

How to Buy a Premier League Football Team.

Our Sports Correspondent sits in on a deal-making conversation between an Agent (who wishes to remain anonymous) and Oleg Nievski, a Russian businessman.

Agent: Right, mate. How can I help?

Nievski: I wish buy English Premier League team. I am Oleg Nievski.

Agent: Oh! Right. Mr. Nievski. Pleased to meet you. Well, there's not much left to buy, to be honest. How about a Championship team, or a National? Plenty of those.

Nievski: I hope we can be serious.

Agent: Yes. Right. Well, like I say, there's very little left in the Premier League.

Nievski: I am informed there are three.

Agent: No, mate. Two went this morning. Chinese Sovereign Fund got one and another Yank got the other. Leaves one, only, I'm afraid.

Nievski: I see. Well. I know who you mean. They are very poor team. I mean players. And money.

Agent: Well, I dunno about that. They just bought Abberdabber and they've got a brilliant kid called Wistan on the team now. Straight out of Scunthorpe Academy. Great little scorer. They should get a few results in the rest of the season.

Nievski: O.K. There is a team. I have the money. I know your personal commission for a purchase. Let us proceed. But first, you must be honest. Why is this team the last to be sold?

Agent: Well, I suppose the others looked more glam. Bigger names on the team.

Nievski: It would not be good - for you - to conceal something from me.

Agent: What? Are you threatening me, mate?

Nievski: No. I am looking after you. So, tell me the problem.

Agent: Alright, then. I will. The major shareholder is Joe Crudaker.

Nievski: This I know.

Agent: Yeah, but that's not all. He loves his club and doesn't want any funny goings-on if he sells. You know, racking up debt like United, that kind of stuff. He wants it to be a club for the supporters like it's always been. But, he love money too and he's a bit strapped since the recession and everything, so he's open to offers.

Nievski: Is good.

Agent: But he wants everything down in black and white about what will happen to the club if it was sold.

Nievski: Of course.

Agent: I would have to give him a full picture of what you want to do and how it can be tied up in a contract to suit him.

Nievski: Of course.

Agent: So. If you bought it, what would be your plans, then?

Nievski: First. I buy and bring over from Russia, Prokov, Rostropov and Shosta. They are the best strikers. The team must be more aggressive. Is good, no? Second, my magazine 'PEEK!' becomes sponsor. On all the shirts.

Agent: What the heck is 'PEEK!'

Nievski: Is a magazine for following private lives of celebrities. We say 'nobody finds out sooner than 'PEEK!' Is good line, no?

Agent: I dunno if Old Joe would like that. He's against celebrities. And the supporters might think it's a bit girlie.

Nievski: Sorry for him. Sorry for them. Third. We need a new Board. I have people for this.

Agent: What if old Crudaker wants to remain Chairman?

Nievski: No problem.

Agent: The Supporters Club will want a representative on the Board, like they have now.

Nievski: No problem.

Agent: Crudaker will want to know who else is on the Board. He doesn't like accountants or lawyers.

Nievski: He is right. No accountants or lawyers. On the Board will be me, and two colleagues with special skills which will be valuable to the club. One, Vladimir Gross and two, Sviatoslav Stronck. Is all.

Agent: Sounds alright. But what special skills do these other blokes have?

Nievski: Vladi is Controller. Not accountant, of course. Controller. To see everything goes OK. Sviatto is Executive Vice-President.

Agent: Executive-Vice President of what, exactly.

Nievski: Control. Control for the supporters. Control for the players. Control for the Board. Anything go wrong, he fix.

Agent: Right.

Nievski: Could be place for you. On the Board.

Agent: Eh? How d'ye mean?

Nievski: I be honest with you. It maybe worth £1.6 million a year to you. I will raise big loans and issue big bonds and offer many financial derivatives against future Club revenues. Through Russian banks and also here. Not immediately of course, only when old man is made reasonable. We put up price of tickets. They are too low. Prices of shirts, also Everything go up. Then I repay myself plus interest for all the money and management I put in for the Club. Other members of Board, also. Each Board member get paid £1.6 million per year, plus house, plus car, plus whatever he want. All this, the loans, the bond, etcetera, probably worth £850 million in three years. You could have part of it. Of course, you have to show you are man of metal. You have to be on my side when contract is discussed. And do all possible persuade old Jim. Joe. This is important. Would be secret for you and me only. Then we sell the valuable building land near stadium. I already buy the connecting land and we sell training complex also. This make £575 million. You follow? You interested?

Agent: Yeah, I am.

Nievski: Good. Then, we relocate Club to Russia. To Kiev. Modern city, Kiev, plenty young guys like football.

Agent: Relocate! What for?

Nievski: For reasons of tax. And other things.

Agent: (to Sports Correspondent)

I forgot about you. You'll have to go now, mate. And you've heard nothing, right?