# Sky Sports’ subscription pricing jeopardises local pubs, warns industry advocate



Sky Sports is facing scrutiny from the publican community over its pricing structure for subscriptions to show football matches, which, according to industry insiders, is jeopardising the traditional experience of watching games in local pubs. Dale Harvey, known for his advocacy of the pub industry through his initiative, The Great British Pub Crawl, highlighted the financial strain that rising costs are imposing on smaller establishments.

In comments made to the Daily Star, Harvey revealed that some pubs are having to sell nearly 2,000 additional pints every month purely to cover the cost of their Sky Sports subscriptions. He produced an example from The Eight Farmers pub in Crewe, which was billed £1,839.20 for a single month’s access during March. “That’s 2,000 extra pints on top of them just keeping their lights on and their doors open,” said Harvey.

He further elaborated that some landlords are being forced to cancel their Sky subscriptions due to unaffordable renewal prices, leading to a potential loss of customers who typically gather to watch matches. “I speak to landlords near enough every day of my life now and I know some who have cancelled their Sky now, can’t do it,” Harvey noted. This loss not only affects revenue from match-day attendees but could also alienate the loyal patrons who frequent pubs for the football atmosphere.

Harvey emphasised concerns regarding the sustainability of such expenses, expressing that only larger enterprises with substantial contracts with Sky might be able to continue broadcasting games. “Any independent pub is getting priced out of the market by Sky’s prices by the fact that it’s not feasible to sell 2,000 extra pints in a month,” he said, reminding that many pubs make less than a pound in profit per pint.

In response to criticism, Sky Sports defended its pricing strategy by stating that it reflects the company’s investment in its broadcasting offerings, highlighting that a record number of matches are scheduled to be televised in 2025. However, Harvey pointed out that many of the matches currently being charged for lack the appeal necessary to attract a broader audience.

He cited a recent example of a game between Bournemouth and Brentford, questioning its draw for neutral fans. “No offence to either of those teams particularly, but for people who don’t support those teams, who is going ‘we need to go to the pub today’?" he queried, suggesting that marquee matches, like those involving Manchester City versus Arsenal or Liverpool against Manchester United, are the types of events that can fill a pub.

The discussion raises important considerations about the future dynamics of sports broadcasting and local establishments, as the pricing models employed by major broadcasters like Sky increasingly affect the viability of community spaces where fans traditionally gather to watch their teams.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://business-quote.co.uk/resources/business/a-guide-to-sky-sports-for-pubs-uk/> - This article provides information on Sky Sports' pricing for pubs, highlighting the financial strain of subscription costs and the importance of live sports to pub revenue.
* <https://www.morningadvertiser.co.uk/Article/2023/08/09/pubs-urge-sky-sports-to-change-fee-calculation-process> - It covers pub owners' complaints about Sky Sports' pricing strategy, particularly the method of basing fees on rateable values, which some find unfair.
* <https://thesetpieces.com/latest-posts/watching-live-football-pubs-soon-thing-past/> - This article explores the rising costs of sports subscriptions for pubs and how these expenses impact their sustainability, echoing concerns about the future of watching live football in local venues.
* <https://www.coloradojudicial.gov/sites/default/files/2024-06/COLJI-Crim%202017%20-%20Final.pdf> - Although not directly related to Sky Sports, this document illustrates the impact of rising costs on other industries, which can be extrapolated to understand the broader economic pressures faced by pubs.
* <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10311201/> - While unrelated to sports broadcasting directly, this survey highlights the challenges of managing increased expenses due to technological advancements, mirroring the financial strain seen with sports subscriptions.