

Man United chasing Spanish top clubs

English clubs have the most fans across Europe

London, 11 February 2009. Although the number of fans of FC Barcelona and Real Madrid declined, they are still the two most popular football clubs in Europe. This is the result of the second edition of the SPORT+MARKT report "Football Top 20", based on research among over 9,600 football fans between 15 and 69 years of age in 16 European countries*. Manchester United, most popular English club, has gained in fans and is now closer to the Spanish clubs with 37.6 mill. followers. The biggest English winner is Chelsea with almost 6 million additional fans – mainly from abroad.

In comparison to Russia or Poland, where national fans make up the lion's share of the fanbase, English clubs have to rely on their foreign fans, where Premier League clubs improved significantly. Gareth Moore, International Sales Director of SPORT+MARKT explains the development: "We can see the direct impact of international presence and success on the international fanbase. The all-English Champions League final was a great success for the Premier League as international brand." This year, English clubs passed Spanish teams and are in the lead with 114.1 mill. European fans altogether. This is mainly due to 14 mill. new international fans.

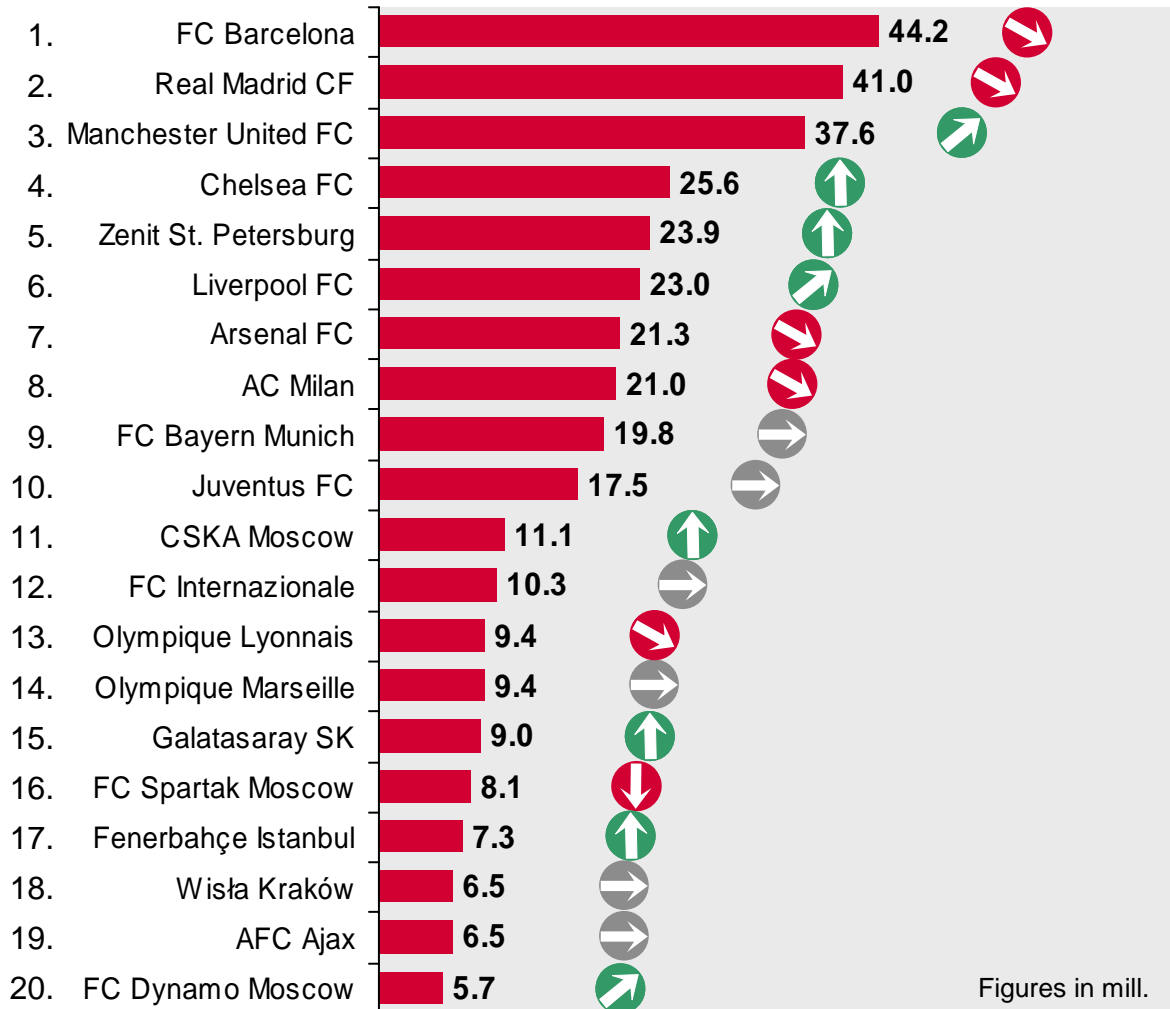
Football Top 20 emphasises the importance of the big four for the international interest in the Premier League. Following ManU, Chelsea, Liverpool and Arsenal is a great gap regarding English teams. As the reports analyses all UK clubs, the next in the ranking is the Scottish Celtic FC with 2.6 mill. fans across Europe. Moore: "Celtic FC has a great European standing especially for a small league. Let alone the great amount of English fans, 45% of their followers are even from outside the UK."

