

## **Revealed: Over 400 points docked from English Football League clubs since dawn of Premier League for governance failings**

- *Total of 418 points deducted from 35 clubs in the three professional divisions below the Premier League since its launch in 1992*
- *Point deductions, which were punishments for various governance-related failings, have led to 11 relegations and one expulsion*
- *Research comes as Independent Football Regulator set to be established by UK government to oversee the men's game in England's top five divisions*

[27 May 2025]: New research from leading UK governance firm, [Indigo: Independent Governance](#), advisors to Southend United in the UK's first 'good governance' football partnership, and Fair Game, an organisation campaigning for fairer governance in English football, reveals the devastating impact of governance failings across the English Football League (EFL).

Since the start of the Premier League in 1992, 35 EFL clubs have seen a total of 418 points deducted as penalties for a variety of failings, including falling into administration, breaching financial fair play rules, late payments of wages and more. A total of 19 clubs in the EFL have entered into administration during the period, resulting points deductions sending eleven clubs down a division. These relegations include Bury FC, one of England's oldest clubs, that was liquidated in 2020 and have reformed at the bottom of the pyramid are now in the eighth tier of English football having got promoted to the Northern Premier League West Division in April.

In the 2021/22 season, Derby County was relegated from the Championship due to points deductions as were Sheffield Wednesday and Wigan FC in the two consecutive seasons prior.

Reading FC has had a total of 18 points deducted since the takeover of owner Dai Yongge for breaching the EFL's Profit and Sustainability rules, failing to meet the requirements of an agreed business plan, late payment of wages and failing to meet HMRC payment obligations. These issues have caused the club to slip from the Premier League in 2013 down to League One in 2024. The club remains in a state of uncertainty, underlining the devastating impact for each club's supporters and long-term finances.

As many clubs continue to struggle to recover from the footballing and financial impacts of administration, a new independent body is set to be launched this year to provide support and prevent more clubs suffering the same fate. This new football regulator will be charged with redressing the current financial structure of English football, which currently rewards risky, short-term spending rather than good financial management and strong long-term focussed governance.

The Premier League controls how income is distributed to the lower leagues and parachute payments have deepened the financial divide between divisions. The regulator will seek to fix the system by establishing a fairer distribution of money and the ability to hold club owners and managers accountable.

**David Gracie, Director at Indigo** said: “Our research shows just how damaging a lack of proper governance has been on the fortunes of so many clubs. Fans deserve better than to see their club mismanaged and relegated as a result of points deductions for failings that could have been entirely avoidable with the right strategic oversight and more sustainable financial arrangements in place.

“A new football regulator is coming and its proposed changes in how football clubs are run will take some adjustment. We’re keen to support teams throughout the EFL in understanding the changes, preparing for and adhering to the new rules and regulations set to govern English football. Simple governance changes will help improve the financial stability and longevity of teams throughout the country. This is not only for the benefit of individual clubs but also for the fans, local communities and businesses that these clubs are a huge part of.”

**Niall Couper, CEO, Fair Game** said: “The findings of the research are stark and shine a light on why a football regulator is desperately needed. One club suffering a points deduction and relegation as a result of governance and financial failings is one too many.

“Fair Game does not believe in sitting on the sidelines, we believe in developing realistic long-term solutions to the problems the game faces. Our ground-breaking conference will put 15 topics under the microscope. The aim is to develop solutions for all of them. At the top of this list is a new Governance Code for football. The incoming football regulator is set to introduce this and we want to give them a helping hand and bring a range of organisations together to produce an off the shelf version that benefits all of football.”

*Indigo: Independent Governance will be hosting a panel discussion at the Fair Game Conference on the 28-29 May 2025 at AFC Wimbledon’s stadium to discuss what clubs need to be thinking about to prepare for the new regulatory environment and what guidance and resources clubs need to adapt to a new system.*

**Ends**

#### **Notes to editors:**

##### **Largest EFL points deductions are:**

- **Luton Town (2008/09, League Two) – 30 points** deducted for financial irregularities and administration issues, the largest deduction ever in English football.

- **Derby County (2021/22, Championship) – 21 points** deducted (12 for entering administration, 9 for breaching financial rules).
- **Bournemouth (2008/09, League Two) – 17 points** deducted after entering administration.
- **Rotherham United (2008/09, League Two) – 17 points** deducted for financial breaches.
- **Leeds United (2007/08, League One) – 15 points** deducted for failing to meet Football League regulations after exiting administration
- **Wigan Athletic (2019/20, Championship) – Deducted 12 points** after entering administration.
- **Bolton Wanderers (2019/20, League One) – Deducted 12 points** for entering administration.
- **Bury (2019/20, League One) – Deducted 12 points** for insolvency before being expelled from the EFL
- **Portsmouth (2012/13, League One) – Deducted 10 points** after entering administration.
- **Coventry City (2013/14, League One) – Deducted 10 points** for financial irregularities.
- **Wigan Athletic (2022/23, League One) – Deducted 10 points** for failing to pay players on time.
- **Rotherham United (2008/09) – Deducted 10 points** for financial breaches.
- **Plymouth Argyle 2010/2011 – Deducted 10 points** for administration.
- **Birmingham City (2018/19) – Deducted 9 points** for breaching financial regulations.
- **Wigan Athletic (2023/24) – Deducted 8 points** for failing to pay players on time.
- **Sheffield Wednesday (2020/21) – Deducted 6 points** for financial misconduct.

\* 418 points is a combination of all of the EFL (championship-League 2 since the 1992-1993 season.

Excludes 2024-2025 season) The 35 EFL clubs with points deductions include: Wigan, Reading, Morcombe, Derby, Sheffield Weds, Macclesfield, Bolton, Bury, Birmingham, Brentford, Rotherham, Coventry, Wimbledon, Portsmouth, Aldershot, Port Vale, Plymouth, Hereford, Torquay, Crystal Palace, Hartlepool, Southampton, Stockport, Darlington, Luton, Bournemouth, Leeds, Boston, Wrexham, Cambridge, Chesterfield, Leyton Orient, Middlesbrough, Brighton & HA, Maidstone. While Reading FC have had 18 points deductions, they have amalgamated over several seasons.

Since 1992/93 season, the 19 clubs that have received points deductions for going into administration are: Derby, Wigan, Bolton, Coventry, Aldershot, Portsmouth, Port Vale, Plymouth Argyle, Crystal Palace, Southampton, Stockport, Darlington, Luton, Rotherham, Leeds, Boston, Wrexham, Cambridge United.

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### About Indigo:

[Indigo](#) provides bespoke consultancy to leading UK companies to help navigate the complexities of today's evolving governance landscape. Specialising in listed company support, subsidiary governance, compliance, transaction management, board effectiveness, and shareholder engagement, Indigo helps boards improve performance and long-term sustainable value for all stakeholders.

### About Fair Game:

Fair Game represents 35 men's professional football clubs in the English football pyramid and campaigns for a fairer future for football. It works with leading academics and experts to develop realistic long-term solutions to the problems in the game.