

SIR ALEX FERGUSON

MY TOUGHEST BATTLE

I was looking around and it struck me that of our fans will die

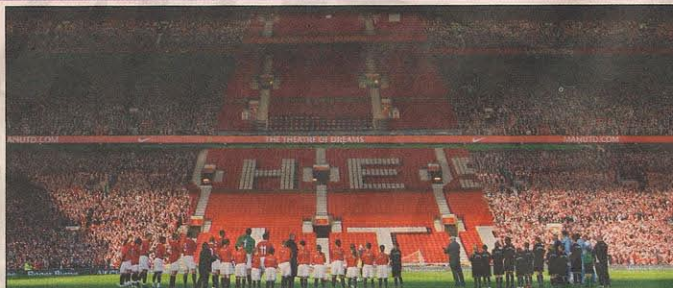
Old Trafford one in three from cancer

By **ROB SHEPHERD**
Football Editor

SIR ALEX FERGUSON today makes a passionate appeal to Prime Minister Gordon Brown to fund a revolutionary cancer cure.

The Manchester United manager has cast aside his spats with referees, his fights with the FA and his mind games with rival Premier League bosses to fight for the one thing 23 years of unrivalled football success cannot guarantee you... health.

Cancer treatment is a subject close to Fergie's heart. Both his parents died from lung cancer, he has seen the disease claim the lives of many friends - including former England manager Sir Bobby Robson and United fan Dave Rensimon - while his brother Martin is recovering from prostate cancer.



■ THE HARSH REALITY - how Old Trafford would look without the one in three supporters who will die from cancer

Cash

Fergie worries about the killer disease enough to have himself checked by doctors every 12 months.

And now, backed by a host of celebrities, the most successful football manager in history is demanding cash for the development of radical new treatment Photo Dynamic Therapy.

PDT can kill cancers in a single 20-minute session and without the horrific side-effects of chemotherapy and radiotherapy.

And the 68-year-old Scot admits: "I was looking around Old Trafford the other day and it dawned on me: One in three of those magnificent fans will die from cancer." The North Stand would be empty.

"Cancer could get me - or you. The thought of any cancer fills me with dread: Lung cancer. Stomach,

Bladder. Pancreatic. What about mouth or throat cancer? I think any cancer at my age would be a terrible risk to me. That is why I go to the doctor each year

for tests to see if there are any early signs of cancer, and if there are, the sooner we can get treatment, the better it is. Getting those early signs improves people's chances of being able to combat cancer. But I've learned that cancer is a part of life that escapes nobody.

"Mum and Dad both died from lung cancer. My brother, Martin, has thankfully recovered from prostate cancer. My father got bowel cancer at 47 and had to have a colostomy. One week after he retired, the cancer came back in his lungs and he died a year later, aged 68.

"My mother was a smoker all her life and anyone who does that runs the risk. She

got lung cancer and died a year after my father. She was 64. I've also had many friends who have died from cancer. It is one of those diseases that everyone prays we will find an answer for.

"Two years ago everyone at United was searching for a cancer cure that could help Dave - a gentle giant of a man so well known to everyone at the club. He had pancreatic cancer. Eight thousand people die of this every year. Few survive."

Ferguson has built a glittering tower of success during his 23 years at the world's most famous club: Two European Cups, two FIFA Club World Cups, one UEFA Super Cup, one European Cup Winners' Cup, 11 Premier League titles, five FA Cups, three League Cups and eight FA Community Shields. But he wants to

build his most successful team ever - better than his 1999 Treble winners, better than his 2008 European Cup and Premier League Double winners.

A team that defeats cancer. His health squad includes Blackburn boss Sam Allardyce and Rangers manager Walter Smith, snooker stars Ronnie O'Sullivan, Stephen Hendry and Steve Davis, 14-times darts world champion Phil Taylor, rock stars Roger Daltrey and Robert Plant and TV legends Sir David Frost and Chris Tarrant.

They have all met cancer sufferers who have been CURED with PDT.

The treatment kills cancer cells through a combination of drugs and light, which starves the cancer of oxygen, allowing the body to heal and create new, healthy cells.

And, unlike chemo, there is no chemical poisoning of the body.

Future

Sir Alex added: "I wish that PDT had been available for Dave and my parents."

"It could have given my mother and father a chance and a choice of what they went through. We can't change the past, but we can change the future.

"If one million Manchester United fans all donated £10, the medics could maybe get PDT approved and in use for pancreatic, throat, breast and lung cancer."

PDT treatment is available in the UK only for skin, head and neck, mouth, lung and oesophageal cancers.

Despite being approved by the NHS, fewer than 300 of the 300,000 patients diagnosed with cancer received it last year.

The KILLING Cancer campaign Fergie is endorsing has set a target of having PDT treatments approved and available on the NHS for half of all cancer patients within three years.

Sir Alex said: "A number of PDT trials are desperately short of funds. The PDT trial for arterial and heart disease was

stopped years ago. The work on bladder, stomach, colon and several others has never even started."

Fergie is making his plea for government and private funding on both the official Manchester United website and the KILLING Cancer homepage. Health leaflets are to be distributed to every United season ticket holder.

"I think it's fantastic what PDT can do," he says. "I am supporting the campaign to raise funds for PDT research and to get more treatment centres. We are out to save people's lives. That message has to be stronger."

"We have to get that message out to people in government and the NHS who can do something about it."

Ferguson gave a moving speech at Sir Bobby's memorial service after lung cancer claimed the life of one of football's dearest at the age of 76.

"Anyone who has reached my stage in life has had many experiences of cancer," admits Ferguson.

"Over many years I've spoken to patients with cancer who are having chemotherapy and radiotherapy. They have their really bad days and it really brings them down."

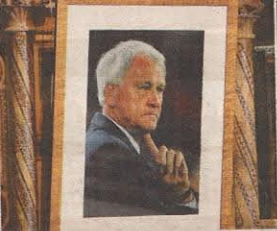
"If there was another way, we must make them aware of it. If they want to go to a doctor who is going to operate, remove their organs to save their lives and then go through with the radiotherapy or the chemotherapy, then it's a choice.

But if there is another choice that debars all these pains and surgery, we must look at it. This is why PDT must be given a voice and a platform so people can make a choice. It's as simple as that.

"We can make the difference. We can create one of the most successful, winning teams - this one dedicated to defeating cancer."

"I have made my donation. Please join me."

At my age any type of the disease would pose terrible risk



It killed both my parents and a lot of friends



That is why I'm giving my backing to a radical new treatment

KILLING cancer
FOR more information on how you can help in the battle against cancer, go to www.killingcancer.co.uk