

= Sunderland A.F.C. =

Sunderland Association Football Club ( / ˈsʊndərˌlɑːnd / , local / ˈsʊndlən / ) is an English professional football club based in the North East city of Sunderland in the larger metropolitan area of Tyne and Wear . The club is currently playing in the Premier League , the top league of English football . Since its formation in 1879 , the club has won six top @-@ flight First Division ( now the Premier League ) titles ( 1892 , 1893 , 1895 , 1902 , 1913 , and 1936 ) , a total only bettered by five other clubs , and has finished runners @-@ up five times . The club has also won the FA Cup twice ( 1937 and 1973 ) and been runners @-@ up twice ( 1913 and 1992 ) , as well as winning the FA Community Shield in 1936 and being finalists the following year . Sunderland have also been Football League Cup finalists in 1985 and 2014 .

Sunderland won their first FA Cup in 1937 with a 3 ? 1 victory over Preston North End , and remained in the top league for 68 successive seasons until they were relegated for the first time in 1958 . Sunderland 's most notable trophy after the Second World War was their second FA Cup in 1973 , when the club secured a 1 ? 0 victory over Leeds United . The team has won the second tier title five times in that period and the third tier title once .

Sunderland play their home games at the 49 @, @ 000 @-@ capacity all @-@ seater Stadium of Light having moved from Roker Park in 1997 . The original ground capacity was 42 @, @ 000 which was increased to 49 @, @ 000 following expansion in 2000 . Sunderland have a long @-@ standing rivalry with their neighbouring club Newcastle United , with whom they have contested the Tyne ? Wear derby since 1898 . Since their most recent promotion to the Premier League in 2007 , Sunderland have become one of the world 's wealthiest football brands , being valued at USD \$ 93 million in 2014 , 31st in the world overall .

= = History = =

= = = Early years and league triumphs = = =

Founded 17 October 1879 as ' Sunderland and District Teachers A.F.C. ' by schoolmaster James Allan , Sunderland joined The Football League for the 1890 ? 91 season . They replaced Stoke , who had failed to be re @-@ elected , becoming the first new club to join the league since its inauguration in 1888 . During the late 19th century , they were declared the " Team of All Talents " by William McGregor , the founder of the league , after a 7 ? 2 win against Aston Villa . Sunderland won the league championship in the 1891 ? 92 season , one season after joining The Football League . The club 's 42 points were five clear of nearest rivals Preston North End , and this performance led The Times to describe the players as " a wonderfully fine team " . Sunderland successfully defended the title the following season , aided by centre forward Johnny Campbell , who broke the 30 @-@ goal mark for the second time in consecutive seasons . In the process , they became the first team to score 100 goals in a season , a feat not matched until 1919 ? 20 , when West Bromwich Albion set a new record .

Sunderland came close to winning a third successive league championship in the 1893 ? 94 season , finishing second behind Aston Villa . However , they regained the title in the 1894 ? 95 season , ending the season five points ahead of Everton . After winning the English League Championship , Sunderland played against Heart of Midlothian , the champions of the Scottish League , in a game described as the Championship of the World title match . Sunderland won the game 5 ? 3 and were announced " Champions of the world " . Sunderland came close to winning another league title in the 1897 ? 98 season , when they finished as runners @-@ up to Sheffield United . That season was their last at Newcastle Road , as they moved to Roker Park the following season . After coming second in 1900 ? 01 , the club won their fourth league title in the 1901 ? 02 season , beating Everton by a three @-@ point margin .

In 1904 , Sunderland 's management was embroiled in a payment scandal involving player Andrew McCombie . The club was said to have given the player £ 100 ( £ 9 @. @ 7 thousand today ) to help

him start his own business , on the understanding that he would repay the money after his benefit game . However , McCombie refused to repay the money , claiming it had been a gift . An investigation conducted by the Football Association concluded that the money given to McCombie was part of a " re @-@ signing / win / draw bonus " , which violated the Association 's rules . Sunderland were fined £ 250 ( £ 24 @.@ 3 thousand today ) , and six directors were suspended for two and a half years for not showing a true record of the club 's financial dealings . Sunderland manager Alex Mackie was also suspended for three months for his involvement in the affair .

