My life in cars: Jonathan Woodgate

Jonathan Woodgate is now carving a career in football management and media punditry after being recognised as one of England's best central defenders.

Here he takes us through some of his motoring memories. Some good; some bad.

Jonathan grew up on Teesside and began his footballing career in the youth system at Middlesbrough FC. In 1996 at the age of 16, he moved to Leeds Utd where he helped the Elland Road club win the FA Youth Cup in 1997. The following year he made his senior debut and went on to make over a hundred appearances for the club and rapidly became a fan favourite.

During his time at Leeds he also won his first England cap, playing at Under 16 level. He would go on to play at U18, U21 and also in the senior England team where he made his debut in 1999 playing against Bulgaria. Sadly a series of injuries plagued Jonathan's international career.

2003 saw him move to Newcastle Utd where once again the fans took to him.

2004 saw Jonathan move to the Spanish giants Real Madrid before returning on loan in 2006 to play for his home town club, Middlesbrough. There then followed three seasons with Tottenham Hotspur followed by a move to Stoke and then finally back to Middlesbrough where, in 2016, he called it a day as a player after racking-up almost 400 games.

Since then he's been involved in coaching, scouting and management. He was most recently at Bournemouth and, such is his reputation within football, that it's only a matter of time before he's back in a dugout somewhere.

In the meantime he's working with BBC 5Live and with Match of the Day 2.

So, here's Jonathan Woodgate's life in cars....

What is the first car you can remember?

My parents had a Daihatsu Charade. They used to take me everywhere in it and it was very reliable. I used to love trips to Flamingo Land and Lightwater Valley as a kid. Also my father used to take me up and down to Leeds Utd three times a week when I starting out as a footballer.

What was the first car you owned?

My first car was a second-hand green Ford Escort Convertible with a black roof. Your first car is always so special...you never forget it.

What did you drive when you were at Newcastle Utd and Middlesbrough?

When I was at Newcastle I drove a black Cadillac Escalade with spinner alloys. That car was a big mistake..it was also left hand drive. I soon got rid of it.

At Middlesbrough I bought a beautiful Ferrari 599 GTB. It was gun metal grey with red leather. It was so quick. I got rid of that after 4 months as I was getting too much back pain. I then bought a Mercedes S65. What a fantastic car that was..it was like a speedboat...so fast but so comfortable.

What sort of car did you have at Real Madrid and how did you find driving in Spain?

In Spain, Real Madrid were sponsored by Audi at the time so we all had to drive Audis. Every player was given a club car. I had an Audi A6 which was nice. At some clubs I know that players are often given a car from a sponsor but then leave it at home and arrive in their own preferred car. At Real Madrid that wasn't advisable for the simple reason that if you weren't driving the club car, you didn't get into the car park at the ground.

Did you ever get a sponsored car?

No only a club car.

Smart car or a mobile skip?

Smart car. I like to keep it clean..inside and out.

Any motoring embarrassments?

Yes. While in Spain I once parked outside a garage but didn't realise that it was in use. It was covered in graffiti so I just thought I could park there. I didn't realise that it was actually the garage which belonged to a block of flats and I'd stopped people getting in or out for over two hours. I remember walking back to my car thinking 'what are all those people doing next to my car'. Then I realised they were kicking it and trying to smash the windows. They were going crazy. I had to ring my team-mate, Javi Garcia, who helped by speaking to the police etc to get me out of the situation. Oops.

What's your favourite road trip? Did you get a chance to explore Spain?

I didn't really get a chance to explore Spain but when I go to Ibiza every summer I hire a Jeep and go exploring with the kids to different parts of the island. It's such an amazing place.

Steady Eddy or a bit of a speedster?

I'm a bit of both really but only in the right areas.

Worst (if any) accident you have been involved in?

Touch wood I have never been involved in any accidents myself.

What have been your favourite cars?

The Mercedes S65 was my best by far.

Worst Car you've had?

Land Rover Discovery. It was nightmare... so unreliable.

And finally...your dream car?

I don't really have a dream car as I have had a lot of cars but when I was young I always wanted to drive a big Mercedes.