

BBC tv

PRESS PACK

**It's a
Knockout**



Television & Radio Press Information

MANCHESTER

BBC INFORMATION
NEW BROADCASTING HOUSE
P.O. BOX 27 OXFORD ROAD

MANCHESTER M60 1SJ ★ 061-236 8444

IT'S A (BIGGER, BRIGHTER)

KNOCKOUT

1966 - 1976

Issued by James Conway, Information, BBC Manchester on 061 236 8444 Ex 2355,
who will also be on location with the series.

KNOCKOUT ANNIVERSARY

It's a Knockout is 10 years old. Celebrating in style, the new series returns to where it all began, on the sea front at Morecambe.

There are more shows than ever before with 21 towns competing to win a place in the international rounds. Host town for the British heat of Jeux sans Frontieres is Leeds and, as it is our turn to stage the Grand Final this year, Blackpool has been selected as the location for the show which is expected to have an audience of around 200M in September.

The very first It's a Knockout was broadcast live from Morecambe sands in 1966 and nearly ended in disaster. The tide came in during the closing minutes and the cameramen were up to their knees in water by the end.

This time, the show will be staged on the promenade.

There is a strong North v South flavour to the contest, with the Midlands and Scotland also staking a claim.

Three towns take part in each of the seven 'domestic' heats, with the winner from each programme representing Britain in the international series which includes teams from France, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Holland and Switzerland.

For the first time this year, the seven successful British towns will also participate in a special All-Winners programme to be recorded on neutral ground at Charnock Richard, Lancashire, for the Radio Times trophy.

There is also another all-star celebrity edition following the success of last year's charity-raising event, and a Cup Final special with teams of supporters from the two clubs who win through to Wembley.

Cecil Korer takes over as producer this year from Barney Colehan, who launched the show. However, Barney, who retired from the BBC in January, will still act as adviser on the series.

cont'd.....

"We are determined to put more fun back into the show," says Cecil. "I want to revive the original concept of the series as a happy entertainment with lots of humour. In recent years, it has become too competitive and serious.

"The European versions have often been crazier than ours and now we are importing some of that flavour with daft props and costumes.

"The bonus for the teams will be that they will have the chance to take part in European-style games before Jeux sans Frontieres actually starts. British teams haven't performed so well lately. The changes we are making should alter that."

Here's a run down of the series. The attached chart gives it in more detail.

TOWNS AND TEAMS

The nation-wide contest starts on April 4 with Morecambe playing host to Blackpool and Liverpool.

On April 11, Hanley Park at Stoke-on-Trent is the venue when Birmingham and Tamworth challenge the home team.

A week later on April 18, Cirencester and Newbury lay siege at picturesque Sudeley Castle, in Gloucestershire, used as a location for The Pallisers, against a local team from Winchcombe.

Yorkshire enters the fray on May 2 when Kirklees, Doncaster and Leeds meet at the Princess Mary Playing Fields, Cleckheaton.

Harlow are at home to Thurrock and Lee Valley, at the Sportscentre on May 9.

The Boating Lake on the sea front at Redcar will be the scene of a contest between the home team and Carlisle and Durham on May 16.

The domestic series winds up on May 23. Stirling are the hosts when the town takes on Edinburgh and Linlithgow at King's Park, Stirling.

cont'd.....

BACKGROUND AND BIOGRAPHIES

It's a Knockout has become a national institution and an international phenomenon. Its roots go back more than 20 years when then producer Barney Colehan first launched a series in the North called Top Town, in which communities competed against each other in a studio.

Knockout was born in 1966 and has never looked back. The following year, Europe joined in and set in motion the crazy international competition Jeux sans Frontieres.

Knockout's inimitable duo, Stuart Hall and Eddie Waring are the commentators again, and former international soccer referee Arthur Ellis is the senior referee.

STUART HALL

Stuart Hall, who made his Knockout debut in 1972, presents Look North, the BBC North West weeknight TV magazine programme in Manchester and makes frequent appearances on the network in Nationwide.

A Lancashire lad, he first broadcast in 1958 as a radio contributor in Sports Spotlight. He has reported on soccer, cricket, tennis, motor racing and motor cycling, as well as current affairs.

His great loves are football, fast cars and antique clocks. Perhaps the clocks reign supreme - he loves their sense of continuity.

Married the same year he started broadcasting - 1958 - Stuart has two teenage children, Francesca and Daniel. His home in Glossop, Derbyshire, is crammed with antique clocks, Victorian furniture, bronzes and old portraits.

