

Abramovich Roman

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Roman Arkadievich Abramovich (Russian) (born October 24, 1966 in Saratov, Russian SFSR, USSR) is a Russian oil billionaire, referred to as one of the Russian oligarchs. In March 2005 he was listed by Forbes Magazine as the richest Russian and the 21st richest person in the world with an estimated fortune of \$13.3 billion. Everyone above him in the list was older than him; the only one of those within a decade of his age was computer magnate Michael Dell, 20 months older. He is most famous outside of Russia as the owner of Chelsea F.C., an English Premiership football club.

Abramovich lost his mother at the age of 18 months and his father, who was killed in a construction accident, at the age of four. Adopted by his paternal uncle and raised by his Jewish family in the harsh environment of Komi in North West Russia, Abramovich has been able to transform hardship into significant success.

Abramovich attended the Industrial Institute in the city of Ukhta before being drafted into the Soviet Army, the Soviet military ground force.

Abramovich gained his wealth by cheaply acquiring shares in newly-privatised industries after the fall of communism. He is now the majority shareholder in Sibneft, a large oil company, and is also a major shareholder in RusAl, the world's second-largest aluminium producer, as well as various other companies.

In 1999 Abramovich was elected to the Russian Duma as the representative for the impoverished Far East region of Chukotka. He started the charity Pole of Hope to help the people of Chukotka, especially children, and in December 2000 was elected governor of Chukotka, replacing the corrupt Alexander Nazarov. Since then he has invested hundreds of millions of dollars in Chukotka, for example building a college and hotels in Anadyr and renovating the airport. He has also used Chukotka as a tax haven for Sibneft and has been exploring for oil there. Abramovich said that he would not run for governor again after his term of office expires in 2005, as it is "too expensive" - and he rarely visits the region - but since then Russian President Vladimir Putin has changed the law to abolish elections for regional governors, so it is possible that Putin could appoint Abramovich governor for another term.

In 2003 he became the owner of the companies that control Chelsea Football Club in the United Kingdom. Since he took control, Chelsea (sometimes humorously termed Chelski by British tabloids) have gone on a buying spree of some of the game's most skilled players. The result was near-instant success, with Chelsea spending the 2003-2004 season at or near the top of the Premiership (finishing second to Arsenal) and doing well in the prestigious Champions League competition (being knocked out in the semi-finals by the eventual runners-up, AS Monaco). The second place finish in the Premiership automatically qualified them for the group phase of the 2004-05 Champions League. Only a week after Porto won the 2004 Champions League final, Abramovich replaced Claudio Ranieri as manager with José Mourinho, who had led Porto to the crown. The 2004-05 season proved equally successful; Chelsea won their first English title since 1955 and only the second in their history. They also won the 2005 Carling Cup. Chelsea also reached the semi-finals of the Champions League for the second successive season, knocking out Barcelona and Bayern Munich, before they lost to eventual winners Liverpool. Still, it represents a major success for José Mourinho and Roman Abramovich's dream of domestic, European and worldwide dominance of football.

The proposed merger of Sibneft with Yukos was seen by most as a distancing of himself from Russia, at a time when the Kremlin appears to have decided to bring at least some of the oligarchs to account for their colourful past business practices. Abramovich was a close associate of controversial Boris Berezovsky who sold him his stake in Sibneft, although in July 2005 Berezovsky announced his intention to sue Abramovich in the British courts for pressuring him into selling most of his Russian assets cheaply to Abramovich after Berezovsky fled the country [1].

In March 2004, Sibneft agreed a three-year sponsorship deal worth USD 58 million (approx. GBP 30 million, EUR 44.5 million, RUR 1.6 billion) with the Russian team CSKA Moscow. Despite the company explaining that the decision was made at management level, some viewed the deal as an attempt by Abramovich to counter accusations of being unpatriotic which were made at the time of the Chelsea purchase. UEFA rules prevent one person owning more than one team participating in UEFA competitions, so Abramovich has no equity interest in CSKA. Nevertheless, he was named most influential person in Russian football in the Russian magazine Pro Sport at the end of June 2004. In May 2005, CSKA won the UEFA Cup, becoming the first Russian club ever to win a major European football competition.

Abramovich is known as a fan of Formula One and is often seen in the paddock at races; in 2004, after the sport's owner Bernie Ecclestone was seen giving Abramovich a tour of the pitlane at the Monaco Grand Prix, rumours circulated that he was considering investing in or purchasing an F1 team.

In 2005, he moved down to second place in the Sunday Times Rich List of UK residents, as the newspapers estimate of Lakshmi Mittal's wealth had more than quadrupled since the previous year. Abramovich is included in the list despite the fact that he retains residences in Moscow and Chukotka.

He owns his own private Boeing 767-300 known as "The Bandit" due to its paint scheme.

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