

Brand it like Beckham

Ben Ritchie thinks that David Beckham has sold out by taking his football to America.

I can't believe it. I thought I had seen it all. That was until this past week when David Beckham announced to the world that he was off to the "Sunshine State" to ply his trade in a second rate soccer league. I don't like it and below I have outlined why.

Thursday 11th January 2007, will be a day that will live long in the memory. Not because George W. Bush announced his latest plans for Iraq, not because interest rates rose to 5.25 percent, not even because Marcia Cross (Bree Van De Kamp in Desperate Housewives) is filming the show in her own house. No not at all - Thursday will be remembered because David Beckham announced that as of this August he will be leaving Real Madrid to cross the Atlantic and play for Los Angeles Galaxy in a five year deal which is said to be worth a whopping £128 million.

The once golden boy of English football moved to Madrid from Manchester United in 2003 for £25 million and the paparazzi weren't too far behind. In his first season he won the Spanish Super Cup. Unfortunately, for him, that is likely to be the only trophy that he will ever win as a Galactico. Now he's off again, and it smacks of crass cynicism.

Beckham is set to become the only footballer in history to actually own a share in his clubs profits because he will also receive a percentage of the gate receipts. He is following in the footsteps of famous players like the greatest of them all Pele, "Der Kaiser" Franz Beckenbaur, the majestic Johan Cruyff and, of course, the sublime George Best. All of whom left Europe for America in the 1970's and 80's when the years had caught up with them and they could no longer cut it in the big league. Do footballers still leave for the States because they want a new challenge or because they are near the end of their career and want more money?

America still seems to be the land of opportunity for ageing footballers. Over the next five years at LA Galaxy, "Golden Balls" will, purportedly, earn \$1million a week when merchandising and other things are taken into consideration. Surely an ageing footballer, even such a famous footballer as David Beckham doesn't deserve to earn that amount of money. It's a ridiculous amount of cash for simply kicking a ball about in a second-rate league.

How can any person believe that Beckham is going to America for the football? At the age of 31 his career is over. I think that both parties have seen this as a great opportunity to "coin it in". It helps that Beckham is already in business with AEG, the owners of LA Galaxy, who own shares in his footballing academy in, ahemm, funnily enough, Los Angeles.

Beckham has decided to uproot his family and completely change his children's lives in the pursuit of filthy lucre. How can anyone respect him as a footballer any more? Yes in his day he was a talented player but now, to put it simply, he is a money-grabber. He was simply looking for the best and biggest deal so that he could end his career and "clean up" in the process. Whilst not having to labour too hard for the money.

It is obvious that many players are only interested in money but Beckham's move has meant that things have reached an all time low. His move is more about merchandising than it is about football. Real Madrid may well have sold millions of replica shirts but at least he was still playing to a reasonable standard. The LA move is just too cynical for my liking and let's not forget that Mrs "Posh Becks" will find plenty of expensive shops along Sunset Strip to while away the hours and help him to spend his not so hard earned cash.

About this article

This article was written by Ben Ritchie, and published on the [Reach for the Sky](#) website.

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