**ADIDAS 2014 FIFA WORLD CUP BRAZIL™ PLAYER Q&A**

***Steven Gerrard, midfield, England***

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**It’s England vs Luis Suarez this summer. What will it be like facing a player you are used to seeing torment other sides for Liverpool?**

It’s not going to be easy, that’s for certain! I can’t speak highly enough of Luis as a player. He’s in the top five players in the world. I’d rather play in the same team than have him running at me with the ball, but I haven’t got much choice in the matter this summer. He’s world-class, and I know him well. I know his strengths and his few weaknesses. So it’s going to be tough.

**But you have some great players in the England team, too…**

Yes, we have got so much young attacking talent, it is exciting. I’m going to have to use my knowledge and experience of Luis to try and help beat him on the day, but on the other side, he will be doing the same thing with the Liverpool lads. He will be telling the Uruguay side all the insider information he has, he knows the strength of all the great players that he has to face in the Premier League, and that he faces in training. But these stories, these games – that’s what the World Cup is all about.

**How exciting is it to be playing in Brazil, a place that just makes you automatically think of football?**It doesn’t get any better, really. It’s iconic. It feels like the home of football, alongside England. They are absolutely football crazy out there, and the crowds will be really interesting. It’s funny playing in England, because you talk to all the foreign lads who come over and they want to play at Wembley, they grew up seeing Wembley on their TVs. But the Maracana has that same feel about it, the same special sense, and the idea of playing a World Cup final at the Maracana – that’s an absolute dream. It should be a really special summer.

**How tough will it be to get out of the group? Italy are a very solid outfit at the moment…**

It’s going to be tricky of course, but there are no easy games in these tournaments and we got handed a very hard draw. But you go to the tournament to play in and win tough games. As well as Luis and Uruguay – and there are plenty of other players in that Uruguay team to worry about apart from Luis – Italy are definitely going to be hard opponents. They qualified for the tournament with two games to spare and they are very solid. Cesare Prandelli has put together a great side, and Italy always seem to step up their game in the World Cup. They will have their eyes on the final.

**Even the Costa Rica game won’t be easy…**

And you can’t go into a match against Costa Rica thinking it is won before it has even started, that’s how you get yourself in trouble. Look at the amount of upsets in past World Cups. Every single tournament, there are always upsets. There will be some in this tournament for sure. So we need to be professional and make sure we win that game, which people are expecting us to win, and don’t make headlines for the wrong reasons.

**You missed the 2002 World Cup with injury, but made it to 2006 and 2010. How special will this tournament be?**

Missing out in 2002 was devastating and it brings home how special this World Cup is. There are some great players out there who never got to play in a World Cup at all, so to play in three will be something really incredible. I know I’m lucky to have a third go. It’s all about competing against the best sides and individuals on the planet, and of course that dream about coming home as heroes in an England shirt, which I have never experienced.

**How much would success in the World Cup mean to you? Would it top everything else in your career.**

I have dreamt about it. I’m sure everyone has. I have got close to it, too. Penalty shoot-outs in the last eight are close, but they aren’t as close as you want to be. You want to be walking out for a World Cup final in an England shirt. The thought of lifting that trophy, it is just amazing. I also feel like I need to do myself justice at a World Cup. I have come out of the tournaments with England regretting that we haven’t gone to that extra stage, the semis, the final. As for my career, I’ve had some brilliant moments, and winning the European Cup in Istanbul with Liverpool is top of the list, but to win a World Cup would be another level, the absolute pinnacle of a football career.

**Is there less pressure on England this time round than there has been over the last eight to ten years?**

Maybe. It’s always there to a degree, but I think the unrealistic expectation and pressure has gone, which is a good thing, and it will help the team. People realise what this team is capable of, what we do well and where we need to improve, and that’s healthy. We have to get the balance right of being confident in our own game and not getting carried away.

**So what chance have England got of actually winning the tournament, and should that be the goal?**

Things are moving forward, we are coming together well and the manager is doing the right things and creating the right atmosphere. We have got a good side with some exciting young talent in it, and a few older more experienced heads like myself. The first thing is to get out of the group, preferably by winning it, and then take each game as it comes. But you have got to go to a tournament believing that you can compete with anyone on your day, and make it deep, deep into the competition. I believe that. Our goal absolutely has to be to win it.

**If you get out the group, you’ll play someone from Group C. Have you thought about a preferred opponent?**

No. It’s a difficult group to call – Colombia, Ivory Coast, Greece and Japan. They all have a chance of getting out of that group. The key thing is to try to win the group so we face whoever is runner-up in that one. That’s always an advantage.

**Will this be your last World Cup, do you think? Might you retire internationally after the World Cup?**

You can never say for certain, but I’ll be 37 in 2018! I’d like to play for as long as possible – there are a quite a few outfield players going at 40. That appetite and desire will always be there. But we’ll have to see what is best for me, my body and my game. For now I just want to go to Brazil, give it my best, and after the tournament I will chat to the right people and make a decision. It’s not something you decide overnight.

**How amazing would it be for England to walk out at the Maracana for a World Cup final?**

It’s crazy just imagining what the supporters would be like. I know this from Liverpool in Istanbul. There were two teams playing in that final, but three sides of the ground was red, our supporters just took over. And the English fans are like that too. They would travel anywhere on the world to watch England play, so to walk out to something like that, you know 90% of the stadium would be England fans. It sends shivers down you spine to even imagine it.

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