On Saturday the new Premier League starts and hearing the scores come in on the first day is one of my highlights of the sporting calendar. How will new players gel and newly promoted teams get on?

There’ll be several more weeks of the transfer window to go, so clubs will look to fine-tune their teams, plug any weaknesses and give themselves the best chance on the pitch. A lot of money will still be spent because as we know football is big business. However with that comes some unacceptable and unnecessary inequalities that unions want to tackle.

The new three-year deal for UK TV rights for the Premier League is worth £5.1 billion alone, which represents an increase of 71% from the previous deal. In the last recorded year Premier League club revenues have increased by 21%. Meanwhile clubs are employing some of the people key to making match-days a success less than the living wage. Some clubs go further and cynically recruit 17 year olds so that they only have to pay the under-18 rate of £3.79 per hour. It’s a scandal.

It is simply unacceptable that anyone working for a football club is paid poverty wages while there is so much wealth in the game. The GMB union represents many in the sports industries and their End Foul Pay campaign aims to press clubs to do the right thing, pay a living wage and show leadership in our communities.

There is widespread support for this cause. A survey of football fans shows that 84% believe football league clubs should pay the living wage. Tim Roache who leads the End Foul Pay campaign for the GMB rightly argues that if clubs can afford millions for players on the pitch, they can afford to pay at least £7.85 outside of London and £9.15 in London for those working off the pitch.

As a result of the pressure to date, Premier League clubs have committed to paying a living wage from the 2016-17 season but there’s no reason why they can’t pay it right now.

To kick off the next phase of the End Foul Pay campaign, we’ll be in Newcastle city centre on Saturday lunchtime to mark the start of the new Premier League season calling on Premier, Championship and Football League clubs to pay a living wage. I’ll be astonished if we find anyone who believes Mike Ashley, the tenth richest person in the UK, cannot afford it.

Football, like business is a team sport. We each have different and important roles to play. A lot of attention this weekend will understandably be on those on the pitch and on the decisions taken in the dug-out. We must also think of those working off the pitch and the responsibility of those in the boardroom of our great clubs to end foul pay for their entire workforce.

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