

BT Boss warns there are limits to what he will pay for Premier League games

By [Matt Oliver For The Daily Mail](#)

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BT IS bracing for a challenge to its [Premier League](#) broadcasting rights with boss Gavin Patterson warning there are limits to what he is willing to pay.



In a marked change of tone to the last two auctions, the embattled chief executive has told investors the telecoms company is prepared for a situation in which it loses ground to another bidder in February.

Liverpool FC fan Patterson previously spearheaded a multi-billion-pound raid on football TV rights that left rival Sky reeling, snatching a quarter of Premier League games and all of the [Champions League](#).

But as the next Premier League rights auction approaches, the 50-year-old is instead looking over his shoulder as speculation grows that US tech giants such as Amazon and [Facebook](#) may try to muscle in.

At a conference in Barcelona, Patterson reportedly said he was prepared for a situation in which BT loses some of its football rights.

However, he told investors: ‘we have a Plan B. We are never in a situation where it is existential for us.’ Insiders admit that the father-of-four’s room for manoeuvre has been reduced after BT took several financial hits this year.

These include fines from regulators, a £500million accounting scandal in Italy and a 31 per cent drop in its share price.

Bosses are also trying to tackle a £14billion pension fund deficit, while pressure is mounting for the company to spend further billions on a major upgrade of the UK’s broadband network.

The battle for football between BT and Sky has pushed prices up by almost 190 per cent since 2012, with the Premier League last selling the rights for £5.2billion in 2015.

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