

Embargoed:**Not for publication before 00.01hrs 21st May 2009****Wigan Athletic tops Premier League – for value**

The likes of Man Utd, Liverpool and Chelsea may sit at the top of the Premiership – but they're not leading the league when it comes to value for supporters.

New research issued today by ING Direct compares club season ticket costs with their Premier League performance¹, and when it comes to getting the most points for your pound it's Wigan Athletic, Aston Villa and Blackburn who really deliver.

Even recovering Tottenham didn't do enough to prevent their fall down the value league, sitting in the 'relegation zone' along with Newcastle United and Portsmouth.

Yet it's clear that Premier League clubs are already battling to improve their position in next year's value league, with the majority (17 out of 20) already announcing that they are freezing or dropping their ticket prices for next year².

And according to the research, they've made the right decision, as nearly one in 10 fans say that they wouldn't renew if prices go up – the equivalent to around 45,000 season ticket holders³.

However, the current climate has forced a small number of supporters to give up their tickets regardless of price changes, with more than one in 20 Newcastle, West Ham and Tottenham followers surrendering their season tickets – twice that of the average club⁴.

On the other end of the scale, around one in five (18 per cent) say that they'll pay out whatever it takes to follow their side, with Arsenal, Stoke and Sunderland fans most willing to stretch their finances for their club⁵.

And while one in four fans (25 per cent) has already saved up for next year's season ticket, a significant minority of supporters (38 per cent) are forced to make serious financial sacrifices as they struggle to meet this cost.

ING Direct CEO Johan de Wit commented: *"Many of our customers have dedicated savings plans in place to manage the cost of their season ticket.*

"However, it's clear by the research that lots of supporters find it difficult to deal with such a large outlay at the beginning of the season, so it's good to see the majority of Premier League teams appreciate this and are not taking fans loyalty for granted."

Football enthusiasts can find a range of match-day money saving tips at: www.savingfeelsgood.co.uk.

ING Direct 'Value League'

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|---------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Wigan Athletic | 11. Man City |
| 2. Blackburn Rovers | 12. West Bromwich Albion |
| 3. Aston Villa | 13. Hull City |
| 4. Man Utd | 14. Arsenal |
| 5. Liverpool | 15. Sunderland |
| 6. Stoke | 16. West Ham |
| 7. Everton | 17. Middlesbrough |
| 8. Chelsea | 18. Portsmouth |
| 9. Fulham | 19. Tottenham |
| 10. Bolton | 20. Newcastle |

Ends

Breakdowns by Premiership team

Team	Decided not to renew season ticket (%)	Won't renew if prices go up (%)	Pay whatever it takes to follow my club (%)	Put savings away for season ticket (%)	Make financial sacrifices to follow club (%)
Arsenal	1	9	27	29	47
Aston Villa	2	9	18	27	41
Blackburn	1	9	14	28	45
Bolton	3	9	20	20	40
Chelsea	1	5	21	31	43
Everton	3	3	14	17	31
Fulham	2	3	13	17	41
Hull City	2	4	18	28	25
Liverpool	2	5	26	33	47
Man City	1	3	10	33	42
Man Utd	2	13	17	26	45
Middlesbrough	3	13	18	18	36
Newcastle	7	14	8	17	42
Portsmouth	3	13	17	18	33
Stoke City	5	5	27	21	43
Sunderland	5	9	27	19	28
Tottenham	6	9	17	24	34
West Brom	1	5	18	19	36
West Ham	7	12	20	16	48
Wigan Athletic	2	5	22	20	36

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Notes to editors

Research was conducted by Football Fans Census and ING Direct in March and April 2009. Total sample size was 2,011 adult season ticket holders of Premiership clubs.

1. The value league was compiled by comparing season ticket prices with points earned, with a bonus for goals scored (which affects fans' enjoyment of the game). This calculation was supported by Dr Steve Kelly from the University of Huddersfield, an expert in sports and society.
2. As of 19 May 2009, 17 of the 20 premiership clubs had announced price drops or price freezes. Blackburn and Bolton are yet to announce, and Manchester United has announced increases.
3. Of the 680,000 fans who attend premier league games every year (based on average attendance figures), around 73 per cent are season ticket holders = 496,400 (buzzle.com). Nine per cent of fans said they wouldn't renew their tickets if prices were increased = 44,676, approx 45,000 season ticket holders.
4. When asked about renewing their season ticket, an average of three per cent of fans said that they wouldn't be renewing regardless of what happened to the price. This figure sat at seven per cent for Newcastle and West Ham fans and six per cent for Tottenham fans (double the average).
5. 18 per cent of season ticket holders questioned said that they would "pay whatever it takes" to follow their club. When analysed by club, 27 per cent of Arsenal, Stoke and Sunderland fans made this statement.