

Foreign players in english football

Sport & Tourism, Football



On 30 December 2009, the Barclays Premier League football match between Arsenal and Portsmouth made English football history as the first match not to include any British players. Arsenal's team of multi-million pound foreign stars won the game comfortably, 4-1; some would argue this is all that matters, but those who are passionate about football – the real connoisseurs of the English game – will recognize a deep underlying issue. Modern day football is unrecognizable compared to what has preceded it.\n

In times past, teams were fashioned by nurturing young home-grown talent and bolstering the squad with a few lads from Scotland and Ireland. Now the common consensus is that to achieve any success it is necessary to catch the attention of an exceedingly wealthy oil tycoon who will buy the club and proceed to spend ? 200 million a year on overpriced talent from the four corners of the world. This ethos is destroying British football. For example in the Premier League there are 337 registered foreign players representing a total of 66 different countries.

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That equates to an average of 17 foreign players per squad; the averages in Italy, France and Spain are all around 10. On the first day of the inaugural Premier League season in 1992 just 22 non-British players started; on the first day of this season 124 started. It isn't right that success should be based on finance, is it? In 2004 Russian billionaire Roman Abramovich bought Chelsea F. C. , a team which hadn't won the league since 1954. He splashed an extravagant amount of money on the creme de la creme of foreign talent from around the globe.

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Three seasons later they experienced unprecedented success which, would never have happened without the cash injection. However, it was all achieved with just three regularly playing British players, who only made the squad because they were exceptional talents which money could not replace. This set a new benchmark for all the top teams in the land, making a clear statement that if they wanted to match Chelsea's success they would have to match Chelsea's spending and sacrifice their home-grown players or risk being left behind.

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In 1995 the British transfer record was ? 7, 000, 000; by 2006 the record had sharply risen to ? 30, 800, 000, and player wages were spiralling out of control. It is true that this has lead to stronger squads, and the Premier League being viewed as the strongest league in the World, with consistent success in Europe, but can it be right to sacrifice our own players for this success? I think not. Journalists, pundits and just about every football fan in England have formed their own theories concerning England's miserable failure at the 2010 World Cup in South Africa.

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Many causes have been suggested, yet to me the reason is obvious. If one analyses the teams which were most successful in South Africa, a definite trend appears. Spain won the World Cup this year. Many argue that they reached the final against Holland mainly because 77. 1% of footballers in

their domestic league are qualified to play for the national team, a direct result of home-grown players being given the opportunity in their clubs' first teams. In the Premier League fewer than 40% of players are English. Jose Luis Astiazaran, president of the Spanish Football League, said. Our strategy is to work very hard with young home-grown players and to try to have a mix between them and experienced players... we invest more and more in young Spanish players than in young foreign players. England has many times taken young players from outside... these kinds of players are not English. This is one of the most important differences between Spain and England. We invest in young Spanish players... maybe this is why at the moment you are not creating young English players. " One view is that foreign players benefit the English players, who apparently perform better alongside the World's best. I think – don't you? that if more money, time, and attention were put into cultivating the abundance of young English talent, the English players themselves would be the world's best. The Premier League have recognised this, and this year the F. A. implemented new squad rules controlling the number of foreign players in each squad. This is a start towards reducing the amount of foreign players in the league, but the rules are too loose and easy to circumvent. Foreign players can be bought in from a young age and developed in the academies; this means the young Englishmen still don't get the attention they crave in order to advance their careers.

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In my opinion the influx of foreign players in England is the single most detrimental factor in the game, leading to over-inflated transfer fees,
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increase in ticket prices, under development of home-grown players and ultimately the destruction of the national team. The Premier League must review its policies, and clubs must invest in their academies or English national football will continue to deteriorate well into the future, and so many young aspiring footballers will be cast aside, and I for one cannot see that happen to the sport I and so many other Brits love.