



1990: Paul Parker at Villa Park during Rangers' 2-2 draw

machine and let them make the match-winning pass. If I'd realised that a lot earlier I think I would have been the best right-back this country has ever produced."

Was losing the World Cup Semi-Final against Germany in Italia '90 the most disappointing thing to happen in your career or was the game your proudest achievement?

"To be honest I wasn't that disappointed - I'd achieved something I never thought I would.

I didn't think I'd get more than one game during the tournament because I had a hernia on the way and was getting pain-killing injections in my groin, plus I was recovering from a broken toe.

Before leaving for Italy all I was concerned about was whether I could train and run up and down the touch-line as sub and warm up - that was the limit of my hopes.

In the end I played six out of the seven games and I was just so happy to be in the Semi Final. When it went down to penalties I couldn't throw my boots away quick enough.

I couldn't have taken one with countless millions of people watching on the television all over the world, I tell you, it was never going to be me taking one of those spot kicks.

I didn't get upset or emotional although I suppose if we'd got to the Final we could have won it. The team got better as the tournament progressed and I think we really deserved to win against Germany.

But I've got a solid bronze medal and at this moment in time there are only twenty-two players who own winners medals in the country and only twenty-four with bronze medals - I'm happy to be one of that minority."

When you got home did you get much stick because of your deflection on 'that' German goal?

I still get stick today - there have been a couple of nasty incidents too. I was at a dinner where one of the speakers, who knew I was there, kept saying that 'Paul Parker cost us the World Cup'.

In the end I felt embarrassed for the guy because a lot of people knew me there and nobody laughed, he made an idiot of himself.

The worst thing about the night was when my missus went to the bar to get a pint of coke to throw over the bloke, luckily a mate's wife spotted her and calmly sat her down and stopped her from attacking him.

But there have been a lot of people who've shouted out snide remarks since, but I just look at them and laugh.

If I meant to do it, well, come and punch me on the nose right now, most people realise I did what I had to do, it was just a freak goal."