= = = Further league championship titles = = =

On 5 December 1908 , Sunderland achieved their highest ever league win , against north @-@ east rivals Newcastle United . They won the game 9 ? 1 ; Billy Hogg and George Holley each scored hat @-@ tricks . The club won the league again in 1913 , but lost their first FA Cup final 1 ? 0 to Aston Villa , in a very tough loss . This was the closest the club has come to winning the league title and the FA Cup in the same season . Two seasons later the First World War brought the league to a halt . After the league 's resumption , Sunderland came close to winning another championship in the 1922 ? 23 season , when they were runners @-@ up to Liverpool . They also came close the following season , finishing third , four points from the top of the league . The club escaped relegation from the First Division by one point in the 1927 ? 28 season despite 35 goals from Dave Halliday .

The point was won in a match against Middlesbrough , and they finished in fifteenth place . Halliday improved his goal scoring to 43 goals in 42 games the following season , an all @-@ time Sunderland record for goals scored in a single season .

The club 's sixth league championship came in the 1935 ? 36 season , and they won the FA Cup the following season , after a 3 ? 1 victory against Preston North End at Wembley Stadium . The remainder of the decade saw mid @-@ table finishes , until the league and FA Cup were suspended for the duration of the Second World War . Some football was still played as a morale boosting exercise , in the form of the Football League War Cup . Sunderland were finalists in the tournament in 1942 , but were beaten by Wolverhampton Wanderers .

For Sunderland , the immediate post @-@ war years were characterised by significant spending ; the club paid £ 18 @,@ 000 ( £ 574 thousand today ) for Carlisle United 's Ivor Broadis in January 1949 . Broadis was also Carlisle 's manager at the time , and this is the first instance of a player transferring himself to another club . This , along with record @-@ breaking transfer fees to secure the services of Len Shackleton and Welsh international Trevor Ford , led to a contemporary nickname , the " Bank of England club " . The club finished third in the First Division in 1950 , their highest finish since the 1936 championship .

= = = Financial troubles and three cup finals = = =

The late 1950s saw a sharp downturn in Sunderland 's fortunes , and the club was once again implicated in a major financial scandal in 1957 . Found guilty of making payments to players in excess of the maximum wage , they were fined £ 5 @,@ 000 ( £ 109 @,@ 000 today ) , and their chairman and three directors were suspended . The following year , Sunderland were relegated from the highest division for the first time in their 68 @-@ year league history .

Sunderland 's absence from the top flight lasted six years . The club came within one game of promotion back to the First Division in the 1962 ? 63 season . Sunderland required only a draw in their final game against promotion rivals Chelsea , who had another game left to play after this match , to secure promotion . However , they were defeated , and Chelsea won their last game 7 ? 0 to clinch promotion , finishing ahead of Sunderland on goal average . After the close call in the previous season , the club was promoted to Division One in 1964 after finishing in second place . Sunderland beat Charlton Athletic in the final stages of the season , where they clinched promotion with a game to spare . At the end of the decade , they were again relegated to the Second Division after finishing 21st .

Sunderland won their last major trophy in 1973 , in a 1 ? 0 victory over Don Revie 's Leeds United in the FA Cup Final . A Second Division club at the time , Sunderland won the game thanks mostly to the efforts of their goalkeeper Jimmy Montgomery , who saved two of Leeds shots at goal in quick succession , one being from hot @-@ shot Peter Lorimer . Ian Porterfield scored a volley in the 30th minute to beat Leeds and take the trophy . Since 1973 only two other clubs , Southampton in 1976 , and West Ham United in 1980 , have equalled Sunderland 's achievement of lifting the FA Cup while playing outside the top tier of English football .

