# Keir Starmer and Donald Trump clinch last-minute trade deal amid Arsenal game chaos



# Unlikely Alliances: Keir Starmer and Donald Trump Strike a Trade Deal Amidst Chaos

In a surprising turn of events, British Prime Minister Keir Starmer received an unexpected late-night call from former President Donald Trump on May 8, 2025. The phone call occurred during a tense second half of the UEFA Champions League match where Starmer's cherished Arsenal were vying against Paris Saint-Germain. Instead of focusing solely on football, the Prime Minister transitioned from the football pitch to the negotiating table, with both leaders keen on securing a pivotal trade deal that could bolster their respective political standings amidst challenging circumstances.

Starmer was taken aback by the timing of the call. "No, I didn't know the exact day," he confided later. "I wouldn't have been having my phone call with President Trump halfway through the second half of the Arsenal-PSG game had I planned it better." The call indeed bore significant weight, as both leaders were grappling with dwindling approval ratings.

The trade agreement, touted by the Trump administration as "historic," marked a strategic shift from the UK’s initial lofty aspirations for a comprehensive deal. Instead, the focus narrowed to immediate relief for key sectors adversely affected by U.S. tariffs. Under the terms of the agreement, the United States agreed to reduce tariffs on British cars from 27.5% to 10% for the first 100,000 vehicles annually, in addition to eliminating tariffs on UK steel exports. In exchange, the UK afforded greater access for U.S. agricultural products, including beef and ethanol, while maintaining stringent food standards. This concession underscores Starmer's diplomatic approach that contrasts sharply with the confrontational stance of his predecessor.

As discussions unfolded, British Business Secretary Jonathan Reynolds emphasised the urgent nature of these negotiations for the UK’s automobile industry. The need to save jobs at companies like Jaguar Land Rover appeared to hang in the balance. While the Prime Minister was in the thick of football fervour, preparations were underway in Downing Street for what would become an unexpected, yet momentous announcement coinciding with the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II in Europe.

Complications arose as aides hastily arranged for Starmer to announce the deal at a Jaguar Land Rover manufacturing plant. In a comically chaotic turn, the media were mistakenly directed to the wrong factory, triggering a swift scramble across Birmingham—a “Wacky Races-style sprint” that highlighted the disarray surrounding the high-profile announcement. Amidst the bustling activity, the context of a new Pope's appointment added an unlikely layer of distraction to the unfolding trade saga, further complicating the optics of this significant moment.

The messy nature of the announcement contrasted sharply with Starmer's calculated diplomatic tactics. Reflecting on ongoing relations with the U.S., the Prime Minister aimed for a cooperative rapport rather than a confrontational stance. The agreement was seen as a necessary step not only for economic interests but also for Starmer's leadership image, particularly as he weathered political turbulence at home.

Despite the prevailing optimism surrounding the deal, economists maintained a cautious perspective, suggesting it is more symbolic than transformational. The absence of substantial coverage regarding digital services or comprehensive agricultural tariffs points to a landscape still fraught with unresolved issues. Calls have emerged for broader discussions in future negotiations, highlighting the fine balance Starmer must navigate between appeasing domestic interests and fostering international partnerships.

In closing, while the deal with the United States may provide Starmer a much-needed political lifeline, the challenges ahead reveal the complexities of trade negotiations in a rapidly changing global landscape. With Arsenal's Champions League dreams dashed, the focus may now shift from sporting disappointments to the tangible impacts of this unexpected partnership on the UK economy.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14693583/Donald-Trump-called-Sir-Keir-Starmer-late-night-discuss-sorting-trade-deal-PMs-beloved-Arsenal-playing.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[4]](https://time.com/7283842/united-states-united-kingdom-trade-deal-trump-starmer-tariffs-agreement/), [[6]](https://apnews.com/article/f65fb13f17cfc14d0b5b8d267953d5c4)
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## References

