



TOUR: Comic Attack

Em: I'm 30 and selfish

EMILY Atack says she has started putting herself first since turning 30.

The *Inbetweeners* star, who is preparing for her second comedy tour this autumn, said she had been "so scared" about reaching the milestone.

The actress and stand-up said she had written her new show for the "prosecco-drinking, cackling women that love the Kardashians and hen dos". She said: "The first tour was about the woes and worries of turning 30.

"Everything really does start to change at 30.

"You start to make better decisions.

"Since I have hit 30 I find that I am making different decisions. I am putting myself first more and being a bit more selfish."

Couple in legal con

A COUPLE defrauded solicitors out of more than £60,000 by inflating translation costs for legal aid documents.

Alexandru Major, 35, and Babita Attra, 41, of Catford, London, were found guilty of fraud at Inner London Crown Court.

He was jailed for three years and she got a suspended two-year term.

CHIPS BEAT DOGS

POLICE sniffer dogs could lose their jobs after scientists revealed a new microchip that allows robots to distinguish between smells.

HOW BEAUTIFUL GAME KICKED OFF

Passing of time



TOFFS HAVE A BALL: Edward Holcroft leads charge in *The English Game*. Left, passions start to blaze

THERE'S a great bit near the start of *The English Game*, Netflix's new football drama, where captain Fergus insists his side must update their tactics.

"Two full-backs, three half-backs," he suggests to the boss, "and we keep five up top."

As you can imagine, the boss is not convinced. His reply? "We always play six up front."

The year is 1879, the side is Darwen FC, a team of Lancashire mill workers, and the football played is, well, a bit different from the football we know now.

Created by *Downton Abbey*'s Julian Fellowes, *The English*



Game takes us back nearly a century and a half, to tell the story of how the modern professional game began to take shape. And, as you'll see, it's come a long way.

The ball back then could weigh up to double what today's does.

A side like Darwen would take the field in cut-off trousers and boots they'd worn all day.

The goals had no nets, often

no crossbar. The grass was overgrown. "There weren't any markings either, not even a centre spot," explains historical consultant Andy Mitchell. "And there was no referee on the pitch, just a couple of umpires who'd flag if there was a foul."

Not that many fouls were given back then because roughness was part and parcel of the game, at least as played by the southern upper classes who dominated it.

The seemingly unstoppable Old Etonians, led by their talisman Arthur Kinnaird (Edward Holcroft), knew no other way.

"It was like rugby but without the handling," says Andy. But

big changes were coming, as the series reveals. A version of football with actual passing had evolved up north. And Darwen had controversially signed two Scots from Partick who excelled at it, Fergus Suter and James Love (Kevin Guthrie and James Harkness). They'd soon have the toffs deeply rattled.

"When you're faced with these large, well-fed southern gentlemen, you can't go through them," explains Andy. "But if you pass the ball, you can use your skill to overcome that."

These two different styles of football summed up the Victorian class divide, a theme throughout the show. The fact

that Suter and Love were being paid to play was seen by the posh guys as particularly vulgar.

But Kinnaird's attitude, at least, would change. He'd come to play a key role in football's evolution. Also pivotal was James Walsh (Craig Parkinson), Darwen's mill owner.

"It's an extraordinary story," says executive producer Rory Aitken. "And yet even people deeply involved in football don't know it - the history of their own sport."

●The English Game, a six-part drama, is on Netflix from today.

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