By winning the 1973 FA Cup Final , Sunderland qualified for the UEFA Cup Winners ' Cup , the club 's only appearance in European competition to date . Sunderland beat Vasas Budapest 3 ? 0 on aggregate , and were drawn against Lisbon club Sporting in the second round . They won the first leg at Roker Park 2 ? 1 but were defeated 2 ? 0 in the away leg , and were knocked out of the competition 3 ? 2 on aggregate . After spending six seasons in the Second Division , Sunderland were promoted to Division One in the 1975 ? 76 season ; they topped the table over Bristol City by three points . However , Sunderland were relegated the following season back into Division Two , without their FA Cup Final winning manager Bob Stokoe , who had resigned because of health problems at the start of the season . The club celebrated its 100 @-@ year centenary in the 1979 ? 80 season with a testimonial against an England XI side , which they lost 2 ? 0 .

Sunderland appeared in their first League Cup final in 1985 , but lost 1 ? 0 to Norwich City . In 1987 , Sunderland saw one of the lowest points in their history , when they were relegated to the Third Division of the English league for the first time . Under new chairman Bob Murray and new manager Denis Smith , the club was promoted the following season . In 1990 , they were promoted back to the top flight in unusual circumstances . Sunderland lost to Swindon Town in the play @-@ off final , but Swindon 's promotion was revoked after the club was found guilty of financial irregularities and Sunderland were promoted instead . They stayed up for one year before being relegated on the final day of the following season .

Sunderland 's next outing in a major final came in 1992 when , as a Second Division club , they returned to the FA Cup final . There was to be no repeat of the heroics of 1973 , as Sunderland lost 2 ? 0 to Liverpool .

= = = New stadium , promotions and relegations = = =

In 1995 , they faced the prospect of a return to the third @-@ tier of English football . Peter Reid was brought in as manager , and quickly turned things around . Reid 's time in charge had a stabilising effect ; he remained manager for seven years . After promotion from Division One in the 1995 ? 96 season , Sunderland began their first season in the Premier League , but finished third from the bottom and were relegated back to the First Division . In 1997 , Sunderland left Roker Park , their home for 99 years . Bearing fond memories of the stadium , former Sunderland player Len Shackleton said , " There will never be another place like Roker " . The club moved to the Stadium of Light , a 42 @, @ 000 @-@ seat arena that , at the time , was the largest stadium built in England after the Second World War . The capacity was later increased to 49 @, @ 000 . Sunderland returned to the Premier League as First Division champions in 1999 with a then @-@ record 105 points . Sunderland 's 1999 ? 2000 season started at Stamford Bridge , where Chelsea beat them 4 ? 0 . However , in the return match later in the season Sunderland turned the tables on Chelsea , avenging their 4 ? 0 defeat with a 4 ? 1 win at the Stadium of Light . Sunderland also achieved a 2 ? 1 victory over rivals Newcastle United at St. James ' Park , a result which helped bring about the resignation of Newcastle 's manager , Ruud Gullit . At the end of the season Sunderland finished seventh , with Kevin Phillips winning the European Golden Shoe in his first top @-@ flight season , scoring 30 goals .

Another seventh @-@ place finish in the 2000 ? 01 season was followed by two less successful seasons , and they were relegated to the second @-@ tier with a then @-@ record low 19 points in 2003 . Former Ireland manager Mick McCarthy took over at the club , and , in 2005 , he took Sunderland up as champions for the third time in less than ten years . However , the club 's stay in the top flight was short @-@ live as Sunderland were once again relegated , this time with a new

record @-@ low total of 15 points . McCarthy left the club in mid @-@ season , and he was replaced temporarily by former Sunderland player Kevin Ball . The record @-@ low fifteen @-@ point performance was surpassed in the 2007 ? 08 season by Derby County , who finished on eleven points .

