry Butcher was never afraid to risk injury by diving in where the boots were flying. Capped 77 times between 1980 and 1990, his commitment to the Three Lions' cause was best illustrated by the famous picture of him with blood dripping down from a head wound on to his white England shirt during a match against Sweden in 1989.

7) Martin Keown

A long-serving defender with Arsenal, Aston Villa and Everton who also won 43 caps for England between 1992 and 2002, Martin Keown was a brilliant man-marker who excelled at neutralising the opposition's star player. Throughout his playing career he delighted in inflicting 'the reducer' – a hearty challenge on an opponent in the early part of a game which would signal to him that he was in for an extremely tough afternoon.

8) Jack Charlton

A tall and gangly centre-half who was nicknamed 'The Giraffe', Jack Charlton was a member of the successful but often ruthless Leeds United team of the 1960s and early 1970s. Most celebrated for his solid defending during England's 1966 World Cup triumph, Charlton was not afraid to court controversy and once landed in

hot water after revealing he had a ‘little black book’ containing the names of players who had fouled him in the past and who he intended to exact revenge upon.

9) **Bryan Robson**

By some distance the finest footballer on this list, Bryan Robson was an energetic box-to-box midfielder with West Bromwich Albion and Manchester United who won 90 England caps between 1980 and 1991. As well as scoring and making goals, ‘Captain Marvel’ was also famed for his committed tackling – although, sadly, he suffered numerous injuries as a result of his wholehearted approach to the game, limping out of all three World Cup finals tournaments he participated in with the Three Lions.

10) **Tommy Smith**

The Liverpool enforcer was unfortunate to only win a single cap for England, in a disappointing 0-0 draw with Wales at Wembley in 1971. ‘The Tank’, as he was dubbed, was known for his uncompromising challenges in the heart of the Reds’ defence, leading legendary Anfield boss Bill Shankly to once say of him, ‘Tommy Smith wasn’t born, he was quarried.’ Opponents agreed, Jack Charlton remarking, ‘When you tackled Tommy, it was like running into a brick wall – it shook every bone in your body.’

TOP 10 JOYFUL ENGLAND NEWSPAPER HEADLINES

The newspaper headlines that England fans might consider framing:

1) **‘The World Beaters!’, News of the World, 31 July 1966**

After England won the World Cup in 1966 the *News of the World* captured the mood of the nation, its front-page headline being accompanied by pictures of skipper Bobby Moore collecting the Jules Rimet Trophy from The Queen and then kissing it on the Wembley turf.

2) **‘Golden Boys’, Sunday Mirror, 31 July 1966**

The *Sunday Mirror* also produced a memorable headline for its coverage of England’s triumph, but opted for a picture of the squad

celebrating their success on the balcony of the Royal Garden Hotel in Kensington.

3) ‘Kane You Believe It!’, Daily Mail, 8 July 2021

After England beat Denmark 2-1 to reach the final of the delayed Euro 2020 tournament the *Mail* couldn’t resist punning on the name of skipper Harry Kane, scorer of the winning goal in the semi-final at Wembley.

4) ‘England! Top of the World!’, Evening Standard, 30 July 1966

The London evening paper was one of the first in the country to report England’s historic victory in 1966, a sub-heading proudly pointing out the key contribution of players from the capital – ‘All West Ham goals, Hurst hat-trick, Peters 1’. A later edition of the same paper was headlined ‘Champions of the World’ in red lettering and showed Bobby Moore holding aloft the trophy while perched on his team-mates’ shoulders.

5) ‘Gazzacadabra’, The Planet on Sunday, 16 June 1996

The Planet on Sunday was a British tabloid Sunday newspaper that launched on 16 June 1996 with the intention of highlighting environmental issues, but never appeared again. At least the subs on the sports desk came up with a decent back-page headline celebrating Paul Gascoigne’s starring role in England’s 2-0 win over Scotland at Wembley during Euro ’96.

6) ‘Spot on!’, Daily Star, 4 July 2018

A rare penalty shoot-out win for England, against Colombia at the 2018 World Cup in Russia, merited front-page headlines for virtually all the newspapers. The *Daily Star* kept it pretty simple, illustrating its lead story with pictures of the England players celebrating together in a huddle and goalkeeper Jordan Pickford making a vital penalty save.

7) ‘Gay England Attack Stuns Scots!’, News of the World, 3 April 1966

A headline which today would surely have eyebrows being raised at breakfast tables across the land referred to a vibrant England attacking display in a 4-3 win at Hampden Park just three months before the start of the 1966 World Cup.