

# Bristol City chief executive to move to England and Wales Cricket Board

The chief executive of Bristol City Football Club is stepping down from his role to take up the top job at the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB).

Richard Gould, 52, will remain with the Robins until the end of the January transfer window. He was selected ahead of Durham's Tim Bostock to one of the most influential roles in English and world cricket.

He said: "Serving as CEO of City is an honour and a privilege and I am grateful for the amazing support provided by players, staff, fans and the Lansdown family. For a Bristol boy who grew up in football it will be a real wrench to leave this great club and city so early but I hope people will understand that the scale of the role at ECB makes it a difficult challenge to ignore.

"In the meantime, everyone at City remains fully focused on the challenge ahead and pushing up the table and I firmly believe this club can achieve great things."

Bristol City owner Steve Lansdown said he was "obviously disappointed" to lose Mr Gould after 18 months but said the club "understands" his reasons for wanting to return to cricket.

"He goes with our thanks and the search is underway for a successor," he said. "Richard remains with us until the end of the transfer window, working alongside City board director and group director of sport Gavin Marshall."

Mr Gould will still be at Thursday's fans forum alongside City

manager Nigel Pearson and striker Nahki Wells, the club confirmed.

*BusinessLive* understands Mr Gould was head-hunted for the role, having previously been unsuccessful in 2014, and the move will reunite him with ECB chair Richard Thompson, who was chairman during his 10-year stay at Surrey, having previously worked as the chief executive of Somerset.

City will shortly be searching for their third chief executive in the last 18 months after Mr Gould replaced Mark Ashton last June after he had left City to join League One side Ipswich Town. Since returning to Ashton Gate, having served as commercial director from 2001 until 2005, Bristol-raised Mr Gould has proved a stabilising figure behind the scenes.

He has operated within a time of considerable financial turmoil for the club, and the Championship at large, amid record losses of £38.4m, and successfully brought the club's wage bill down significantly, while ensuring the team remain competitive in the Championship.

He has remained largely out of the limelight, but has been a driving force behind a number of initiatives to form a greater understanding of the club's history, including the marking of the 40th anniversary of the Ashton Gate Eight, the establishment of the Former Players Association and the tributes around the death of former manager Terry Cooper.

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