= = = Drumaville Consortium takeover and Ellis Short era = = =

Following Sunderland 's relegation from the Premier League , the club was taken over by the Irish Drumaville Consortium , headed by ex @-@ player Niall Quinn , who appointed former Manchester United captain Roy Keane as the new manager . Under Keane , the club rose steadily up the table with an unbeaten run of 17 games to win promotion to the Premier League , and were named winners of the Championship after beating Luton Town 5 ? 0 at Kenilworth Road on 6 May 2007 .

The club 's form in the 2007 ? 08 season was better than during their last season in the Premier League , as they finished 15th with 39 points . Following an inconsistent start to the 2008 ? 09 season Keane resigned , to be replaced by coach Ricky Sbragia as caretaker until the end of the season . After keeping Sunderland in the Premier League , Sbragia stepped down from his managerial post . Meanwhile , off the pitch , Irish @-@ American tycoon Ellis Short completed a full takeover of the club from the Irish Drumaville Consortium , and Steve Bruce was announced as the new manager on 3 June .

One of Bruce 's first signings , Darren Bent , cost a club record fee of £ 10 million . Sunderland started their first season under Bruce strongly but then went 14 matches without a win over the winter , eventually finishing the 2009 ? 10 season in 13th . Sunderland completed the signing of Ghana international Asamoah Gyan in Aug 2010 for a fee around £ 13 million , becoming their new record transfer fee . Sunderland started the next season strongly and the club challenged for a European qualification place by the end of 2010 . However , striker Darren Bent left Sunderland for Aston Villa in Jan 2011 in a deal potentially worth £ 24 million ( a record transfer fee received for the club ) . Following Bent 's departure Sunderland suffered a mid @-@ season slump and finished 10th ? which was still their highest top @-@ flight finish for 10 years .

Ellis Short replaced Quinn as chairman in Oct 2011 , with Quinn becoming Director of International Development . Bruce was sacked on 30 November 2011 , following a poor run of results , and was replaced by Martin O 'Neill . O 'Neill made an instant impact , with Sunderland taking 13 points from a possible 18 in his first six games in charge . O 'Neill was named the Premier League Manager of the Month for December , and went on to guide the club to the FA Cup quarter @-@ finals for the first time since 2004 . On 20 Feb , Niall Quinn left the club with immediate effect . Sunderland endured a difficult start to 2012 ? 13 season , with their first victory not coming until late Sept , against Wigan . With the threat of relegation looming , O 'Neill was sacked on 30 March and Italian Paolo Di Canio was announced as O 'Neill 's replacement the following day . The appointment prompted the immediate resignation of club Vice Chairman David Miliband due to Di Canio 's " past political statements " . The appointment of Di Canio also sparked opposition from the Durham Miners ' Association , which threatened to remove one of its mining banners from Sunderland 's Stadium of Light , which is built on the former site of the Wearmouth Colliery . The threat by the Durham Miners ' Association was removed after meeting with the management of the club . After a 2 ? 1 loss at Chelsea , Di Canio 's second match in charge saw Sunderland beat Newcastle 3 ? 0 at St James ' Park in the Tyne Wear Derby and their first win at St James Park since Nov 2000 . Sunderland went on to survive relegation with one game to go . Over the summer , the club appointed Italian former agent Roberto De Fanti as the club 's first director of football .

