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U.S.-based GSE buy Derby County

(Adds quotes, details)

By Sonia Oxley

LONDON, Jan 28 (Reuters) - English Premier League strugglers Derby County named U.S.-based General Sports and Entertainment (GSE) as their new owners on Monday.

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The club said the investment was in the form of cash, and not debt, and that the financial future of the club was underpinned.

"This is a significant day in the history of this club," Derby chairman Adam Pearson told the club's Web site (www.dcfc.premiumtv.co.uk).

"The takeover adds new financial firepower, underpinning a long-term plan to establish Derby County as a major player in the Premier League and as an international club brand."

Derby lie bottom of the Premier League, with just one win from 23 games, and on Saturday were knocked out of the FA Cup after a 4-1 thrashing by Championship (second division) side Preston North End.

GSE is a sports and entertainment marketing and management firm founded in 1998 by chairman Andy Appleby, 45, who will be on the board alongside Pearson who stays on as chairman of football operations.

INCREDIBLE POTENTIAL

Tom Glick, a former chief marketing officer for NBA team the New Jersey Nets, will be president and chief executive.

"We are excited about the opportunity to make a significant impact at Derby County with our collective sports industry knowledge of best practices in management, sales and marketing," said Appleby.

"We have visited Derby County over the last six months and experienced a match day at Pride Park stadium, where we were impressed with the incredible potential of the club and the loyalty of the fan base."

The club gave no financial details of the deal but said they would hold a news conference at 1400 GMT.

Derby are the fourth Premier League club to be taken over by Americans, following in the footsteps of Liverpool, Manchester United and Aston Villa.

"The turnaround in the fortunes of Aston Villa, with their American investment in the squad and club infrastructure, is a key model we would like to emulate over the coming seasons," said Pearson.

"The long-term aim is to establish the Derby County brand worldwide through successful alliances with sporting teams in the USA, Far East and other continents." (Reporting by Sonia Oxley, editing by Justin Palmer)



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