As a special feature, this year's report "Football Top 20" analyses the position of European top clubs in Latin America. Real Madrid and FC Barcelona also lead the ranking. Manchester United is the most popular Premier League club with a fanbase of 3.6 mill. The other top clubs Liverpool and Chelsea cannot reach one million while Arsenal has a mere 0.1 mill fans. "Latin America is surely closer to Spanish teams. For English teams, Asia is a much more interesting market to exploit – not only is it much bigger, but also is there more open space for football clubs", analyses Moore. Last year's "Football Top 20" had Asia in focus where Man U had 10.2 million fans and the impressive figure of 151.7 mill sympathisers.

While Italy and Germany both lost one club in the Football Top 20, one Russian and one Turkish club has moved up. Similarly to England, Russia now has four clubs in the ranking. After winning the UEFA Cup last May, Zenit St. Petersburg jumped from 10th to 5th position in the ranking, gaining 8.5 mill. to a total of 23.9 mill. fans. Despite European presence, they have not gained many fans from outside their own market.

* U.K., Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Poland, Netherlands, Portugal, Turkey, Czech Republic, Hungary, Greece, Switzerland, Austria, Russia, Croatia.

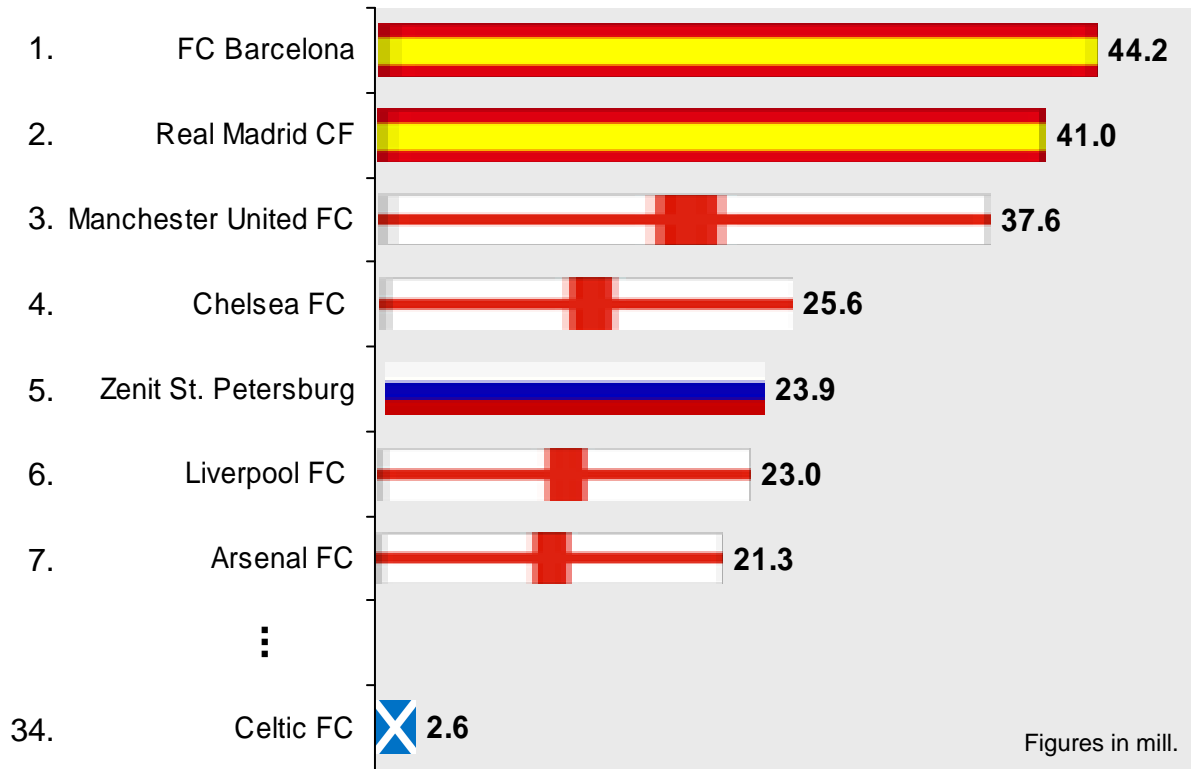
Graph 1: Europe's most popular football clubs with their European fanbase – Top 20



Source: SPORT+MARKT Football Top 20 2008/09

Base: 9,600 football fans between 15 and 69 years of age in U.K., Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Poland, Netherlands, Portugal, Turkey, Czech Republic, Hungary, Greece, Switzerland, Austria, Russia, Croatia.

