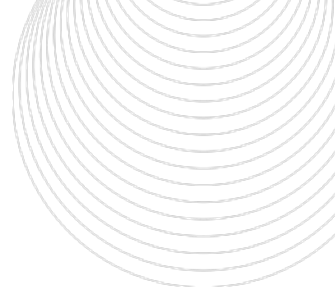





The 5 Word Lesson that Changed My Investing

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Many years ago, in my twenties, I found myself playing football in the local park with colleagues from the stockbroking firm where I worked. Among them was Brian Statham, an ex-professional footballer. I remember charging around the pitch, sweating buckets, desperate to get to the ball. To my eyes, I was doing well. But to anyone watching, the difference between me and Brian was crystal clear.

While I was running myself ragged, Brian barely broke a sweat. He didn't need to. The ball did the work for him. After the game, he gave me a piece of advice that has stuck with me ever since:

"No matter how fast you run, you'll never outrun the ball. Make the ball work for you."

At the time, it was a lesson in football. Over the years, I've realised it's also one of the greatest lessons in investing.

Your Strengths vs the Market's Strengths

In football, your job isn't to chase the ball endlessly. Your job is to use your skills wisely: spotting passes, keeping your composure, playing as part of a team. In investing, it's the same. You don't win by chasing every hot tip, every flashy opportunity, or every rumour. You win by playing to your strengths.

What are your strengths as an investor?

- You can research the market.
- You can analyse company reports.
- You can weigh up opportunities.
- You can build a game plan.

These are human skills. They require judgement, discipline, and patience.

And what about the market's strength? Unlike you, the market doesn't tire, it doesn't sleep, and it doesn't panic. Its strength is simple and relentless: over time, it goes up. That's its superpower.

History proves it. Indices rise. Economies expand. Profitable companies grow. Yes, there are dips, crashes, and corrections along the way, but the long-term trend has always been upward.

That's the market's force. That's its equivalent of the football itself — the thing that moves faster, further, and with less effort than you ever could.

Your job is to combine your strengths with the market's strength. Work in unison, not against it.

Don't Run Against the Market

Think back to football. If you've got the ball and the pitch is clear, why would you keep running aimlessly until you're exhausted? Far better to pass the ball, let it do the work, and conserve your energy for when you'll really need it.

Investing is no different. When the market is trending upwards and you decide to sell everything, jump into cash, and sit on the sidelines, you've made a mistake. You've chosen to ignore the upward momentum. You're running against the ball instead of letting it carry you forward.

That doesn't mean you throw caution to the wind. It means you let the market's natural tendency to rise work in your favour. Buy quality investments, hold them, and let time and momentum do the hard work for you. That's how wealth compounds.

Knowing When to Hold Back

Of course, the market isn't always a clear, sunny pitch. Conditions change. Sometimes it rains, sometimes the mud slows the ball down, sometimes you're two goals ahead with ten minutes left and the smart move is to protect your lead.

Translating this to investing, there will be moments when the conditions are less favourable. Perhaps you've already hit your goal for the year.

Say you set a target of 15% and you're sitting on 20% gains. Markets are getting choppy, uncertainty is rising, and risks are building.

Do you keep pushing for more? Or do you recognise that protecting what you've gained is the smarter play?

Too many people get greedy. They push for the second goal when they're already winning.

They over-stretch, over-trade, or over-expose themselves. Just like on the football pitch, it can cost them dearly.

The lesson: let the ball do the work when conditions are right, but when the game changes, adapt.

Sometimes passing sideways, slowing things down, or going defensive is the winning strategy.

The Addiction of Success



One of the most dangerous parts of investing is how addictive it can be when things go well. A few wins in a row and you start to believe you can't lose.

