

How fast can an underdog club rise in British Football?

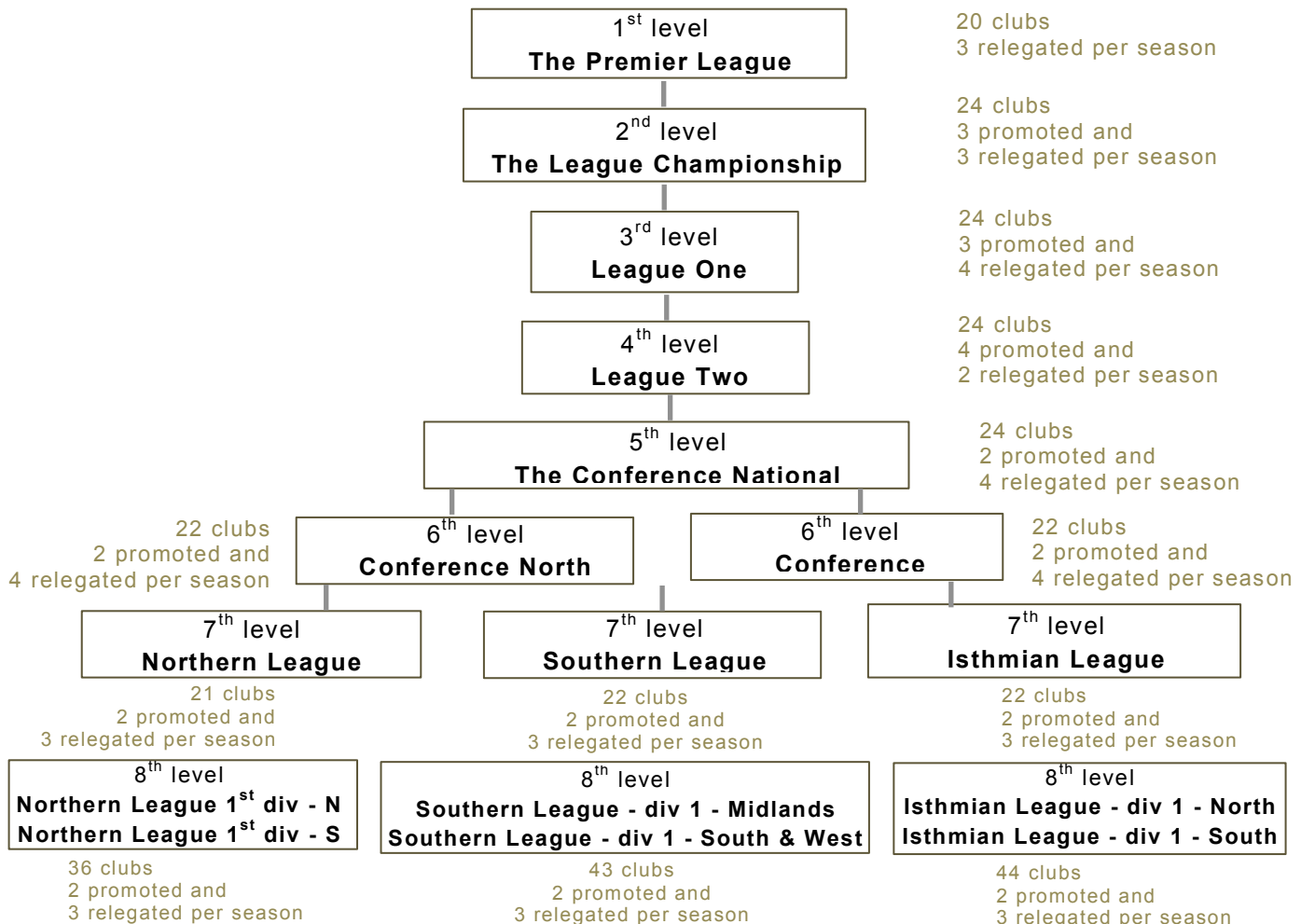


Recently the Leicester City Foxes, a club that was in danger of being relegated to a lower league last year, secured the championship of the Premier British Football League.

Seems like everyone in Britain plays soccer. There are around 40,000 football clubs in the English system. All of these teams dream of becoming the top of the top league in British Football.

What seems really exciting to us is that clubs move up and down in the league system according to promotions and relegations. The top league, the Premier League, always has 20 teams but at the end of the season the bottom 3 teams are relegated to the next lowest division. At the end of the season the top 3 teams in the Football league Championship are promoted to the Premier League and the bottom 3 teams in that League are demoted to the Football league one division. So a successful team can keep moving up in each division. But as a team moves up in the division structure they often must compete against teams that can attract the best soccer players with high salaries. So, can the underdog teams every really win?

To get an idea of how this works we made a flow chart that shows how the top 8 levels of league play move.



In May, the Leicester Foxes, a club that only got into the Premier League 2 years ago, and was close to being relegated to the next lowest league through most of last season, secured the championships.

1. If you were a very good soccer player and you were just hired by an 8th level team to play on their roster, what would be the shortest number of years that you must play in that same club to have a chance to play in the Premier League?

Soccer is a pretty demanding sport.

2. For how many years do you guess a player, on average, can maintain the skill and endurance necessary to play English football?

Actually we found these averages.

The earliest age that a player can become a professional in soccer is 16 years old.

On average, a player's career lasts for 8 years.

So, as a player, it might be kind of hopeless to be hired by an 8th level club. You probably would never make it to the Premier league if you stayed loyal to your club.

3. But if you are a young man and only recognized as a marvelous player in your hometown, how do you suppose you make it to the Premier league before your career is over?

4. So how do you suppose the system attracts the very best players to the top-level clubs?

We found this data on the average league earnings for the 2014 - 2015 season.

- A Premier League player earns on average is £1.7 million per year.
- A Championship League player earns yearly around £324,250.
- A League One player on average earns £69,500.

5. Compare the earnings of a League One player to a Premier League player. By what fraction or percent of salaries do these two level league player's salaries differ.

6. If a club has a roster of 30 players and on average they earn the above amounts, how much money does the club need to spend on only their players?

- A Premier Club?
- A Championship League club?
- A League One club?

7. How much money is that in your currency?

8. How likely do you think that it is that a terrific player in the Championship League won't be lured away to the Premier League with an offer of a greater salary?

9. How do you suppose that a Football club earns enough to pay their players, pay their managers, and pay for the stadium where they play?

Back to the Foxes

To give you some understanding about how rare the Foxes accomplishment is, we've listed the Premier League winners and runners-ups for the last 10 years.

Season	Winners	Runners-up
2015–16	Leicester City	Arsenal
2014–15	Chelsea	Manchester City
2013–14	Manchester City	Liverpool
2012–13	Manchester United	Manchester City
2011–12	Manchester City	Manchester United
2010–11	Manchester United	Chelsea
2009–10	Chelsea	Manchester United
2008–09	Manchester United	Liverpool
2007–08	Manchester United	Chelsea
2006–07	Chelsea	Manchester United

10. Do you notice clubs that are most frequently in the finals?

11. What percent of the games do you see Leicester mentioned in the finals?

12. What closing conclusions or additions can you share with your class?

Sources: http://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/03/sports/soccer/leicester-city-clinches-premier-league-title.html?ref=todaypaper&_r=0
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