



**Birkbeck Sport Business Centre Seminar Series**  
**The English Premier League: A Global Brand or**  
**'Peoples' Clubs?**  
**David Conn, The Guardian**  
**Wednesday 10th June 2009 at 6pm**

**Date:**

Wednesday 10th June  
6pm—8pm

**Venue:**

Room B34  
Malet Street Building  
Birkbeck,  
University of London  
WC1 7HX

(For directions please  
go to [www.bbk.ac.uk/  
maps](http://www.bbk.ac.uk/maps))

Please note that the Business of Sport Seminar Series operates under strict Chatham House Rules i.e. there can be no external reporting of the presentation or discussion without the express permission of the speaker.

For further details on the seminar series contact Sean Hamil at [s.hamil@bbk.ac.uk](mailto:s.hamil@bbk.ac.uk)

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**Synopsis**

Since its foundation in 1992 the Premier League has grown to become the world's richest and most successful elite club football competition. Fans have flocked to stadia, television broadcasting rights have been sold for fortunes here and around the world, and the clubs have become coveted "trophy" assets for a string of international millionaires. However, for many the league embodies much that is wrong in modern sport; over-commercialisation, a corrosive financial divide with the rest of football, and huge personal fortunes being made by director-shareholders and agents, as well as players and managers. In this presentation David Conn assesses the booming popularity and glittering success of the English Premiership and assesses its challenges and its impact on the rest of football and the traditional roots of the game. The presentation will cover the following key areas:

- Trace the growth and development of the Premiership from its initial breakaway in 1992.
- Assess why the game's popularity has boomed so hugely in the twenty years since the Hillsborough disaster.
- Discuss the implications of the spate of takeovers at the top clubs.
- Assess the enormous financial divide between the Premier League and the rest of football and its consequences.
- Discuss the level of debt being carried by Premier League clubs and whether this threatens their long-term future.
- Assess whether relying on the backing of wealthy owners is sustainable in the future.
- Discuss the government's efforts to regulate English football through this boom.

**Biography**

David Conn is an awarding winning writer and journalist. Through his weekly investigative column in The Guardian newspaper he has become one of Britain's most influential commentators on football in the modern era. He is the author of two critically acclaimed best selling books on English football: *The Football Business: Fair Game in the 90s?* (1997); and *The Beautiful Game? Searching for the Soul of Football* (2004). Both texts present an evocative analysis of the remarkable changes in English football since the establishment of the Premier League in 1992, linking analysis of both economic and social trends to assess whether the beautiful game has indeed lost its soul in a period of financial excess, and challenging the received wisdom that the Premier League does indeed offer the model for an elite football league that the rest of the world should follow.