

New Italian league after split from Lega Calcio

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Clubs in Italian football's top-tier Serie A have agreed to split from the Lega Calcio, after a meeting of Serie A and B presidents ended without an agreement over future financial arrangements.

According to Italian newspaper La Gazzetta Dello Sport, the split was provoked after it was revealed the second-tier Serie B was contesting the guidelines for the sale of the league's television rights.

Serie B did not have a television deal for 2007-08 and only managed an agreement shortly before the start of this season.

Presidents of second division clubs have been at loggerheads for years with their Serie A counterparts over how wealth is spread within the league.

"Nineteen Serie A clubs have today discussed starting a 'Serie A League'," a league statement said. "The decision has been taken given it has been impossible to reach an agreement with Serie B clubs."

One Serie A club, which media reports said was relegation-threatened Lecce, was not part of the talks.

England's top clubs similarly broke away from the Football League in 1992 to form the Premier League, a move which led the English top-tier to become the richest in the world.

The league statement said Maurizio Beretta, a former head of Italy's employers' association and former television executive with Italy's public-service broadcaster Rai. He had been proposed as the new president of a breakaway Serie A after league incumbent Antonio Matarrese failed to find consensus over a way forward.

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