

Readers' letters

The Guardian, Wednesday 30 October 2002

Self-interest at stake

As the chair of a small charity, I was interested to read your article on charity giving by football clubs (Pass the cash, October 23). As pointed out, clubs often give back to the local community in some way. However, in addition to this, more clubs should think about giving to charities that reflect the social and health problems that can often affect their players.

Obvious candidates are those that deal with alcoholism, given the number of high-profile cases of the past 50 years (George Best, Jimmy Greaves, Tony Adams). Another, less talked about, problem among footballers is gambling addiction. Charities that deal with the aftermath of problem gambling are never likely to gain public sympathy in the way that other charities do. Therefore, gambling charities require wealthy benefactors that understand the devastation that gambling can cause individuals.

Premiership clubs (and individual players) appear to be obvious candidates. Hopefully, high-profile problem gamblers such as Paul Merson and Steve Claridge might facilitate their clubs (and others) to give to such problems.

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