

Jadon Sancho's Manchester United story was supposed to be a homecoming success. United signed the England winger from Borussia Dortmund in 2021, after a long pursuit, expecting his close control, creativity and experience in the Bundesliga to make him a central part of their attack. Instead, his time at Old Trafford became a cycle of stalled progress, public tension and temporary exits.

The short answer to why he **left Manchester United** is that the relationship between player and club stopped working. Sancho struggled to establish a consistent role, his public dispute with manager Erik ten Hag made a return to the first team difficult, and loan spells offered a way to separate the parties without immediately settling his long-term future. The longer answer is about fit, finances and timing — and why transfer talk should not be confused with a completed move.



From major signing to uncertain role

United paid a substantial fee to bring Sancho back to England in 2021. The deal carried high expectations, but expectations are not the same as a settled tactical role. Sancho was most comfortable receiving the ball wide, combining with teammates and taking defenders on. At United, he was asked to adapt across different managers, formations and attacking partnerships.

He showed flashes of quality, but he did not become a regular, decisive performer. Changes in coaching and the team's broader instability contributed to that, as did competition for attacking places. A player signed to be a long-term first-choice winger instead found himself fighting for minutes and, at times, a place in the squad.

That distinction matters. Sancho's departure was not simply a case of a player failing to have ability or United deciding he had no value. It was a high-cost signing who did not deliver consistently in a setting that became increasingly difficult for him. Once the club's investment and his role diverged, every season without a clear breakthrough made a clean separation more likely.

The public rupture that changed the situation

The decisive break came in September 2023, after Ten Hag publicly said Sancho had not been selected for a match because of his performances in training. Sancho responded on social media, disputing that explanation and saying

he had been made a scapegoat. The post was later deleted, but the disagreement was no longer just a matter of selection or form.

Sancho did not return to the first team at that point. He trained away from the senior group and, in January 2024, went back to Borussia Dortmund on loan. The move gave him regular football and took him out of an increasingly strained situation at Old Trafford. It was a practical solution for both sides, but it did not itself answer the central question: would he return to United, be sold, or leave when his contract allowed?

Dortmund provided a reminder of what Sancho could offer in a familiar environment. He helped the German club reach the Champions League final, benefiting from a team and setting in which he had previously flourished. That spell strengthened his case as a player capable of contributing at a high level. It did not, however, erase the contractual and relationship issues waiting back in Manchester.

Why the Chelsea loan did not settle his future

Sancho's next move was another loan, this time to Chelsea for the 2024–25 season. The agreement included conditions that could have led to a permanent transfer, but a loan with a possible purchase is not the same as a completed sale. When Chelsea did not complete a permanent deal, Sancho's longer-term position remained unresolved.

That distinction is especially important when reports use phrases such as "agreement in place," "interest" or "option to buy." Those descriptions can sound conclusive while leaving key details open. A club may decide not to trigger an option; the clubs may negotiate a different fee; or a player may return to his parent club because no permanent arrangement has been made.

For United, repeated loans offered a way to move Sancho out of the immediate first-team picture while keeping the possibility of a transfer open. But loans also risk turning a major asset into a complicated squad-planning problem: the player is elsewhere, his wages and contract remain central to negotiations, and his future has to be revisited at the next window.

Free agent reality versus rumour noise

The phrase **free agent status** needs careful handling. A player is not a free agent simply because he has been left out, is available for a loan, has attracted interest from other clubs or is reportedly close to an exit. He becomes a free agent when his contract has ended, or when it has been terminated or otherwise concluded without a transfer fee being paid to his former club.

That means the question "why did Sancho leave?" depends partly on the actual transaction. If he departs while under contract, it is a transfer or loan arrangement, even if the fee is modest. If his deal runs out and he signs elsewhere, he has left as a free agent. Rumours about a contract expiring, a club being willing to let him go, or negotiations over a release are not proof that his status has changed.

For supporters, the practical point is straightforward: check for formal confirmation from the clubs, the player or the relevant league before treating a free-agent report as fact. Contract dates, options and registration details can change the picture. In Sancho's case, the label should describe the completed outcome, not serve as shorthand for a difficult relationship with United.



Report or development What it actually tells you A club is "interested" There may be exploratory contact; no move is confirmed. A loan is agreed Sancho can move temporarily, while his permanent future remains open. A purchase option is reported A permanent transfer may be possible, but the option still has to be exercised. His contract expires He can leave as a free agent if no extension or transfer is completed.

