

Half of managers have heart fears



ENGLISH bosses are an endangered breed according to their own association – no fewer than 47 out of 98 football managers who took a health check were revealed to have heart conditions.

The League Managers Association's chief executive John Barnwell condemned the practice of targeting managers for the sack, and therefore placing extra stress on an already highly-pressured job.

Alan Pardew, Iain Dowie, Glenn Roeder and Stuart Pearce have all suffered the intensity of the spotlight in the 'race' to become the first Premiership manager to be sacked this season.

Even new England coach Steve McClaren has suffered



Harry Harris

ON SATURDAY

the torment of a media backlash for England's last two abysmal displays in the Euro 2008 qualifiers.

Barnwell said: "Managers at the highest level have experienced, in the last few years, an intensity in the job that has never been there before. So much is at stake that the job stays with them when they go home, they cannot switch off.

"We recognise this comes with the job, and managers have to cope and live with it. Unfortunately it affects others down the line, their families in particular and it can be incredibly traumatic for them.

"There is an insatiable desire from the public and the board of directors for immediate success, and this

has increased incredibly. Managers have become icons of the game, and it is how they can handle the stress – but no one handles it better than Sir Alex Ferguson.

"But there is no doubt that managers are suffering heart conditions because of the regime they work in – and we have a scheme 'fit to manage' which has a heart-monitoring system.

"We now know that 47 out of the 98 managers have heart conditions. None are life-threatening, but we know they should be regularly checked out.

"If they follow the right procedures, fine, if not we could have another Gerrard Houllier, who became ill at the dug-out with Liverpool a few years back.

"We have had Joe Kinnear collapsing in the tunnel at Sheffield Wednesday and of course Jock Stein...it cost him his life. And we must make sure that it doesn't

happen again." Barnwell added: "It is not right that managers are targeted for the sack, but that's the society we live in and we are not going to stop it. But it doesn't mean it's right.

"However, I have always said that if a manager doesn't like the pressure he should put his coat on and go home.

"It does affect families, so you have to be strong enough, resilient. Of course it depends on the domestic problem.

"I have always said this game is about happiness and sadness, and you have to be the same fellow who puts his head on the pillow each night, whether a success or failure."

Barnwell believes clubs are their own worst enemies, saying: "Time and patience are, commodities lacking in this game. The few clubs that do show patience with their managers are usually the successful clubs."

WARNING:
Ex-Liverpool boss Houllier suffered illness
Picture: REUTERS