

Stress kit cuts risk for bosses

STRESSED-OUT football managers will be wired up this season to check for early signs of heart attacks.

Monitors have been sent to every club and managers in today's big Football League kick-off will have the first chance to try them out, with Premiership bosses joining in the scheme in a fortnight.

In recent years, former Liverpool boss Gerard Houllier and Braeme Souness suffered heart attacks and Kenny Dalglish became so stressed at Newcastle that he had to quit. New research shows that 44 per cent of managers are at risk.

The League Managers' Association already carry out annual checks through the Wellness Centre in Stockport but now they have done a deal with Polar, who make monitoring equipment, to keep a closer eye on all 92 managers and their players. LMA chief executive

EXCLUSIVE By NEIL MOXLEY

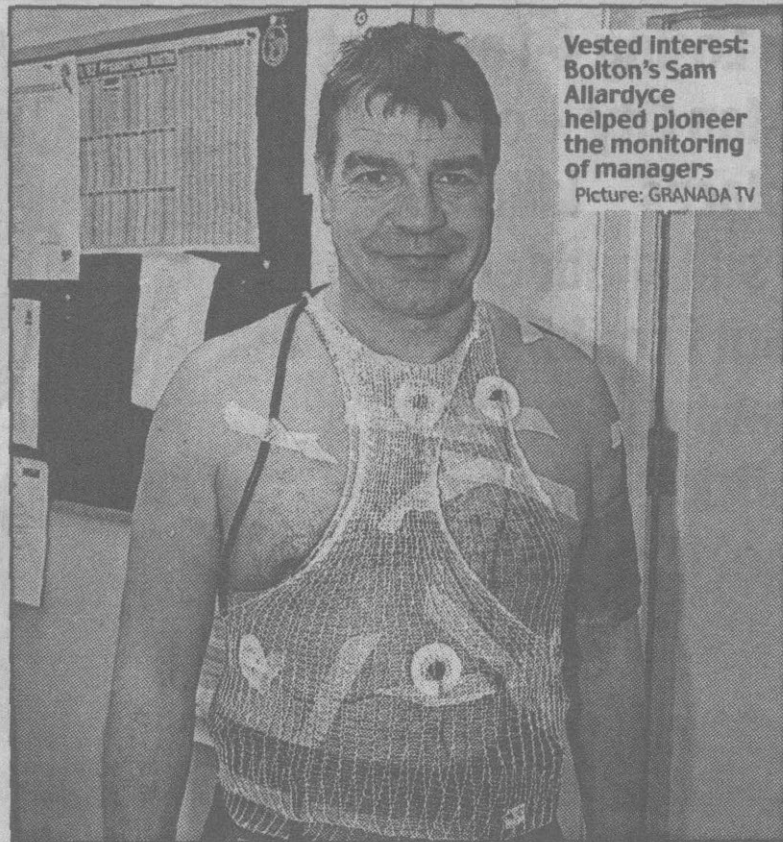
John Barnwell said: 'Special straps and watches have been sent out to managers at each of the 92 clubs.'

'These hi-tech gadgets enable every club to measure heart-rates, both for the players and their manager.'

'As far as the players are concerned, the programme is mainly to monitor fitness levels. However, for the managers it can also show if there are any potential problems.'

'It is a sophisticated piece of equipment and an extension of the service that we already provide via the Wellness Centre.'

'There are guidelines as to how to use the strap and watch but it is really up to the individual manager how he uses them for themselves and his team. Once the information is gathered it can be downloaded into a



Vested Interest:
Bolton's Sam Allardyce helped pioneer the monitoring of managers
Picture: GRANADA TV

computer and analysed by cardio-vascular experts that the association has access to via the centre in Stockport.

'That will flag up any deficiencies in fitness levels as far as the players are concerned. And it may also indicate whether there are any more serious issues with the managers.'

Eighty bosses are already enrolled in a 'Fit to Manage' course that is administered in Cheshire, funded largely through the Premier League. They undergo a series of tests and are checked regularly. Research shows that

incidents of stress-related illnesses are increasing. Malcolm Douglas, spokesman for Polar, said: 'The feedback we have been getting is that the straps can help enormously.'

'For managers in any walk of life it does show quite clearly whether someone is under stress or not.'

'Football managers are exposed to massive pressure and if we can help one person to see the warning signs, then the partnership with the LMA will have been worthwhile.'

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