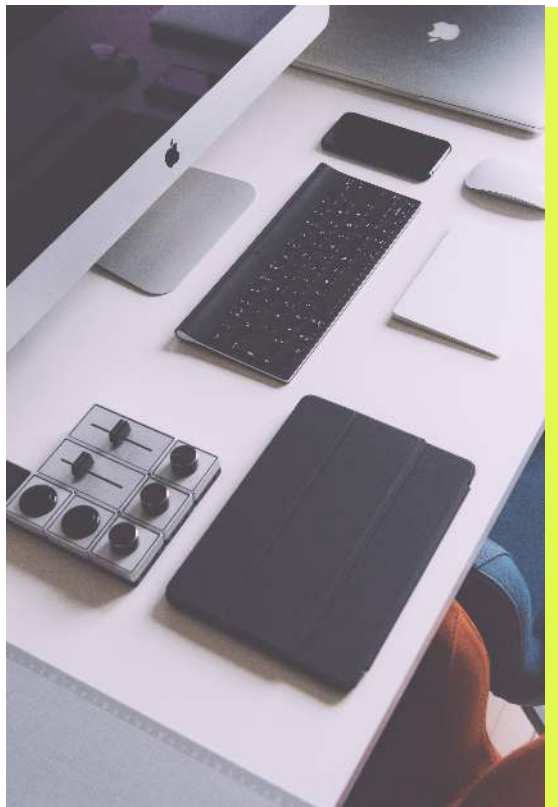
The same happens in football — score once, and suddenly you think you can dribble past the entire defence and bang in another.

But the market has a way of humbling those who get carried away. Success isn't a licence to gamble recklessly; it's an opportunity to reinforce good habits.

Celebrate the wins, but don't let them lure you into thinking the game has changed. The rules remain the same: discipline, patience, teamwork with the market.

2025 and Beyond

This year has been extraordinary. Returns have surprised even seasoned investors. Some people have made 20%, others 30% or more.



It's been one of those rare seasons where the pitch is dry, the ball is zipping across the grass, and almost every pass finds its mark.

But let's be realistic. Will it happen again next year?

Maybe.

But the chances are the conditions will be different. Markets ebb and flow. Strategies that worked this year may not work as well next year.

The important thing is not to predict the future with certainty but to recognise that, whatever happens, the same principle applies: work with the market, not against it.

Life Lessons from the Pitch

What I love most about investing is how closely it mirrors life itself. The football lesson from my twenties still applies today: don't try to outrun the ball. In life, that means don't waste energy fighting forces larger than you.

Instead, learn to work with them.



Markets rise. Time passes. Compounding works. These are the big forces. Your role is to bring your own strengths — research, planning, decision-making — and align them with these forces.

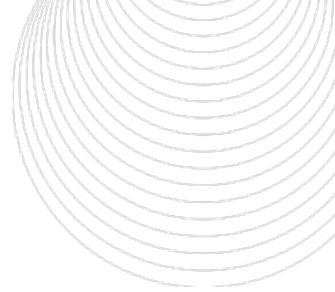

Do that, and the market will carry you further than your own running ever could.

The truth is, you don't need to be superhuman to succeed. You don't need to chase every opportunity. You just need to understand the game, play to your strengths, and let the market's strengths do the heavy lifting.

Final Thought

That day in the park, I thought effort alone would make me a better player. Years later, I know better. The smartest players — and the smartest investors — don't exhaust themselves chasing what they can't catch.

They position themselves wisely, they pass at the right moments, and they let the ball do the work.



In investing, the ball is the market. It will move faster, further, and more powerfully than you ever can. So make it work for you.

Use your skills to research, plan, and act with discipline. Then let the market's natural upward force carry your wealth forward.

That five-word lesson still holds true: make the ball work for you.

And if you apply it in the stock market, it may become one of the most valuable lessons you ever use.

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The 5 Word Lesson...

In "The 5 Word Lesson That Changed My Investing," a simple yet profound piece of advice from a football game transforms the author's approach to investing: "No matter how fast you run, you'll never outrun the ball."

This wisdom teaches investors to leverage their strengths and align with market movements, rather than exhaust themselves chasing fleeting opportunities.

Combining life lessons with investment strategies, the book emphasizes the importance of adaptability, patience, and letting the market's momentum work in your favor.