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* <https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/art-possible-britain-settles-quick-win-in-us-trade-deal-2025-05-08/> - In May 2025, the UK reached a limited but strategic trade agreement with the United States, shifting from its initial aim of a comprehensive deal to securing immediate relief for key sectors affected by U.S. tariffs. After months of negotiations with the Trump administration, Britain agreed to sectoral improvements, particularly cutting car tariffs from 27.5% to 10% on 100,000 vehicles annually, and eliminating steel tariffs. In return, the UK granted reciprocal access for U.S. beef and ethanol while upholding stringent food standards. The breakthrough was attributed to balanced trade between the countries, Britain’s non-retaliatory stance, and Prime Minister Keir Starmer’s diplomatic approach—including extending state visit invitations to President Trump. Business Minister Jonathan Reynolds emphasized the critical nature of these changes for the car industry. Peter Mandelson, UK's ambassador to Washington and a seasoned negotiator, played a central role in securing the agreement. The deal was announced on the 80th anniversary of the end of WWII in Europe, with both sides expressing a desire for continued cooperation on digital trade and further tariff reductions. While welcomed by economists and industry representatives, calls remain for broader agreements in future negotiations.
* <https://as.com/actualidad/politica/acuerdo-historico-entre-trump-y-reino-unido-por-los-aranceles-n/> - Estados Unidos y Reino Unido han alcanzado un acuerdo comercial calificado de 'histórico' y 'muy beneficioso', cinco semanas después de que Donald Trump impusiera nuevos aranceles a múltiples países, incluidos aliados estratégicos. Según el primer ministro británico, Keir Starmer, el pacto reducirá del 27,5% al 10% los aranceles sobre los primeros 100.000 automóviles británicos importados a EE.UU. Aunque no se conocen más detalles, Trump afirmó que el acuerdo beneficiará a los ganaderos estadounidenses y al sector del acero, mientras que Reino Unido eliminará barreras no arancelarias. Ambos líderes adoptaron un tono positivo, resaltando que el acuerdo reduce tensiones y protege empleos y sectores clave como el del automóvil y el acero en Reino Unido. Starmer subrayó su enfoque de negociación y diálogo, en contraposición a una actitud confrontativa. Este es el primer acuerdo de tal magnitud entre Trump y un país europeo, mientras la Unión Europea aún prepara sus propias negociaciones comerciales con EE.UU. En su intervención, Starmer reiteró que no se trata de elegir entre EE. UU. y la UE, enfatizando los beneficios del acuerdo para Reino Unido.
* <https://time.com/7283842/united-states-united-kingdom-trade-deal-trump-starmer-tariffs-agreement/> - On May 8, 2025, former U.S. President Donald Trump announced a 'full and comprehensive' trade agreement between the United States and the United Kingdom via his Truth Social platform, calling it a significant milestone in the longstanding alliance between the two countries. A press conference is scheduled at the Oval Office, although it remains unclear whether trade documents will be signed today. More trade agreements with other nations are reportedly in negotiation. The agreement follows Trump's earlier implementation of a 10% tariff on the U.K. and subsequent 25% tariffs on imports such as steel and cars. These tariffs were partially paused, with the U.K. exempted from higher rates due to its trade surplus with the U.S. British industries, especially the automotive sector, hope the deal will reduce tariffs. U.K. Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer confirmed ongoing U.S. negotiations, emphasizing national interest and economic renewal. Details remain limited, but British officials mention a 'heads of terms' agreement, while lawmakers raise concerns about agricultural standards and protections for U.K. farmers. Despite their initially tense relationship, Trump and Starmer appear to have built a cooperative rapport since Starmer assumed office in 2024.
* <https://www.ft.com/content/1acf796a-4cfd-4c10-88c9-31901c353df5> - In a last-minute agreement, UK Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer secured a trade deal with US President Donald Trump, marking a milestone in UK-US relations amidst Trump’s global trade war. The accord came after months of negotiations, capped by an urgent phone call while Starmer was watching a football match. Trump sought final concessions on agriculture, partially granted by the UK. The resulting arrangement increased American agricultural access to British markets and included UK gains such as protection for car manufacturers and the removal of tariffs on steel and aluminium. Starmer, praised for his measured approach to Trump’s aggressive trade policies—including threats of tariffs on foreign films—managed to finalize the deal with the help of UK ambassador Lord Peter Mandelson and business chief Varun Chandra. The agreement, though less ambitious than post-Brexit aspirations, was politically significant as Starmer became the first world leader to negotiate with Trump following recent tariff announcements. The UK also finalized a trade deal with India and plans to formalize a strategic partnership with the EU. Despite domestic political challenges, Starmer is leveraging international diplomacy to bolster his leadership image.
* <https://apnews.com/article/f65fb13f17cfc14d0b5b8d267953d5c4> - On May 8, 2025, the Trump administration announced a new trade agreement with the United Kingdom, emphasizing symbolic progress but offering limited economic impact. The deal grants American agricultural products, including beef and ethanol, greater access to the U.K. market, while reducing U.S. tariffs on British cars and steel. U.K. steel will now enter the U.S. duty-free, and the 27.5% tariff on U.K. cars will drop to 10% for up to 100,000 vehicles. Additionally, both countries agreed to export 13,000 metric tons of beef to each other, and the U.K. will remove tariffs on 1.4 billion liters of U.S. ethanol. The U.K. will lower its average tariff on U.S. goods to 1.8%, affecting around 2,500 products. Aerospace cooperation includes the removal of U.S. duties on Rolls Royce components and a $10 billion Boeing aircraft order from a U.K. airline. However, the agreement leaves out key issues like digital services tax reforms and access to the U.K.’s national health service. Economists view the deal as more politically symbolic than economically transformational, with further negotiations ongoing in sectors like pharmaceuticals and digital trade.
* <https://www.axios.com/2025/05/08/trump-britain-trade-deal-tariffs-keir-starmer> - The United States and the United Kingdom have reached a significant new trade agreement under the Trump administration's global tariff policy, marking the first major trade pact of this era. Announced by President Trump in the Oval Office with British Prime Minister Keir Starmer on speakerphone, the deal is viewed as a potential model for other nations currently in negotiations with the U.S. In 2024, the U.S. had a nearly $12 billion trade surplus with the U.K., one of the few major countries without a trade deficit. Unlike other global leaders, Starmer chose a less confrontational approach following the U.S.'s imposition of broad tariffs in April. Markets responded positively, with U.S. and European stocks rising on hopes the agreement could pave the way for future deals. Attention now shifts to U.S.-China talks, where Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent sees an opportunity to ease trade tensions that have led to a 145% tariff and an effective trade embargo.