Di Canio was sacked after a poor start to the 2013 ? 14 season , and reports of a complete breakdown in relations with his players . Gus Poyet was announced as his replacement on 8 Oct 2013 . Poyet brought a turnaround in Sunderland 's fortunes as they brought their way back into contention for survival with wins against Newcastle , Manchester City and Everton . Poyet also led Sunderland to the 2014 Football League Cup Final against Manchester City , winning a penalty shoot @-@ out at Manchester United in the semi @-@ final . Sunderland were defeated 3 ? 1 by Manchester City in the final , despite leading 1 ? 0 at half time through a Fabio Borini goal . Despite

a major post @-@ final slump , which left the club bottom of the table 7 points adrift with 6 games remaining , they drew at Manchester City and then defeated Chelsea 1 ? 2 , becoming the first side to beat Chelsea at Stamford Bridge in the Premier League under José Mourinho , ending a streak of 77 games over two spells . The Black Cats went on to win their next 3 games , including away at Man Utd , to avoid relegation with a game to spare . De Fanti was sacked as Director of Football in Jan 2014 and was replaced with Lee Congerton as Sporting Director .

Poyet signed a new two @-@ year deal after the last game of the season . However , on 16 March 2015 Poyet was sacked , following a run of 1 win in 12 games that left the club just one place above the relegation zone . Veteran Dutchman Dick Advocaat was appointed as the club 's new head coach the following day on a deal to the end of the season . Advocaat led Sunderland to Premier League safety with a game to spare following a 0 ? 0 draw away at Arsenal . Eight games into the 2015 ? 16 season he resigned from the position , leaving Sunderland second from bottom and without a win . Sam Allardyce was appointed the next manager in Oct 2015 , and secured a 3 ? 0 victory over Newcastle Utd in his second game , giving the club a record beating six wins in a row against their local rivals . Congerton left the club in Dec 2015 , with the club apparently no longer wishing to use the Director of Football role. n the January transfer window Allardyce signed centre @-@ backs Lamine Koné and Jan Kirchhoff and attacking midfielder Wahbi Khazri . On 6 February 2016 , Sunderland scored two late goals to draw 2 @-@ 2 with Liverpool at Anfield , having trailed 2 @-@ 0 with ten minutes remaining . Later that week winger Adam Johnson was sacked by the club after pleading guilty to one count of sexual activity with a child and one charge of grooming . Sunderland remained in the relegation zone for much of the remainder of the 2015 ? 16 season , before they boosted their survival chances by beating Norwich City 3 ? 0 at Carrow Road on 16 April , closing the gap on 17th @-@ place Norwich to just one point . Allardyce successfully led Sunderland to safety from relegation after beating Everton 3 ? 0 on 11 May , a result which also ensured the relegation of rivals ( and one of his former clubs ) Newcastle United . Allardyce earned praise for his management of Sunderland from some pundits , particularly for his organized approach and emphasis on a strong defence

= = Colours and crest = =

Sunderland played in an all blue strip from their formation until 1884 , when they adopted a red and white halved strip . They assumed the current strip of red and white stripes in the 1887 ? 88 season . Their badge included a ship , the upper part of the Sunderland coat of arms , a black cat , and a football in front of Sunderland 's red and white stripes . In 1977 the badge was changed , but still included the ship , football and the background of red and white stripes .

This badge was used until the relocation from Roker Park to the Stadium of Light . To coincide with the move , Sunderland released a new crest divided into four quarters ; the upper right and lower left featured their traditional red and white colours , but the ship was omitted . The upper left section features the Penshaw Monument and the lower right section shows the Wearmouth Bridge . A colliery wheel at the top of the crest commemorates County Durham 's mining history , and the land the Stadium of Light was built on , formerly the Monkwearmouth Colliery . The crest also contains two lions , the black cats of Sunderland , and a banner displaying the club 's motto , Consectatio Excellentiae , which means " In pursuit of excellence " .

= = Stadium = =

Sunderland have had seven stadiums throughout their history ; the first was at Blue House Field in Hendon in 1879 . The ground was close to the place where Sunderland formed , at Hendon Board School ; at that time the rent for use of the ground was £ 10 ( £ 900 today ) . The club relocated briefly to Groves Field in Ashbrooke in 1882 , before moving again the following season . The club 's third stadium was Horatio Street in Roker , the first Sunderland stadium north of the River Wear ; the club played a single season there before another move , this time to Abbs Field in Fulwell for two seasons . Abbs Field was notable for being the first Sunderland ground to which they charged

admission .

