

Platini's new measures could hurry Liverpool takeover by Kraft

Adam Fraser

While Michel Platini's plans for reform in European soccer may, at first glance, appear a serious threat to English soccer club Liverpool's future in European competition, the club's long-term future may be significantly brighter once the new measures are put in place.

Liverpool were one of the clubs namechecked by Platini when discussing his reforms in an interview with the Daily Telegraph newspaper, saying: "If Liverpool pay €60 million (interest) every year to the banks, it's a lot of money." The Uefa president vowed: "The philosophy to participate in our competitions is you must not spend more money than you receive."

He added: "In Germany, debts are not accepted. In England they are."

Platini also criticised the likes of Manchester United, Chelsea and Inter Milan, saying: "By putting in new rules we will protect the business of [Chelsea owner Roman] Abramovich, [Inter Milan owner] Massimo Moratti or [Manchester United owner Malcolm] Glazer. I am sure they want to sell but who will buy clubs with so many debts? Who would be that stupid?"

However, it is the large section of Liverpool's fans currently dissatisfied with the club's owner, George Gillett and Tom Hicks, who have perhaps the most reason to welcome Platini's reforms. Robert Kraft, one of US sport's most respected team owners, has long expressed an interest in taking control of Liverpool, but has said he will not do so while the financial situation in English soccer remains out of control.

"We don't want to be a business where the wallet determines what kind of player you have," he told the British press in October, before adding to the New York Times: "At some point in the future there's a good possibility we could be involved."

In June, he revealed: "I met with David Moores, who is a fine gentleman, and we came very close to buying it, very close. I wanted to take over Liverpool. If the salary cap was there, we would have done it."

A salary cap may not be on the agenda, but Platini's reforms could be enough to tempt the man who turned the New England Patriots into the NFL's dominant team to put his money where his mouth is.

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