

Ex-Derby County owner Mel Morris offers to take on Boro and Wycombe compensation claims to help make way for new owners

The man who owned Derby County before it went into administration has offered to take over financial claims that Middlesbrough and Wycombe have made against the Championship club to make way for a takeover.

In a statement on Friday, Mel Morris said: “I invite [Boro, and in due course Wycombe](#) if they so wish, to take their claims to the High Court against me personally.

“Let DCFC move on for the benefit of the fans, [the city of Derby](#), the sport and the EFL.”

Middlesbrough and Wycombe are both seeking compensation from the [crisis-hit Rams](#), who have been in administration since September, with the potential liability in both cases said to be a major factor in holding up a sale.

Both [Middlesbrough and Wycombe](#) have made claims relating to the Rams’ breaches of profitability and sustainability regulations, arguing that they suffered financially as a result.

Derby beat Middlesbrough to a play-off place in 2019, while Wycombe were relegated from the Championship last season after finishing one point worse off than the Rams.

At least [one of the groups interested in taking over Derby](#) is understood to be growing increasingly frustrated at the lack

of progress in resolving the impasse caused by the claims.

The EFL has given Derby's administrators until March 1 to provide there is enough funding in place to get the club through the rest of the season and Mr Morris has presented his offer as a way of moving forward.

He said: "I sincerely hope the EFL, Boro and Wycombe will respond urgently and constructively to my proposal to unlock the impasse.

"By preserving the rights of these parties to pursue their claims through the High Court I can see no reason why the EFL cannot allow DCFC to exit administration without issue or concern that it would be contrary to their rules, articles and insolvency policy."

On Thursday, the EFL had invited all parties to enter mediation on the matter.

Following Mr Morris' statement, an EFL spokesperson said it was reviewing how to respond.

They said: "In the meantime, as per Thursday's statement, the offer to engage with Mr Morris and all other stakeholders remains in place as we seek to find the compromises required to protect Derby County in the long-term."

According to Mr Morris' statement, Wycombe are yet to actually lodge a claim but have "merely threatened to".

Furthermore, he expressed surprise that the claims have been treated as football debts, suggesting that Boro's would open a Pandora's Box in football.

He said: "The Boro claim is exceptional and, if it were to be legitimised and proven, would create the backdrop for a myriad of claims between clubs, by players, and even by agents who could claim that a breach of the EFL rules could give rise to a claim for compensation.

“Examples could include a questionable dive by a player in a key match, the tapping up of a manager or player. The list would be endless.”

On Friday, Middlesbrough complained that Derby’s administrators had not engaged with them over their claim, and said it welcomed the fact that the league had agreed the claim should be dealt with under the administration procedures.

A spokesman for Derby’s administrators said they were not expecting a statement when asked on Friday.

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