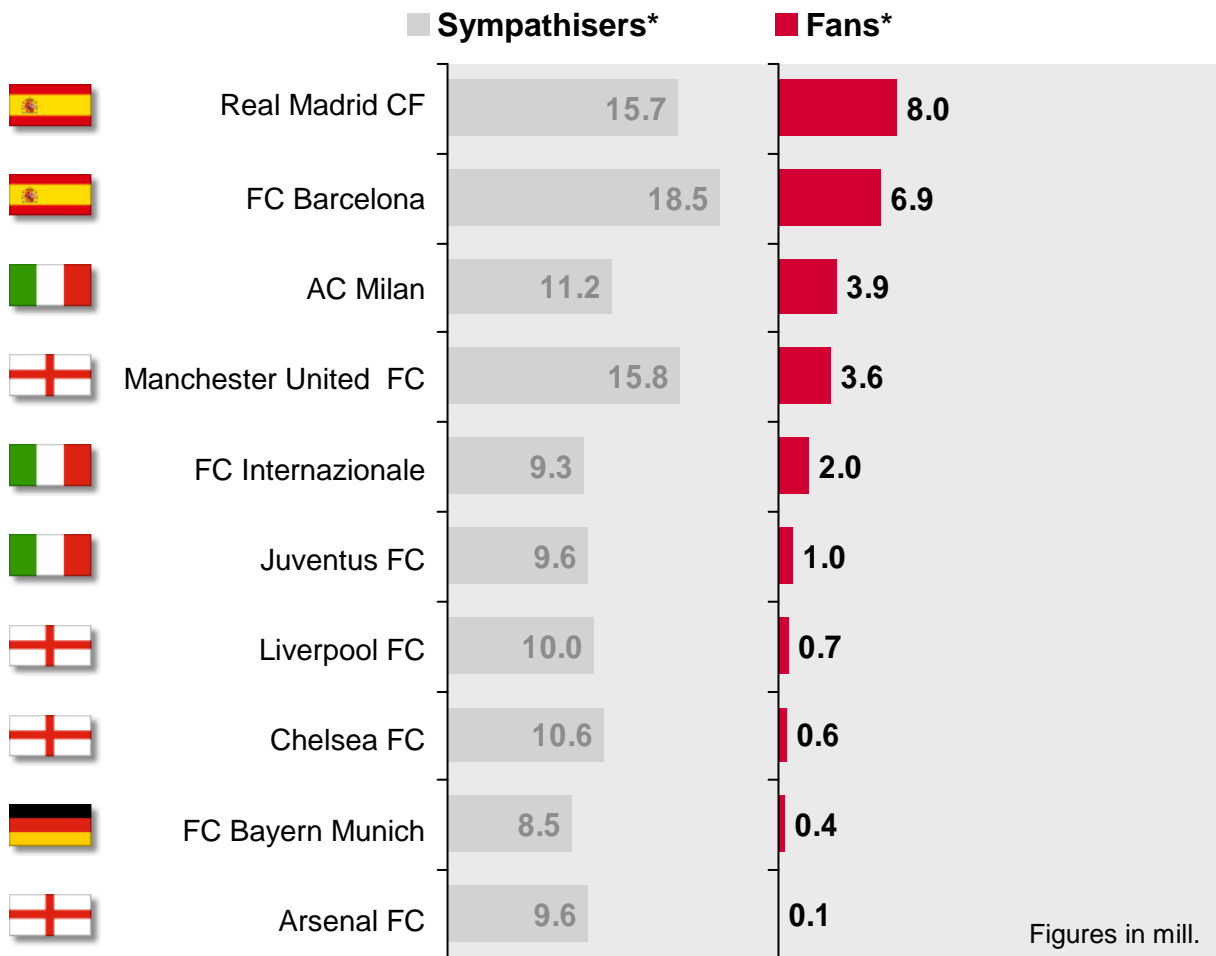
Graph 2: The five most popular football clubs in the UK with their European fanbase



Source: SPORT+MARKT Football Top 20 2008/09

Base: 9,600 football fans between 15 and 69 years of age in U.K., Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Poland, Netherlands, Portugal, Turkey, Czech Republic, Hungary, Greece, Switzerland, Austria, Russia, Croatia.

Graph 3: Special Latin America: Selected European top clubs and their fanbase in Latin America



*between 16-69 years of age

Source: SPORT+MARKT Football Top 20 2008/09

Base: 3,000 representative citizens between the ages of 16-69 in Argentina, Mexico, Brazil

Your contact:

Julia Kunkel
International PR Manager
SPORT+MARKT AG
Luxemburger Str. 299
50939 Cologne
Germany

Tel: +49 (0)221 430 73 177

Fax: +49 (0)221 430 73 161

julia.kunkel@sportundmarkt.com
www.sportundmarkt.com

U.K. Office:

Gareth Moore
Director U.K.
SPORT+MARKT AG
27 Austin Friars
London EC2N 2QP
U.K.

Tel.: +44 (0)207 614 3341

gareth.moore@sportundmarkt.com
www.sportundmarkt.com



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