



HOWARD KENDALL – THE PRODIGY

Words // James Corbett

When Joe Royle won the FA Cup in May 1995, he was a month past his 46th birthday. Harry Catterick was 43 years and six months when the Blues won the top-flight league title in 1963. Yet when Howard Kendall lifted his second league crown as Everton manager and the fourth major trophy of his managerial career in May 1987, he was still aged just 40, having won his first two years earlier when he was 38.

And that, of course, made the great man just 37 years of age when he led Everton to victory in the 1984 FA Cup final against Graham Taylor's Watford.

So many words have been written over the years about Kendall that the extent of what he accomplished while still only a young man has been largely overlooked.

Kenny Dalglish, six years his junior, was operating as Liverpool manager during the same period, which may have overshadowed some of Kendall's prodigious achievements. But other than Dalglish, the scale of Kendall's success while a manager still in his 30s and early 40s is unmatched in English football in the four decades since.

No younger manager has ever led an English club to a European trophy than Kendall, who was a week shy of his 39th birthday.

Football came naturally to Kendall, who was a prodigy from the beginning. An England schoolboy international, he then became the youngest player to appear in an FA Cup final when he played for Preston aged 17 in 1964. (George Best was born on exactly the same day as Kendall so had Manchester United not lost in the semi-final that year, the statisticians



would have needed medical records to see who was the younger!)

Perhaps it was because he was such a natural, Kendall understood football primarily as a human endeavour. When he returned to Goodison as player/manager in 1981, taking over a team that had finished 19th the previous season, it wasn't just his superb tactical knowledge or man-management skills that transformed Everton into champions, it was also his ability to inspire belief.

And, as you can see below, he stands atop the list of the youngest managers to steer an English team to European success.

Youngest managers to win the First Division/ Premier League (since 1960):

Kenny Dalglish – Liverpool, 1985/86 – **35**
 Brian Clough – Derby County, 1971/72 – **37**
 Howard Kendall – Everton, 1984/85 – **38**
 Don Revie – Leeds United, 1968/69 – **41**
 Jose Mourinho – Chelsea, 2004/05 – **42**

Youngest managers to lead an English club to a European trophy:

Howard Kendall – Everton, 1985, ECWC – **38**
 Dave Sexton – Chelsea, 1971, ECWC – **41**
 Don Revie – Leeds, 1968, Inter City Fairs Cup – **41**
 Roberto Di Matteo – Chelsea, 2012,
 Champions League – **41**
 Brian Clough – Nottingham Forest, 1979,
 European Cup – **44**