

British billionaire to buy 25% of Manchester United for £1.3bn

British billionaire Sir Jim Ratcliffe will buy a 25% stake of Manchester United football club.

Sir Jim and his company INEOS are expected to run Manchester United's football operations as part of the deal to purchase 25%, which could be the first step in a phased takeover, according to [Sky Sports News](#).

It comes after the news on Saturday that Qatari businessman Sheikh Jassim bin Hamad al Thani has [withdrawn from the race to buy the club](#).

Sir Jim has said he has been a fan of United since childhood.

The Qatari offer, which valued United at more than £5bn, was believed to be the only bid for 100% of the club – that the current owners, the American Glazer family, announced last November could be sold.

Sheikh Jassim's withdrawal follows further discussions in recent days between his representatives and the Glazer family.

Still a chance Qatari interest could be revived

Sheikh Jassim's bid team had floated the possibility of withdrawing in May after a lack of progress since making an apparent final offer requested by the Glazers in April.

Sheikh Jassim is understood to have raised his offer since then but it was not satisfactory for the Glazers despite being far more than the club's \$3.3bn valuation on the New York Stock Exchange.

The difference between the parties is over the valuation – which still leaves open the possibility of Sheikh Jassim being enticed back into the protracted process – as protests against the Glazers continue.

But any renewed interest from Qatar would be complicated by the progress made by Sir Jim and INEOS.

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Need for investment amid fan frustration

Anger against the current United ownership has simmered and grown as the club have started the season by losing four of their opening eight Premier League games to sit 10th in the table.

Erik ten Hag's side have also lost both Champions League group

games so far in the 2023-24 campaign.

Sheikh Jassim's offer would have made United the most expensive sports team in history by at least £200m, eclipsing the deal to buy NFL side Washington Commanders, but still fell short [of the Glazers' own valuation](#) of the club at around £6bn, it was reported earlier this year.

United are in need of investment to upgrade Old Trafford and win the Premier League for the first time since a record 20th league title in 2013.

The Glazers have owned Manchester United since buying it for just under £800m in 2005 – an 18-year tenure marked by protests and a conspicuous dearth of trophies since the retirement of Sir Alex Ferguson, its former manager, also in 2013.

The Red Devils did win their first trophy in six years by beating Newcastle United in the Carabao Cup final back in February.