# Mel Morris reflects on lessons learned during turbulent Derby County ownership



Former Derby County owner Mel Morris has reflected on his time leading the club, highlighting key lessons learned during an eventful period at Pride Park. Speaking to Techinformed, Morris acknowledged that managing the football club on a part-time basis was a significant error and admitted the ambitious push for Premier League promotion ultimately failed.

Morris took control of Derby County in 2015, during which time the club came close to returning to the top flight. The closest attempt under his ownership was in 2019 when then-manager Frank Lampard guided the Rams to the Championship play-off final at Wembley, only to be defeated by Aston Villa. This near miss marked the peak of the club's efforts to secure promotion after Morris invested heavily in pursuit of top-tier football. Reports indicated that Morris spent around £200 million during his tenure at the club.

However, the club's fortunes worsened dramatically after this period. In September 2021, Derby County was placed into administration, triggering a 12-point deduction in the Championship. Subsequently, the club received an additional nine-point penalty related to breaches of profit and sustainability regulations. These setbacks, combined with managerial changes and financial struggles, led to Derby County’s relegation from the Championship and raised fears about the club’s future viability.

The situation was stabilised in the summer of 2022 when local businessman and lifelong Derby fan David Clowes acquired the club. Under Clowes’ leadership, the Rams secured promotion from League One, marking a significant turnaround as they returned to the Championship for the current season.

Reflecting on these experiences, Morris said, "Sport is nothing like tech, much less predictable. We bought in just before the new Premier League rights kicked in, which gave relegated clubs huge financial advantages. We tried to push for promotion, but it didn’t work. I was also too stretched, trying to manage seven other businesses at the same time. The biggest lesson? Don’t do it part-time."

He also noted differences between the worlds of football and technology, observing that football careers and club decisions often involve heavier consequences for mistakes. "In football, your mistakes cost you dearly, like managers fired a month into a three-year contract. That wouldn’t fly in tech," Morris told Techinformed.

The Derby Telegraph reports that Morris’ reflections underline the complexities and risks inherent in football club ownership, contrasting it with other sectors where decision-making may be less volatile. His tenure at Derby remains a significant chapter in the club’s recent history, marked by substantial financial investment, near success, and eventual hardship before new ownership brought renewed hope.

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

## Bibliography

1. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mel\_Morris\_(businessman)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mel_Morris_%28businessman%29) - This source provides background information on Mel Morris, including his involvement with Derby County and his efforts to increase TV revenue for non-Premier League clubs.
2. <https://www.dcfc.co.uk/news/2015/09/club-statement-mel-morris-completes-purchase-of-derby-county> - This article confirms that Mel Morris completed the purchase of Derby County in 2015, aligning with his goal to take the club back to the Premier League.
3. <https://www.dcfc.co.uk/news/2015/09/mel-morris-i-want-to-take-this-club-back-to-where-it-belongs> - This source supports Morris's ambition to return Derby County to the Premier League and ensure they remain there.
4. <https://www.sportspro.com/news/derby-takeover-sheikh-khaled-abu-dhabi-royal-family-mel-morris/> - This article discusses Mel Morris's role as the majority owner of Derby County since 2015 and the potential for new ownership.
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