



LILIANE TANNOURY

Football's first lady talks tackling the game's brightest stars

Matt Monaghan



@mattmonaghan360 | mattmonaghan@sport360.com

When it comes to knowing football's biggest names, Al Arabiya senior sports presenter and producer Liliane Tannoury boasts a wealth of experience.

The Lebanese Dubai resident has covered a variety of the sport's biggest events, including two World Cups, as well as Formula One Grand Prix and leading horse races. Among many others, the likes of Real Madrid's Cristiano Ronaldo, Chelsea's Diego Costa, Atletico Madrid's Antoine Griezmann and Everton's Wayne Rooney have all featured on her programmes.

Sport360° caught up with the Dubai Eye contributor to discuss what makes football's finest tick, plus her tips for a successful career in sports broadcasting.

Away from doing your daily bulletins on Al Arabiya, you also present a monthly programme covering the big leagues in Europe. Who were your favourite interviewees from last season?

I have had a great experience. It is always nice to interview players during the season, or before the season to promote it.

The main players I spoke to were Wayne Rooney, when he was at Manchester United, and also Antoine Griezmann at Atletico Madrid, plus Manchester City's Sergio Aguero.

I do 11 interviews every season, but those three were the best. They did good ratings for Al Arabiya when they were shown.

From those three, which did you enjoy the most?

It would have to be Antoine Griezmann, because I like his story.

When I got to the Vicente Calderon, it was in the preparations for the new season. Everybody was happy that the new season was only two or three days away.

I could see that Atletico Madrid are all very close, from the owners, to the manager and the players.

Griezmann was very honest and his story, talking about his father and how he went to Spain when he

wasn't wanted in France, showed so much.

I spoke to him in French and that meant he could be more honest and flexible in his responses.

You speak a number of languages. How important is that for your job?

I speak Arabic, English, French, Portuguese and a little bit of Spanish.

This helps a lot. So many players in the Premier League speak Spanish and Portuguese, as well as French.

Most of the players prefer to speak their language, so they are not misunderstood.

What are your main duties with Al Arabiya and what have you learned working there?

I am a senior presenter for Al Arabiya and have been there for 14 years.

I present sports news, four times a week. I can work long hours, from 3pm to 2am.

14 years feels like just one year only. My advice is to focus and concentrate on everything you do.

You need to respect the audience and give them the best we can. You must keep up-to-date and focus on the details.

The devil is in the detail, as you say. You must work like it is your family, your house.

Sports journalism is traditionally male dominated. How proud



are you to have made your mark on the industry?

I am really proud that I could do this job.

I advise every girl who wants to be a sports presenter that you will need more ambition, as you have to prove yourself more to the people that think it is their field.

It was the same thing that happened to me 14 years ago when I came here. You have to put in even more efforts than anyone else.

Even if you go on air, the audience are very smart. Any mistake you make, they will know.

Sport audiences often know more details than we do.

It is more difficult for a lady, than it is for a man.

You are regularly a guest on Dubai Eye's radio show, Sports Tonight, to help promote Al

Arabiya. How much do you enjoy working in another medium away from television?

I am a guest on the radio and I like it a lot. I feel I am promoting Al Arabiya on it.

When you work for Al Arabiya as a presenter, you are its image. They [Dubai Eye] help to promote my show, as we talk about what I am doing and what will be on my next show.

I feel I am helping Al Arabiya in the English community. I hope to give them satisfaction in what I am doing, as I want to help them in every way that I can.

As a reporter, you regularly work in Europe. Does this help people there to know Al Arabiya and the channel's output?

I am so happy and you cannot imagine how satisfied I feel, as this was my goal when going to Europe for the last nine years.

Al Arabiya was initially just recognised as a news channel. But it is now also recognised by Europe's top clubs as a Gulf television station with an important sports department – I think I contributed to that change, with the help of my colleagues in Al Arabiya.

I am proud that I am now known in the clubs and by the players in Europe. This helps Al Arabiya.

For more information and to keep up-to-date with Tannoury's latest broadcasts, you can visit www.liliane-tannoury.com.

