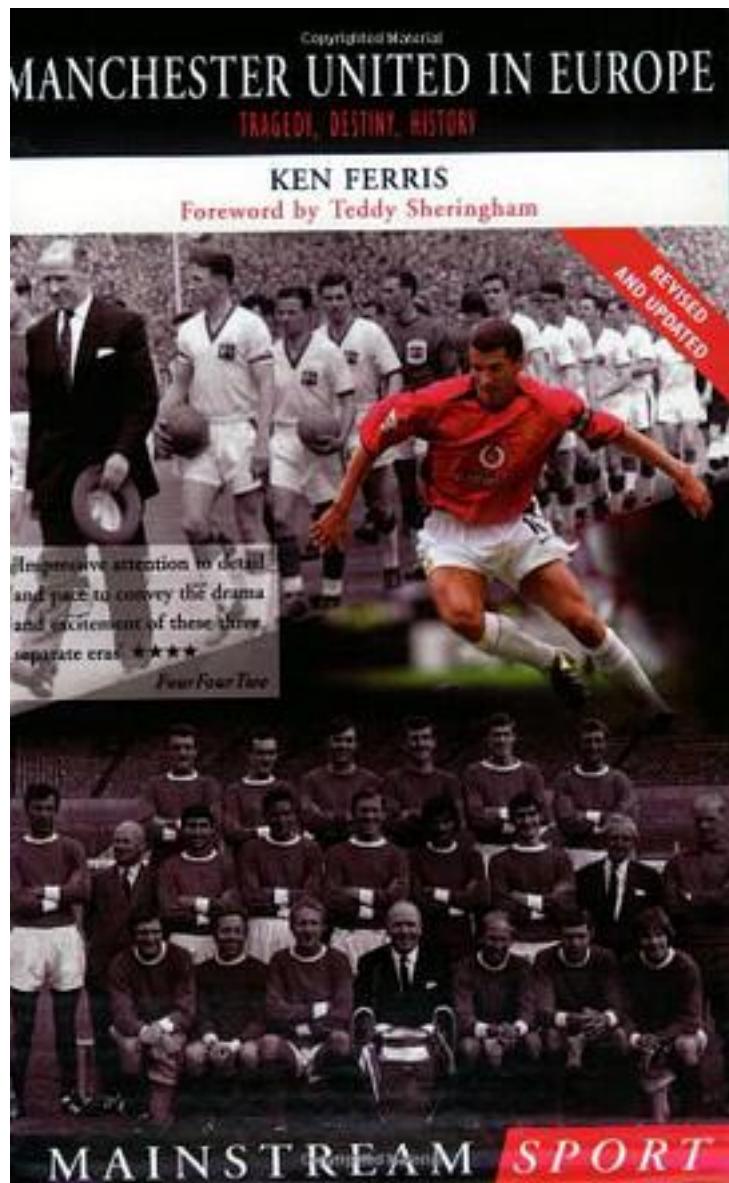


Manchester United in Europe



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Manchester United's quest to win the European Cup was forged amidst the charred remains of an Elizabethan airliner that crashed on take-off at Munich's Riem Airport on 6 February 1958. Twenty-three people died in the tragedy, including eight of the famous Busby Babes. From that moment manager Matt Busby's goal of winning the European Cup became an obsession that permeated the whole club. Ten years after the Munich disaster, Busby achieved his dream when United - inspired by Bobby Charlton and George Best - beat Benfica 4-1 in extra time to lift the European Cup at Wembley. Some felt the ghosts of Munich were there to witness the club's joy. It seemed to be United's destiny finally to honour those who had lost their lives in pursuit of the gleaming silver trophy. But that triumph was to hang over the club for the next 31 years as United failed to regain those heights. Alex Ferguson's arrival spawned a flood of trophies, but the European Cup - by then known as the Champions League - remained elusively outside their grasp. Then came the last final of the twentieth century, against Bayern Munich in the towering splendour of Barcelona's Nou Camp, when United snatched a 2-1 victory from

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