Sunderland moved to Newcastle Road in 1886 . By 1898 , the ground reached a capacity of 15 @, @ 000 after renovations , and its rent had risen to £ 100 ( £ 10 thousand today ) a year . Near the turn of the 20th century , Sunderland needed a bigger stadium . They returned to Roker and set up home in Roker Park . It was opened on 10 September 1898 , and the home team played a match the same day against Liverpool , which they won . The stadium 's capacity increased to 50 @, @ 000 after redevelopment with architect Archibald Leitch in 1913 . Sunderland were nearly bankrupted by the cost of renovating the Main Stand , and Roker Park was put up for sale but no further action was taken . On 8 March 1933 , an overcrowded Roker Park recorded the highest ever attendance at a Sunderland match , 75 @, @ 118 against Derby County in a FA Cup sixth round replay . Roker Park suffered a bombing in 1943 , in which one corner of the stadium was destroyed . A special constable was killed while patrolling the stadium . By the 1990s , the stadium was no longer large enough , and had no room for possible expansion . In January 1990 , the Taylor Report was released after overcrowding at the Hillsborough Stadium resulted in 96 deaths , an incident known as the Hillsborough Disaster . The report recommended that all major stadiums must be converted to an all @-@ seater design . As a result , Roker Park 's capacity was reduced . It was demolished in 1997 and a housing estate built in its place .

In 1997 , Sunderland moved to their present ground , Stadium of Light in Monkwearmouth , which was opened by Prince Andrew , Duke of York . Built with an original capacity of 42 @, @ 000 , it hosted its first game against Dutch team Ajax . The stadium bears a similar name to the Portuguese club Benfica 's ground Estádio da Luz , albeit in a different language . Stadium expansion in 2000 saw the capacity increase to 49 @, @ 000 . A Davy lamp monument stands outside the stadium , and a miners banner was presented to the club by the Durham Miners ' Association , as a reminder of the Monkwearmouth Colliery pit the stadium was built on .

= = Supporters and rivalries = =

Sunderland held the seventh highest average home attendance out of the 20 clubs in the Premier League at the end of the 2013 ? 14 season with an average of 41 @, @ 089 , and held the sixth highest average attendance in the 2014 ? 15 season with an average of over 43 @, @ 000 . Sunderland fans often sell out allocations for away games : in the 2013 ? 14 season , 9 @, @ 000 Sunderland fans attended Old Trafford for the second leg of the Football League Cup semi @-@ final , which they won to go through to the final . At Wembley , London was taken over by thousands of Mackems , the sights of Covent Garden and Leicester Square were awash with red and white , local shops completely sold out of alcohol but only one arrest was reported by the police . Support is drawn from across the North East , in particular County Durham , and beyond . The club has many supporter branches across the world , including the United States , Australia , Canada , Cambodia , and Greece . According to YouGov statistics they are the most left @-@ wing supporters in the Premier League , and often sing " The Red Flag " during games . Former chairman Bob Murray described Sunderland as a " Labour Club " .

Traditionally , Sunderland 's main rivals are Newcastle United , with whom they contest the Tyne ? Wear derby . The club was rivals with the now defunct Sunderland Albion in the 1880s and 1890s ; a breakaway club formed by Sunderland 's founder James Allan . Sections of fans share a mutual friendship with Dutch club Feyenoord , this was developed after Wearside shipbuilders found jobs in Rotterdam during the 1970s and 80s .

The club has an official quarterly magazine , called the Legion of Light , which season ticket holders receive for no cost . One of the club 's current fanzine is A Love Supreme . Others in the past have been It 's The Hope I Can 't Stand , It 's An Easy One For Norman / It 's An Easy One For Given , Sex and Chocolate , Wise Men Say and The Roker Roar ( later The Wearside Roar ) .