Why January can be a realistic decision point

January is often described as a transfer window of opportunity, but for a player in Sancho's position it can be a decision point rather than an ideal time to complete every kind of move. Clubs have fewer weeks to assess a signing, budgets are often tight, and a mid-season arrival may have to compete for a place immediately. Those constraints can narrow the market for a permanent transfer.

Even so, January can make sense if a club has a clear need for a winger, Sancho wants regular football, and the terms are workable. A loan could help a buying club manage risk, particularly if it is unsure about the player's fitness, adaptation or wage demands. United, meanwhile, could use a mid-season arrangement to reduce the uncertainty around a player who is not part of its plans.

There is also a timing question for Sancho himself. A January move may offer minutes and a fresh start, but waiting until the summer could bring a wider choice of clubs and more time to negotiate. If his contract is nearing its end, the difference between moving in January and leaving later may involve more than football: it could affect the fee, salary and control over his next destination.

So January is realistic, but not automatically decisive. The right move depends on whether a club is ready to make a firm commitment, not just whether its name appears in transfer reports.

A global market: Europe, Saudi Arabia, MLS and the Middle East

Sancho's profile makes him a name that can be linked with clubs across several markets. European teams can offer the most direct route back into familiar competition and, potentially, a return to a high level of weekly football. Clubs in Germany or elsewhere may see his Dortmund form as evidence that a change of environment could unlock him again.

Saudi clubs have also pursued high-profile players in recent windows, while teams elsewhere in the Middle East may offer a different sporting and financial proposition. But interest in a market is not the same as an offer, and an

offer is not the same as a deal. A player's age, ambitions, salary expectations and desire to stay in European football all shape whether those links make sense.

Major League Soccer could be another option in the wider conversation. MLS clubs have increasingly attracted established international players, but a move there would depend on sporting plans, roster rules, finances and Sancho's own priorities. It should not be presented as a likely destination merely because he is available or because [krasnodar sancho rumor](#) a club wants a high-profile signing.

The sensible way to read the global-market chatter is to separate possibility from evidence. There may be clubs monitoring the situation in Europe, Saudi Arabia, MLS and the wider Middle East. Until negotiations are confirmed, though, those are potential avenues — not destinations.

Dortmund interest is not the same as a Dortmund plan

Borussia Dortmund remains an obvious reference point because Sancho already knows the club, the league and the environment. His 2024 loan showed that he could still contribute there, and familiarity can reduce the adjustment required in a transfer. That helps explain why Dortmund interest regularly appears in the conversation.

But a club's past connection with a player does not guarantee a reunion. Dortmund has to plan for its current squad, its budget and the balance of positions. It must consider whether it already has enough wide attackers, whether a new signing would be a starter or a rotation option, and whether the financial terms are compatible with its wider recruitment strategy.

United would also need to consider what a Dortmund move means for its own squad planning. If the player is not in the manager's plans, a permanent exit may make more sense than another temporary arrangement. If the clubs cannot agree on the fee or wages, however, even a natural sporting fit may not produce a deal. The overlap between a player's preferred destination and a club's actual plan is where transfers either become real or remain speculation.

The football and financial reasons behind the exit

Sancho's departure was ultimately driven by several factors that reinforced one another:

- **Limited consistency at United:** he did not secure a lasting, influential role after arriving with a major price tag.
- **A breakdown in the relationship:** the public dispute with Ten Hag made a straightforward reintegration difficult.
- **Successful separation by loan:** Dortmund and Chelsea offered temporary solutions, but neither automatically settled his permanent future.
- **Squad planning:** United needed clarity on players who were not central to its first-team plans.
- **Financial complexity:** wages, a potential transfer fee and contract timing all affected which clubs could make a deal work.

It would be too simple to say Sancho left only because of one argument, one manager or one disappointing season. The dispute was the visible turning point, but the broader issue was the gap between the player United had hoped to sign and the role he was actually playing. Once that gap widened, both sides had reasons to consider a change.

Bottom line

Sancho left Manchester United because Old Trafford had become an unworkable setting for his career. He had not established the consistency United wanted, his relationship with the club's management deteriorated, and loan moves became a way to seek football elsewhere while the long-term question remained open.

What happened next depends on the formal terms of his exit. A loan, a permanent transfer and a move after contract expiry are three different outcomes, and only the last one makes him a free agent. January can be a credible moment to resolve uncertainty, while the wider market may include European clubs, Saudi Arabia, MLS and other Middle Eastern destinations. Dortmund is a logical name because of his history, but its current squad planning matters as much as nostalgia.

That is the clearest way to separate the story from the noise: Sancho's departure was about a relationship and a football fit that had broken down. The destination, timing and **summer departure** or free-agent outcome require confirmed details — not just another round of transfer rumours.