

The fight for Manchester United

URL: <http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/0505/050515-manutd-e.html>

Today's contents

The Article	2
Warm-ups	3
Before Reading / Listening	4
While Reading / Listening	5
After Reading	6
Language Exercises	7
Discussion	8
Speaking	9
Listening Gap Fill	10
Homework	11
Answers	12

15 May, 2005

THE ARTICLE

The fight for Manchester United

BNE: American business tycoon Malcolm Glazer has bought Manchester United Football Club, the world's most famous soccer team. This has made fans of the club very angry. They are strongly against the American taking control of the team they passionately love. Many supporters said that "if push came to shove", they would sell their grandparents rather than their team. Fans around the world are protesting. They are boycotting products from the team's sponsors Nike and Vodafone. This may hurt the club's profits. It is the richest club and the biggest brand in football.

The love for football is at the centre of this anger. Does Mr. Glazer know enough or care enough about soccer? Fans are worried he is only interested in making profits. They fear the team's success on the pitch will suffer. They have laughed at Mr Glazer's statement that he is a big Manchester United fan. One fan said the tycoon has never even been to the stadium to watch a game. Mr Glazer's two sisters have added fuel to the fire. They say their brother is only interested in money.

WARM-UPS

1. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics you are interested in, which do not look interesting and which look really boring:

football (soccer) / Manchester United / David Beckham / favourite sports teams / grandparents / Nike / Vodafone / profits / sisters / money

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

2. FOOTBALL: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with football (soccer). Share your words with your partner / group and talk about them.

3. ALIENS: Many Manchester United fans do not want an "outsider" (someone who knows little about football) buying their club. What do you think of "outsiders", or foreigners, taking control of these positions in your country?

- a. A foreigner becoming president or prime minister.
- b. A foreigner becoming king/queen, emperor/empress, sultan/sultana etc.
- c. A foreigner becoming head of your country's secret services.
- d. A foreigner becoming your national soccer team's coach.
- e. A foreigner named as chief of your country's army.
- f. A foreigner becoming boss of your country's department of immigration.

What nationalities would be OK / not OK in the above positions?

4. SELLING YOUR GRANDMOTHER: In English there is an expression "(to) sell one's grandmother". It means you will do anything to get something you want. What would you sell if you REALLY wanted something? Put the following in order. Which would you sell first, second ... last? Talk about your decisions with your partner.

- a. Your grandmother
- b. Your cousin
- c. Your car
- d. All of the hair on your head
- e. One of your eyes
- f. Your collection of music and photographs
- g. Your house
- h. Your pet

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- | | |
|---|-------|
| a. A famous football team has to fight to win a big game. | T / F |
| b. Football fans are angry because an American has bought their club. | T / F |
| c. Some fans want to sell their grandparents. | T / F |
| d. Soccer fans worldwide are refusing to buy Nike products. | T / F |
| e. The love for football is at the center of this anger. | T / F |
| f. Fans believe the buyer of their club loves the team. | T / F |
| g. The American tycoon has been to the club's stadium many times. | T / F |
| h. The tycoon's sisters want to burn him. | T / F |

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| a. tycoon | if a choice had to be made |
| b. famous | heart |
| c. if push came to shove | made a bad situation worse |
| d. boycotting | well known |
| e. hurt | playing field |
| f. centre | damage |
| g. worried | businessman / businesswoman |
| h. pitch | keen |
| i. big | refusing to buy |
| j. added fuel to the fire | anxious |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a. American business | to shove |
| b. They are strongly | of this anger |
| c. passionately | tycoon |
| d. if push came | profits |
| e. This may hurt | in money |
| f. the centre | love |
| g. interested in making | to the fire |
| h. a big | the club's profits |
| i. added fuel | Manchester United fan |
| j. only interested | against the American taking control |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words in the column on the right into the correct spaces in the text.

BNE: American business _____ Malcolm Glazer has bought Manchester United Football Club, the world's most famous soccer team. This has made _____ of the club very angry. They are strongly against the American taking _____ of the team they passionately love. Many supporters said that "if push came to _____", they would sell their grandparents rather than their team. Fans around the world are protesting. They are _____ products from the team's sponsors Nike and Vodafone. This may hurt the club's profits. It is the richest club and the biggest _____ in football.

boycotting
control
brand
fans
tycoon
shove

The love for football is at the _____ of this anger. Does Mr. Glazer know enough or care _____ about soccer? Fans are worried he is only interested in making _____. They fear the team's success on the pitch will suffer. They have _____ at Mr Glazer's statement that he is a big Manchester United fan. One fan said the tycoon has never even been to the stadium to watch a game. Mr Glazer's two sisters have added _____ to the fire. They say their brother is only interested in _____.

laughed
centre
money
profits
fuel
enough

AFTER READING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... of the words 'football' and 'club'.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare and talk about your answers to this exercise. After you agree, check your answers against the text.

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT FOOTBALL SURVEY: In pairs / groups write down questions about football (soccer).

