

# ONE ON ONE DEREK LYON

@DLBOOTROOM

SELF-CONFESSED FOOTBALL BOOT ADDICT AND COLLECTOR BASED IN QATAR.



## Why did you start collecting?

I started collecting football-related items around 2005 and it has continued since then. I bought my first pair of football boots for collecting around 2008 and was hooked. I originally set out to collect adidas Predators in the original colourway but wanted them all brand new in-box and the collection grew from that point. I also love knowing that in perhaps 10 years' time I can show boots to people from today's market and compare to what's available at that point in time.

## Do you think your collection will ever be complete?

Complete, no, but it does get to a point when you don't feel the urge to buy anything. A complete collection can only be made if you literally have everything that you intend to collect, but with football boots there is always something else to buy. Also, I don't really have any target to complete it, I enjoy the chase of getting boots I'm after and also enjoy looking for the new releases.

## What would you say to someone that says collecting boots is a waste of time?

To be honest I don't care. Everyone has their thing that makes them happy and for me it's collecting boots. I have had people say what's the point before but then when they come and see my collection and start asking questions about certain pairs they understand the passion. Within the boot collecting community there's an understanding

and I've made some very good friends through my hobby, so that alone makes it worthwhile. Some people talk about the value of the boots making it worthwhile but anyone who gets into this hobby to make money will be in for a surprise, as often it's extremely difficult to make a lot of money from collecting. Yes it is possible but it should never be the main reason for collecting. As part of my hobby I have been lucky enough to have met one of my all-time favourite footballers in Lothar Matthaus, and receive an extremely limited pair of boots from him. Meeting him was a huge day for me and to be one of the lucky people to receive a pair of boots made it even more special. If collecting boots was a waste of time then I would not be able to have memories like that.

## If your house was burning down and you only had time to save three boots from your collection, what would they be and why?

This is a very hard question to answer, but if I was forced to pick only three I'd go with the following: Cristiano Ronaldo match-worn Nike Mercurial Vapor IV, PUMA X Hublot Special Edition Falcao evoSPEED, adidas Messi 10/10 first edition.

The Ronaldo boots because they have been worn by him and that makes them priceless to me. The PUMA Hublot boot because it's simply so rare and so hard to find. The Messi 10/10 boot because I flew from Doha, Qatar to Barcelona and queued up outside the shop for around

24 hours to get a pair. Stories like this make it all worthwhile and one of the reasons I enjoy collecting so much.

## What's the most you've ever paid for a single pair of boots, and what were they?

The most expensive pair of boots in my collection are the Ronaldo match-worn Vapor IV. Owning a pair of match-worn Ronaldo boots was a goal of mine for a very long time and I really wanted a pair from when he was at Man Utd rather than his Real Madrid days. I knew about the boots and made it well-known to the owner that I was interested, but it took about two years for him to eventually sell them. I had to get these ones as I knew where they came from and there was absolutely no doubt at all about them being authentic unlike many of the so-called "match-worn" boots you see out there.

## How do you feel about the buying-for-profit trend that seems to be ever-growing?

I am in two minds about this as I see why people do it, but at the same time it's very frustrating. I hate seeing boots that I have been unable to get as they have sold out and an hour later they are on eBay for four times the amount. The problem is money can be made from boots and so people will always take advantage of that. I think it's more frustrating on new releases rather than on older boots. If someone wants to sell a pair of boots from 1998 for a lot of money it tends to only be collectors

interested in them and then I don't have much of an issue there. It's with current-day releases that I get annoyed, knowing that many of the limited edition pairs are being bought purely for the purpose of being sold for profit. I think what annoys me is that if, say, adidas released a boot for £1,000 they would receive huge criticism from the media and everyone would have an opinion on it. However, when a reseller asks for that amount it's accepted as paying the going rate.