He sees Knockout as essentially a "fun show" and is determined to make it as entertaining as possible for competitors and viewers.

cont'd.....

EDDIE WARING

Eddie joined the programme in 1966 and has vast experience of Knockout recordings all over Europe.

He has been a top BBC personality ever since TV came to the North in 1951, becoming a household name in covering Rugby League.

Born in Dewsbury, Eddie played soccer, Rugby Union, Rugby League - and was a wrestler, too.

A globe-trotter, he has made seven trips round the world and appeared on TV in Australia, New Zealand and the U.S.

Eddie usually gives a special blow-by-blow account of the mini-marathon contest, which can be a vital tie-breaker in a tight contest. "For me," he says, "the programme really comes alive when we go into Europe. The atmosphere is electric, the competition intense, and yet so enjoyable. It's an exciting show to do."

CECIL KORER
Producer

Cecil joins the series as producer this year, but he is by no means unfamiliar with the programme. He worked on the first two series in 1966 and 1967 as an assistant producer. Since then he's been involved with such shows as Children Talking as director, and produced such quizzes as Password and Ask the Family.

In recent years, he has worked in London, but returned to the North - he was born in Stockport - in the Autumn of 1975 to take over Knockout from Barney Colehan and develop other programme ideas from Leeds.

He has worked on the production team of such other long-running favourites as Top of the Pops and The Good Old Days, where he first established his working relationship with Barney.

cont'd.....

ARTHUR ELLIS
Referee

Arthur Ellis, from Halifax, one of the best-known soccer referees in the world, has officiated in practically every country that plays first-class football.

He refereed World Cup ties and 73 internationals in his time, and became the first English referee to be awarded the Gold Badge of FIFA.

He now works as a brewery representative.

THE SCOREGIRLS

They're not just pretty faces; they also help the judges and Eddie and Stuart adjudicate and add up the scores. This year they are as follows: Hazel Lyons, from Ossett, Wakefield, Dinah May, from Little Neston, Cheshire, Lena Skoog, from Sweden, who now lives in South West London and Marie Worth, from Kinsley, Pontefract, Yorkshire.

THE BACKROOM BOYS (AND GIRLS)

Behind the scenes, there's a dedicated team that the Knockout live audiences see going about their complex duties, but are discreetly out of sight of the TV audiences.

The director is Geoff Wilson, who makes sure that the producer and engineers' efforts reach the screen in the way they were envisaged in the calm of the planning meetings.

Cecil has the assistance of Alan Wright and Alan Walsh, who lead the full-time workers responsible for the months of advance preparation which go into the smooth running of the series.

The design team of Paul Montague, Paul Trerise and Mel Bibby, are responsible for devising and constructing the games.

cont'd.....

Engineering manager Geoff Lomas ensures that all the complicated equipment functions correctly, and the stage managers, led by Bryan Chapman, can be seen racing backwards and forwards talking to the director's mobile control van, via 'walkie talkie' radios during the course of the recording.

IT'S A KNOCKOUT

1976

JEUX SANS FRONTIERES

	Venue	Contestants	Recording Date	Trans Date	Winner goes forward to European heatd held at	Date
Round One	Promenade Morecambe	Morecambe, Blackpool, Liverpool.	April 4	May 21	Nimes, France.	June 2
Round Two	Hanley Park, Stoke-on-Trent	Stoke-on-Trent, Birmingham, Tamworth.	April 11	May 28	Milan, Italy	June 16
Round Three	Sudeley Castle, Winchcombe	Winchcombe, Cirencester, Newbury.	April 18	June 4	Caslano, Switzerland	June 23
Round Four	Princess Mary Playing Fields, Cleckheaton	Kirklees, Leeds, Doncaster.	May 2	June 11	Roundhay Park, Leeds	July 14
Round Five	Sportscentre, Harlow, Essex	Harlow, Lee Valley, Thurrock.	May 9	June 18	Liege, Belgium	August 11
Round Six	Boating Lake, Seafront, Redcar	Redcar, Durham, Carlisle.	May 16	June 25	Bad Mergentheim, Germany	August 25
Round Seven	King's Park, Stirling	Stirling, Edinburgh, Linlithgow.	May 23	July 2	Groningen, Holland	Sept. 8
All British Winners Champs.	Arena North, Charnock Richard, Lancs.	Winner of each domestic heat.	June 27			
Final	Blackpool	Highest placed British team in international heats	Sept. 22			