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make a mini-presentation to another group / the class on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- | | |
|----------------|-----------|
| • tycoon | • centre |
| • passionately | • profits |
| • grandparents | • pitch |
| • Nike | • laughed |
| • hurt | • fuel |
| • brand | • money |

LANGUAGE

FROM THE ARTICLE: In pairs / groups, complete the following sentence starters using your own words, about your own story. Forget about the Manchester United news item.

An American business tycoon has bought _____

They are strongly against _____

They are boycotting products from _____

People are worried he is only interested in _____

They fear the team _____

She added fuel to the fire by _____

- After you have completed each sentence, try to make a story.
- Change partners and compare your sentence endings and tell your stories.
- Write down any unknown vocabulary you hear from your new partners.

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. What did you think when you saw the headline of this article?
- b. Do you like reading about football (soccer)?
- c. Do you read the sports section in a newspaper?
- d. Which word is best, 'football' or 'soccer'?
- e. Do you think the tycoon is wrong to buy Manchester United?
- f. Are you a big fan of any sports team?
- g. Football is the most important thing in the lives of many British people. What do you think of this?
- h. Can an American with no knowledge of football be successful with a famous British football team?
- i. Would you boycott (refuse to buy) a company's goods or products?
- j. Have you ever been strongly against anything?

STUDENT B's questions (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading the article?
- b. Would you ever sell your grandmother?
- c. Do you like football (soccer)?
- d. What do you know about Manchester United?
- e. Can you understand the fans' feelings in this story?
- f. How would you feel if your favorite team was totally changed?
- g. Is football (soccer) the best game in the world?
- h. What do you think of the tycoon's sisters' comments?
- i. How would you feel if you were the tycoon?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What question would you like to ask about this topic?
- b. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- c. Was there a question you didn't like?
- d. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- e. What did you like talking about?
- f. Do you want to know how anyone else answered the questions?
- g. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

IF PUSH CAME TO SHOVE: Complete the following "If push came to shove questions" then ask them to your partner / group. Write down what your partners say below each question.

If push came to shove, would you...

eat _____ or _____ ?

live _____ or _____ ?

marry _____ or _____ ?

sell _____ or _____ ?

work _____ or _____ ?

have _____ or _____ ?

- Ask the questions to four or five other students if you can.
- Return to your original partner and report on how other students answered your questions

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

The fight for Manchester United

BNE: American _____ _____ Malcolm Glazer has bought Manchester United Football Club, the world's most famous soccer team. This has made fans of the club very angry. They are _____ _____ the American taking control of the team they passionately love. Many supporters said that "if _____ _____ shove", they would sell their grandparents rather than their team. Fans around the world are protesting. They are boycotting products from the team's sponsors Nike and Vodafone. This _____ _____ _____ profits. It is the richest club and the biggest brand in football.

The love for football _____ _____ this anger. Does Mr. Glazer know enough or care enough about soccer? Fans are worried he is _____ _____ making profits. They fear the team's success on the _____ _____. They have laughed at Mr Glazer's statement that he is a big Manchester United fan. One fan said the tycoon has never even been to the stadium to watch a game. Mr Glazer's two sisters have added _____ _____. They say their brother is only interested in money.

HOMEWORK

- 1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION:** Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.
- 2. INTERNET:** Search the Internet and find information on Manchester United. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.
- 3. MY TEAM:** Make a poster about your favourite sports team. Show it to your classmates in your next lesson. Ask your classmates what they think of the team.
- 4. LETTER:** Pretend you are an avid, passionate fan of Manchester United. Write a letter to the American tycoon to tell him your thoughts on what he should change and how he should run the team. Show your letter to the class next lesson. Did your classmates write similar things?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE

- a. F b. T c. F d. T e. T f. F g. F h. F

SYNONYM MATCH

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| a. tycoon | businessman / businesswoman |
| b. famous | well known |
| c. if push came to shove | if a choice had to be made |
| d. boycotting | refusing to buy |
| e. hurt | damage |
| f. centre | heart |
| g. worried | anxious |
| h. pitch | playing field |
| i. big | keen |
| j. added fuel to the fire | made a bad situation worse |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a. American business | tycoon |
| b. They are strongly | against the American taking control |
| c. passionately | love |
| d. if push came | to shove |
| e. This may hurt | the club's profits |
| f. the centre | of this anger |
| g. interested in making | profits |
| h. a big | Manchester United fan |
| i. added fuel | to the fire |
| j. only interested | in money |

GAP FILL:

BNE: American business **tycoon** Malcolm Glazer has bought Manchester United Football Club, the world's most famous soccer team. This has made **fans** of the club very angry. They are strongly against the American taking **control** of the team they passionately love. Many supporters said that "if push came to **shove**", they would sell their grandparents rather than their team. Fans around the world are protesting. They are **boycotting** products from the team's sponsors Nike and Vodafone. This may hurt the club's profits. It is the richest club and the biggest **brand** in football.

The love for football is at the **centre** of this anger. Does Mr. Glazer know enough or care **enough** about soccer? Fans are worried he is only interested in making **profits**. They fear the team's success on the pitch will suffer. They have **laughed** at Mr Glazer's statement that he is a big Manchester United fan. One fan said the tycoon has never even been to the stadium to watch a game. Mr Glazer's two sisters have added **fuel** to the fire. They say their brother is only interested in **money**.