= = = Affiliated clubs = = =

Sunderland have recently created affiliations with several African clubs including Ghana 's Asante

Kotoko , Egypt 's El @-@ Ittihad El @-@ Iskandary and South Africa 's Bidvest Wits . Sunderland also have an affiliation with Belgian side Lierse S.K. , allowing the possibility for young African players who would not qualify for a UK work permit to spend three years with Lierse to gain a Belgian passport . In August 2014 , Sunderland announced a commercial partnership with Washington D.C. based MLS club D.C. United .

= = Statistics and records = =

The holder of the record for the most league appearances is Jimmy Montgomery , having made 527 first team appearances between 1961 and 1976 . The club 's top league goal scorer is Charlie Buchan , who scored 209 goals from 1911 ? 1925 ; Bobby Gurney is the record goalscorer over all competitions with 227 goals between 1926 and 1939 . Dave Halliday holds the record for the most goals scored in a season : 43 in the 1928 ? 29 season in the Football League First Division . As of October 2014 John O 'Shea is the most capped player for the club , making 100 appearances for the Republic of Ireland .

The club 's widest victory margin in the league was in the 9 ? 1 win against Newcastle United in the First Division in 1908 . Sunderland 's biggest ever win in the FA cup was against Fair field ( a non @-@ league team ) and the final score was 11 ? 1 . Their heaviest defeats in the league were 8 ? 0 against Sheffield Wednesday in 1911 , West Ham United in 1968 , Watford in 1982 and Southampton in 2014 Sunderland joined the top division in England , The Football League , in the 1890 ? 91 season and were not relegated until 1957 ? 58 ( a span of 67 seasons ) . In October 2015 , Sunderland defeated rivals Newcastle United for the sixth consecutive time , a new record .

Sunderland 's record home attendance is 75 @,@ 200 for a sixth round replay FA Cup match against Derby County on 8 March 1933 .

= = Transfers = =

The biggest transfer fee Sunderland have ever received for one of their players is £ 24 million for Darren Bent who moved to Aston Villa on 18 January 2011 . The biggest fee Sunderland have received for a player produced by the Sunderland academy is £ 16 million ( rising to a possible £ 20 million ) for Jordan Henderson , who moved to Liverpool on 9 July 2011 . The biggest transfer fee paid by Sunderland is the eventual £ 16 million after add @-@ ons for Bent , who was bought from Tottenham Hotspur in July 2009 .

= = Overall = =

Seasons spent at Level 1 of the football league system : 86

Seasons spent at Level 2 of the football league system : 29

Seasons spent at Level 3 of the football league system : 1

Seasons spent at Level 4 of the football league system : 0

As of the 2015 @-@ 16 season

= = Nicknames = =

Sunderland 's official nickname is The Black Cats . They have other nicknames , such as ' The Rokerites ' , ' The Lads ' or ' The Mackems ' . After leaving Roker Park for the Stadium of Light in 1997 , the club decided on a vote to settle the nickname for the last time . The Black Cats won the majority of the 11 @,@ 000 votes , beating off other used nicknames such as the Light Brigade , the Miners , and the Sols . There is a long historical link between black cats and Sunderland , including the " Black Cat Battery " , an Artillery battery based on the River Wear .

Around the early 19th century , the southern side of the River Wear contained four gun batteries , which guarded the river mouth during the Napoleonic wars . In 1805 , the battery was manned by local militia , the Sunderland Loyal Volunteers , one of whom was a cooper by trade named Joshua

Dunn . He was said to have " fled from the howling of an approaching black cat , convinced by the influence of the full moon and a warming dram or two that it was the devil incarnate " . From that point onwards the John Paul Jones Battery was known as the Black Cat Battery .

