# Bob Kraft wary of English football investment amid surge of US Premier League owners



Bob Kraft, the billionaire owner of the New England Patriots NFL franchise, has articulated a reluctance to invest in English football due to the absence of guaranteed income linked to relegation risks, a stance that contrasts with the growing wave of American investments in the sport. According to the Daily Mail, while Kraft remains cautious, a significant number of wealthy Americans are increasingly acquiring Premier League clubs, with projections indicating that 12 of the 20 Premier League teams next season could be owned by US investors.

This surge in American ownership has prompted concern among traditionalists who fear that a concentrated US voting bloc within the Premier League could lead to significant structural changes in the sport's organisation. However, Simon Jordan, in his column for the Daily Mail, expresses a nuanced view, emphasising that US owners typically understand and respect the core values of European football and the meritocratic systems that underpin it. He argues that the notion of American owners seeking to dismantle key aspects of the game, such as relegation, is more speculative fear than reality.

Jordan points out the diversity among US owners in the Premier League, highlighting figures such as Dan Friedkin at Everton, Wes Edens at Aston Villa, and John Textor at Crystal Palace, who are well-versed in European football’s unique characteristics. He contrasts these with other ownership models, such as the Abu Dhabi Group at Manchester City, which aims for economic viability despite having other strategic interests.

The article notes that the American sports ownership model differs substantially because US leagues like the NBA and NFL were designed to be closed systems without promotion or relegation, unlike football's 150-year-old global structure. Jordan suggests that US owners recognize the distinctiveness of football and generally accept that they must operate within established traditions, which preserve competitiveness and community ties.

Beyond the Premier League’s high-profile clubs — including Manchester United, Liverpool, and Arsenal — US ownership extends to lower-tier teams such as Ipswich, Wrexham, Birmingham, Gillingham, and Carlisle. The case of Wrexham is particularly notable, where Hollywood actors Ryan Reynolds and Rob McElhenney have turned a football club into a content and marketing platform through digital media, showing innovative investment approaches distinct from traditional sports ownership.

The contrast in investment strategies is pronounced, with Todd Boehly's acquisition of Chelsea characterised by heavy spending, which Jordan describes as financially unsustainable, compared to other more cautious approaches. Still, he acknowledges the importance of safeguarding football clubs as community assets, suggesting regulatory protections to prevent extreme actions like relocating clubs, as can happen in certain American sports franchises.

Jordan also reflects on the 2021 European Super League episode, noting the swift opposition led by American owners of major clubs, which dissipated plans perceived as a threat to the sport's integrity. This, he observes, indicates that American stakeholders are not necessarily seeking radical upheaval but rather harbour ambitions aligned with the growth and global reach of the Premier League.

He concludes that ownership quality transcends nationality, citing Liverpool’s John W Henry as an example of effective American stewardship, contrasting it with previous less successful ownerships. Jordan also remarks on cultural differences in sports ownership, noting that in the US, owners are often celebrated figures who may even partake in trophy celebrations, reflecting a different relationship with the sport compared to the UK.

On management, Jordan discusses the early managerial careers of former England footballers Frank Lampard and Michael Carrick, who are working to establish themselves with clubs vying for promotion to the Premier League. He suggests that only sustained success will earn them the full admiration their playing reputations imply.

Finally, Jordan touches on boxing, specifically the case of Conor Benn, who returned to the ring after a banned substance incident. He calls for a reconsideration of attitudes toward Benn, noting that other top fighters with doping histories continue to be celebrated.

This commentary in the Daily Mail provides a broad overview of the evolving landscape of American influence in English football, illustrating differing approaches to ownership and management, alongside ongoing debates about tradition, commercial interests, and community values within the sport.

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

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