**Would you call your boot collecting an addiction?**

One hundred percent it's an addiction. I spend hours on social media and eBay looking for new additions to my collection as well as spending a lot of time chatting to other bootheads about new releases. If I know a new boot is coming out, I will go out of my way to make sure that I am free at launch time. If I can't be online at that time I will have family and friends trying to get me a pair and when I lose out (as is often the case) I get quite annoyed and it can take me a few hours to get over the disappointment.

**How strong are the parallels between sneaker collectors and boot collectors?**

It's getting stronger all of the time. Sneakerheads are now seeing the value in the football boot market and are creeping in, mainly just to fund their next pair of sneakers for their own collections. I don't think it will ever be as big as sneaker collecting but it's definitely a growing trend. Recent collaboration between big brands and fashion companies are showing that the market for football boots is growing. Also, when you see new releases of football boots being partnered with a sneaker version, of course it raises the profile and makes a lot more people interested.

**What was the first boot you ever bought, and why did you start collecting?**

First boots I bought for collecting were

the adidas Predator Pulse Ying Yang David Beckham boots. I was a huge Beckham fan when he was at Man Utd and having those boots was a must, but this was before I actually got into collecting boots. When I played football, the adidas Predator was the ultimate boot, meaning that was what I wanted to collect. The original boot from 1994 was a boot that took me a long time to collect in brand new condition. I was fortunate enough that my wife found a pair for me and surprised me on Christmas day with them and the collection has simply grown and grown since then. More recently I have enjoyed collecting signature boots for players like Ronaldo, Messi, Neymar and any others that the big brands release.

**How many pairs of boots do you own and which is the rarest?**

At present the collection is around 350 pairs, which covers a wide variety of brands. In my collection I have boots from adidas, Nike, PUMA, Mizuno, Reebok, Concave, Lotto, Pantofola d'Oro and Pele Sports. I have never really stuck to one brand like some collectors purely because I like so many different aspects of the boots.

Rarity is hard to say as some boots had maybe more pairs released a long time ago but finding them now is extremely hard. For example, I have a pair of adidas Predator Mania Japan Blue Edition with a firm ground soleplate in brand new condition. Finding boots like this in brand new condition is virtually impossible these days so very rare. However, we now get limited editions from all brands and they can be limited to as low as 15 pairs, making them extremely rare. But normally you can find them, you just can't buy them as collectors often don't want to sell them. Then there are the match-worn pairs, which I guess in some ways are unique, so again very rare. I'd say in my whole collection the rarest boot that I own is the PUMA Hublot X Special Edition Falcao evoSPEED boot as up until now

I have never met another collector with a pair, meaning that it's extremely rare. I am sure some people out there have the boot in their collection but I just haven't come across them yet.

**Do you collect anything else football related?**

I've been collecting various pieces of Manchester United memorabilia for a very long time too. My pride and joy is my match-worn Ronaldo shirt from the 2006/07 season and it's also signed by the great man. Match-worn items for Manchester United are very expensive and I like having the few pieces that I have in my collection. My match-worn collection include shirts from Ryan Giggs, Bastian Schweinsteiger and Rio Ferdinand. I probably have around 100-200 pieces of signed memorabilia from Manchester United, which has been built over many years. I have been fortunate enough to meet a few footballers here in Qatar and enjoy getting various football items signed by the players.

**Is there a boot that has escaped you, one that you need to own but don't?**

Currently there are two football boots that I wish I could add to my collection, but I don't think it will ever happen. Firstly, the Nike Mercurial Superfly IV Carli Lloyd Limited Edition to celebrate her winning the Ballon d'Or. I have every colourway of the Superfly IV but this one limited edition boot seems to have just disappeared off the face of the world. I know of two pairs out there but that's it, and neither is for sale.

The other pair is the more limited PUMA Hublot evoSPEED Falcao boot, which is similar to the one I have but has the gold PUMA logo on the side. Only 40 pairs were released but to get them you had to purchase a watch for around £35,000 and to this day I have never seen one pair of these boots in any collection. I will never give up hope of owning these boots as the one thing that's very true in the collecting world is that you just never know what's around the corner.