A Sunderland supporter , Billy Morris , took a black cat in his top pocket as a good luck charm to the 1937 FA Cup final in which Sunderland brought home the trophy for the first time . During the 1960s a black cat lived in Roker Park , fed and watered by the football club . Since the 1960s the emblem of the Sunderland A.F.C. Supporters Association has been a black cat .

As well as the " Team of All Talents " at the turn of the 20th century , Sunderland were known as the " Bank of England club " during the 1950s . This was a reference to the club 's spending in the transfer market at the time , which saw the transfer @-@ record broken twice . At the beginning of the 2006 ? 07 season , the purchase of the club by the Irish Drumaville Consortium , the appointments of Niall Quinn and Roy Keane to their respective roles as chairman and manager , as well as the relatively large number of Irish players in the squad , led some fans to jokingly dub the team " Sund @-@ Ireland " .

= = Kit sponsorship = =

The first sponsor to appear on Sunderland kits was Cowie 's , the business group of then chairman Tom Cowie , between 1983 ? 85 . The club was sponsored by the Vaux Breweries between 1985 and 1999 , with drink brands such as Lambtons sometimes appearing on kits . Subsequently , the club were sponsored by Sunderland car dealership company Reg Vardy from 1999 to 2007 . Sunderland were sponsored by the Irish bookmaker Boylesports , who signed a four @-@ year contract with the club in 2007 worth up to £ 12 million . In April 2010 , Sunderland signed a two @-@ year shirt sponsorship deal with tombola , a local online bingo company . On 25 June 2012 , Sunderland announced the strengthening of their partnership with the Invest in Africa initiative , with the initiative becoming the club 's shirt sponsor for two years . The project is closely linked with Tullow Oil . However , after a year the club announced a new sponsorship deal with South African company Bidvest . On June 1 , 2015 Sunderland announced a new sponsorship with Dafabet to appear on the kits for the following season .

The first kit manufacturer to appear on Sunderland kits was Umbro , between 1975 ? 81 . French brand Le Coq Sportif produced kits between 1981 ? 83 . Nike 's first stint as kit manufacturer came between 1983 ? 86 , before kits from Patrick ( 1986 ? 88 ) , Hummel ( 1988 ? 94 ) , Avec ( 1994 ? 97 ) and Asics ( 1997 ? 00 ) . Nike returned between 2000 ? 04 . Diadora produced kits for a solitary season , 2004 ? 05 , and Lonsdale made kits between 2005 ? 07 . Umbro returned for five seasons between 2007 ? 12 , before Adidas became the club 's kit manufacturer for the first time in 2012 .

= = Players = =

= = = First team squad = = =

As of 26 July 2016 .

Note : Flags indicate national team as defined under FIFA eligibility rules . Players may hold more than one non @-@ FIFA nationality .

= = = Out on loan = = =

Note : Flags indicate national team as defined under FIFA eligibility rules . Players may hold more than one non @-@ FIFA nationality .

= = = Reserves and Academy = = =



= = Club officials = =

= = = Board of Directors = = =

= = = Coaching staff = = =

= = Managers = =

= = Honours = =

The following are the honours Sunderland have achieved since their foundation in 1879 .

= = = League = = =

First Division / Premier League : 6 ( level 1 )

1891 ? 92 , 1892 ? 93 , 1894 ? 95 , 1901 ? 02 , 1912 ? 13 , 1935 ? 36

Second Division / First Division / Championship : 5 ( level 2 )

1975 ? 76 , 1995 ? 96 , 1998 ? 99 , 2004 ? 05 , 2006 ? 07

Promotion ( 1 ) : 1989 ? 90

Third Division / Second Division / League One : 1 ( level 3 )

1987 ? 88

= = = Cup = = =

FA Cup :

Winners ( 2 ) : 1937 , 1973

Charity Shield

Winners ( 1 ) : 1936

Sheriff of London Charity Shield :

Winners ( 1 ) : 1903

= = = Other = = =

BBC Sports Personality Team of the Year Award : 1

1973

Football World Championship : 1

1895