

Why the region needs a Premier League club.

Cambridgeshire is poorly represented in England's top division. GURSIMRAN HANS assesses why its important and how they can get a team in the top flight.



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Having lived my entire life in London, I've always had the opportunity to watch Premier League football, since my birth Arsenal, Charlton Athletic, Chelsea, Crystal Palace, Fulham, Queens Park Rangers, Tottenham Hotspur,

West Ham United and Wimbledon, ten different clubs from the capital have played in the top flight. Watford, whilst technically being based in Hertfordshire are still accessible from the London Underground system.

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Young people from Peterborough do not have the same privilege. Peterborough have never been in the top flight. Local rivals Northampton Town were last in the top flight in the 1965-66 when they finished 21st. Cambridge United, too have not been in the top flight.

This means that people from Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire do not get the opportunity to see the world's best players play against their local clubs, save for cup ties, even then chances are they'll face a weakened team. The closest club geographically to London Road to have played in the Premier League are Norwich City, who have spent most their history below the top tier.

Make no mistake about it, this has a considerable effect, by being able to watch the world's biggest stars, I still remember being 12 years old and being mesmerized by David Silva, the local youth can be inspired and can even learn more, to help them with their own game. By being exposed to a higher standard of play, it can help younger players watching on the side-lines take up football and hone their skills even further.



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The effect on the local community is almost unbelievable. Attendances will naturally increase if Peterborough find themselves in the same league as Manchester United and Liverpool, more people would want to come. This will increase matchday revenue, and allow the club to employ more people as part of their matchday team. The increased revenue from advertising, will allow the club to invest more in local grassroots campaign and play a wider role in the community. Away from the money, they'll be a feel-good factor around the town. Something experienced in Bournemouth in 2015 and Blackpool in 2010. They'll be an increased amount of pride derived from the fact the local club are competing with the

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so-called "big boys". This would only increase if The Posh are to claim a few big scalps in the league.

But how does a side get to the Premier League?

The obvious step is a promotion to the Championship, first. The Posh have made the second tier several times throughout their history and another promotion could be on the cards this season. If the promotion dream doesn't happen, then with a bit of investment, it could easily occur next year.

The side need to be able to keep hold of their best players. Joe Lewis, called up to the England squad in 2008, went on to play in the top flight for Cardiff City. George Boyd has been a key player in the Premier League for Hull City and Burnley. Dwight Gayle impressed at Crystal Palace and is tearing it up at Newcastle. Britt Assombalonga has impressed for Nottingham Forest and been linked with a move to the Premier League. Craig Mackail-Smith was a very solid signing for Brighton.

To progress, a club cannot weaken its' squad. Indeed, if a sell is necessary, it is vital MacAnthony gets the biggest fee possible for his players. With the exception of Mackail-Smith due to age, all the players above would probably have commanded a bigger transfer fee if held on to far a little while longer. The more money generated from sells, the more money can be spent on high quality replacements that can help the club progress.

The club needs stability too. Since Darren Ferguson's second departure from the club, the club have employed three full time managers in Dave Robertson, Graham Westley



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and Grant McCann. This is an unsustainable model. McCann needs time to build his own squad, one he trusts and one that is tailored to his style of play, this way Peterborough will get the most out of the XI they have on the field.

The Posh have a relatively young squad, however, they could do with a few older heads with experience in the Championship and Premier League, who can help guide the younger players. Mark Tyler, 39, is the only player in the

squad in his thirties. This could also allow McCann to develop more tactical plans for when plan A doesn't work.

The region as a whole needs a Premier League football club. The declines of the Midlands as a football force since the 1980s is plain for all to see. Aston Villa and Nottingham Forest, European Champions both are in the second tier. Leicester City were the first club from the region to win the league in thirty five years. The academy sides of clubs based in the region have begun to seriously dry up too, as has the system at Leeds United, out of the top flight since 2004, previously famed for their academy churning out the likes of Alan Smith, Harry Kewell, Jonathan Woodgate and Paul Robinson amongst others, in the time since their relegation the only really notable product has been Danny Rose.

By getting a Premier League club, the region will find it easier to sustain the running of clubs, and be able to invest more widely in the community to the benefit of everyone living in the region, that is why Peterborough and Cambridgeshire in general need a Premier League football club.