# Ryan Reynolds and Hollywood glamour transform Wrexham A.F.C. and town fortunes



In the former Welsh coal mining town of Wrexham, a unique blend of Hollywood glamour and grassroots football has captivated both locals and international fans, with Ryan Reynolds, the Hollywood star, playing a central role. Reynolds and his partner, Rob McElhenney—creator of the TV show "It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia"—acquired Wrexham A.F.C. nearly five years ago for £2 million, a move that has transformed the fortunes of the third oldest football club in existence, founded in 1864. Their stewardship has propelled Wrexham A.F.C., affectionately known as the Red Dragons, from the fifth division to an unprecedented third consecutive promotion, now placing them in the Championship, drawing widespread attention and acclaim.

The club’s success story and celebrity owners have fueled the immensely popular Disney+ documentary series "Welcome to Wrexham," which has received several BAFTA nominations and recently announced a fourth season. The series has not only highlighted the sporting journey but also spotlighted the town, significantly boosting tourism and local businesses. Since the takeover, tourism revenue in Wrexham has soared by £120 million in three years, reaching £179 million, with the town experiencing a surge in visitor numbers, particularly from North America. Local establishments such as The Turf pub and The Fat Boar have thrived with the new influx of tourists and celebrity visits. Reynolds and McElhenney’s influence extends beyond the pitch, with the club's growing brand attracting sponsorships from major companies like United Airlines, Meta Quest, Gatorade, and Blake Lively’s tonic and mixer brand Betty Buzz.

Despite a bustling social and sporting life in Wrexham, Reynolds' personal life has been under strain due to his wife Blake Lively’s ongoing legal battle with Justin Baldoni, her co-star from the film "It Ends With Us." The lawsuit, initiated by Lively in late 2023, alleges sexual harassment and orchestrated defamation by Baldoni, who has countered with accusations against Lively and Reynolds of defamation and extortion. The resulting media storm has affected Lively's public image, prompting discussions about how she might rehabilitate her reputation.

Personal branding expert Kelly Lundberg, author of "Deseed The Lemon," has suggested that the ongoing success of Wrexham A.F.C. offers Lively an opportunity to reshape her public persona by appearing more relatable and authentic. Speaking to MailOnline, Lundberg noted, "What her and her family's Wrexham appearance could do is strip that all away... Instead of seeing them out of reach, they become just like us. One of us." Lively has made several appearances at Wrexham matches, displaying a more down-to-earth image that contrasts with her usual polished Hollywood presence. Lundberg advises that Lively should continue engaging in grassroots settings where she can be seen without the usual stylists and PR scripts, fostering a genuine connection with the public.

Locals in Wrexham have been welcoming to Lively and Reynolds, focusing on their contributions to the community and the football club rather than the couple’s off-pitch controversies. Bronwyn Jones, a mother of two, shared her views: "I saw Blake at an end of season game. She was on the pitch after the game and meeting all the fans. She was really smiley and friendly – she was signing lots of stuff and going round the pitch to meet people. They will always be welcome here in Wrexham whatever happens."

The transformation brought about by Reynolds and McElhenney has revitalised not only the football club but also the town’s identity, offering a narrative of resilience and community spirit. Local tour guides and club supporters have witnessed the influx of international visitors inspired by the duo’s involvement, and fan memorabilia like cardboard cutouts of Reynolds have become popular photo spots in local shops.

The latest achievement saw Wrexham triumph 3-0 over Charlton Athletic, securing the historic third consecutive promotion. Reynolds was present at the match, marking another milestone in the family's involvement with the club and the town. The success story of Wrexham A.F.C. continues to unfold, blending the worlds of Hollywood and British football in a unique partnership that has captured imaginations across the globe.

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

## Bibliography

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2. <https://www.reuters.com/sports/soccer/reynolds-mcelhenney-wrexham-one-step-closer-top-flight-dream-2025-04-26/> - This piece discusses how Wrexham's promotion to the Championship brings them closer to the Premier League, emphasizing the impact of their celebrity owners on the club's success.
3. <https://www.reuters.com/sports/soccer/reynolds-mcelhenney-wrexham-one-step-closer-top-flight-dream-2025-04-26/> - This article highlights the influence of Ryan Reynolds and Rob McElhenney on Wrexham AFC's rise, noting their significant role in the club's promotion to the Championship.
4. <https://www.reuters.com/sports/soccer/reynolds-mcelhenney-wrexham-one-step-closer-top-flight-dream-2025-04-26/> - This piece discusses the international attention Wrexham AFC has garnered due to their celebrity owners and promotion to the Championship, underscoring the global appeal of the club's success story.
5. <https://www.reuters.com/sports/soccer/reynolds-mcelhenney-wrexham-one-step-closer-top-flight-dream-2025-04-26/> - This article mentions the 'Welcome to Wrexham' documentary series, which has been instrumental in boosting the club's popularity and tourism in the town.
6. <https://www.reuters.com/sports/soccer/reynolds-mcelhenney-wrexham-one-step-closer-top-flight-dream-2025-04-26/> - This piece highlights the positive impact of Wrexham AFC's success on local businesses, including establishments like The Turf pub and The Fat Boar, which have thrived due to increased tourism.
7. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-14660407/What-Wrexham-fans-REALLY-think-Blake-Lively-battles-rebuild-reputation-benefit-clubs-fairytale-success.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data