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This Sporting Life: Over 100 BBC Broadcast Sport Reviews 1984-1988

Deric Longden

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Deric Longden was best known for his books which touched millions in print and on screen, and which were critically acclaimed on both the UK and International stage. Many of the stories he told were drawn from his broadcasting days with BBC Radio Derby and BBC Radio Nottingham, where he enjoyed regular slots and a large audience of loyal listeners.
Deric said that he had the best job he could wish for, being paid for sharing his passion for sport through his reporting and broadcasting. Whether it was providing his insight and often humorous observations on the performance of his local football club Matlock Town, or reviewing the sporting moments of the week, as only he could see them, he did it in his own style.
One of his funniest broadcasts came when, faced with an abandoned football game and other matches called off up and down the country, his producer demanded him to get a live interview with the Town manager Peter Swan. Swan had already gone, so Deric interviewed a duck he found on the flooded pitch. The duck's answer to Deric's probing questions was, 'quack.' Not only was the interview live and the duck real, but it went on to be one of the most requested interviews on the station.
These typescripts of his weekly Radio Nottingham Sports Review were discovered in the basement of his home, carefully filed and adorned with his handwritten scribbles to assist him during the broadcasts and prompting him as to where to pause for breathe. They give further insight into workings of the mind of this comic genius and his love of sport. They cover a period in the mid-80s which gave us many rich sporting moments and stars. Steve Davis ruled the world of snooker, Liverpool and Everton football, English cricket gave us Gatting, Botham, Gooch; Torvill and Dean skated into our memories, Mike Tyson and Mervin Haglar dominated the boxing ring and Alan Shearer and Paul Gascoigne at the age of 17 made their league debuts. These were the days when football was in decline and English clubs banned from Europe, before Lance Armstrong was exposed for doping and the US cycling team was stripped of their medals. The characters may have changed but Deric's observations and thoughts on the sports themselves still hold true.

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