

Sir Jim Ratcliffe: Who is the Ineos billionaire who wants to buy Manchester United?

Sir Jim Ratcliffe has made no secret of his desire to buy Manchester United, the football club he has supported since childhood.

Ever since Chelsea was sold in the summer for £4.2bn the billionaire's name has been floating around as one of a select few who might be interested in taking over the Red Devils if they were ever put up for sale by the Glazer family.

Late on Tuesday night United's American owners [issued a statement](#) many fans had been waiting for since their debt-laden £750m takeover in 2005.

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The Glazers confirmed they are open to selling up or accepting new investment, having started "a process to explore strategic alternatives for the club".

So with United back on the market, BusinessLive has taken a look at who the Ineos billionaire is.



Sir Jim Ratcliffe
(Image: VALERY HACHE/AFP via Getty)

Background

Jim Ratcliffe was born in Failsworth, Greater Manchester in October 1952.

His dad was a joiner while his mum was employed as an accounts officer worker.

The family lived in a council house until the early 1960s when they moved to East Yorkshire.

Jim attended Beverley Grammar School and graduated from the University of Birmingham in 1974.

His first job was at oil giant Esso but then went to study for a masters in finance at London Business School from 1978 to 1980. He then joined US private equity firm Advent International in 1989.

Ineos

Having co-founded Inspec, which leased the former BP Chemicals site in Antwerp, Belgium, Sir Jim formed Ineos in 1998 to buy the company out.

He started acquiring unwanted operations from companies such as ICI and BP, selecting targets based on their potential to double their earnings over a five-year period.

In 2006 Ineos bought BP's refining and petrochemical arm Innovene. The move gave the company refineries and plants in Scotland, Italy, Germany, France, Belgium, and Canada.

Ineos's head office was moved from Hampshire to Rolle, Switzerland, in 2010 in a move that decreased the amount of tax the business paid by £100m a year.

In 2015, Ratcliffe opened the UK headquarters of the chemicals and energy group in Knightsbridge, London.

He hit the headlines in 2018 when he was named as the richest man in the UK, with a net worth of £21.05bn, by the Sunday Times.



Ineos Chairman Sir Jim Ratcliffe
(Image: TOLGA AKMEN/AFP via Getty Images)

Sports ownership

The billionaire became the owner of FC Lausanne-Sport, a Swiss Super League football club, in November 2017.

The next year he partnered with Ben Ainslie to establish Ineos Team UK to compete for the 36th America's Cup in 2021.

In March 2019 he purchased the Team Sky cycling franchise and rebranded it as Team Ineos.

Later that year his €100m takeover of Ligue 1 club OGC Nice from Chinese-American entrepreneur Chien Lee was approved.

In February 2020 Ineos became principal partners of Mercedes AMG F1, signing a five-year agreement with the team.

Although he has supported United since he was a child, after moving to London, Ratcliffe became a season ticket holder at

Chelsea.

He would also go on to make a last-minute bid to take over the Stamford Bridge club when Roman Abramovich was forced to sell earlier this year, however his attempts failed.

According to Forbes, as of 2022, Ratcliffe has an estimated net worth of \$16.3bn (£13.5bn).



Sir Jim Ratcliffe has been linked with a potential takeover of Manchester United.

(Image: VALERY HACHE/AFP via Getty Images)

Honours and personal life

In May 2009, he was granted an honorary fellowship by the Institution of Chemical Engineers citing “his sustained leadership in building the Ineos Group.”

In 2013 he received the Petrochemical Heritage Award while he was knighted in the 2018 Birthday Honours for services to business and to investment.

Sir Jim has two sons and one daughter and now lives in Monaco.

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