

Association of Tartan Army Clubs (ATAC)



Minutes from the meeting between the SFA/SSC and ATAC Tuesday 26th October 2006 at Hampden Park, Glasgow

Attendees:-

Tam F [EASTA]
Andrew S [PTA]
Simon J [ETA]
Tam C [WESTA]
Freda M [ASOW]
David Findlay (SFA)
Colin Banks (SFA)
Derek Kirkwood (SFA)
Angela Forbes (SSC)
Alison Jack (SSC)

Tam F opened the meeting, thanking the SFA for seeing ATAC at such short notice but it was felt that the issues surrounding the Ukraine match needed brought up early so we can identify if any lessons can be learned for the future safety of Scotland Fans.

1. Kiev Security:

Segregation of Fans getting to stadium:

DK explained that there were several deviations from the pre-match briefing and from agreements made at the security reconnaissance.

ALL 68 gates to the stadium were supposed to be opened, including the gate right at the Sport hotel.

Police would not open the gate at the Sport hotel, DK tried through an interpreter to get the gate open before the match but the police refused.

DK had set up a specific area for the Scotland fans to go once through the perimeter gates (essentially where the 'escorted' march was guided) but Public order police blocked this route off after the march and most fans went straight up the stairs and then right towards sections 34/35/36.

Public order police were there for the Scotland Fans' protection and DK applauded the behaviour of the fans when faced with this potentially intimidating spectacle of being guided to the match and their singing of "We're only here for the Football".

2. Segregation of Fans IN the stadium:

The Ukrainian fans being above the Scotland fans went totally against the plan agreed by the Ukrainian FA and SFA for this match.

DK did everything in his powers on the Recce visit to make sure the Ukrainian fans were not above the Scotland Fans.

The SFA had assurances that no Ukrainian fans were above Scotland fans but they went back on that agreement.

There was no need for the Ukrainian fans to be there as even in the reduced capacity ground, there was still ample space for the home fans.

Logistically and communications-wise, this game was "one of the most difficult matches to coordinate".

DK could not get an answer about what was happening with the Disabled supporters, eventually on the match night, and after talking to 6 different people, it was agreed the Disabled Scotland fans would watch the game from the trackside. But the Rocksteady steward had loads of problems getting the fans to their position.

DK has no idea why some Scotland fans were squashed up and standing in the aisles.

Tam F said that the only way to ensure no home fans were above Scotland fans, was to put Scotland fans above Scotland fans.

DK agreed that this is what should happen in such circumstances but that you are always reliant on the host association is putting these arrangements in to practice. All pointed to match in Italy last year as example of how that this is normally delivered.

3. Unprovoked attacks on Scotland fans/Police ambivalence:

There was no intelligence of potential attacks on Scotland fans. There is no history of trouble at Ukrainian Matches and there was no indication of any trouble from British intelligence either.

There were 2000 police on duty on the Tuesday night throughout Kiev, however the Police made no arrests.

The unprovoked attacks on Scotland fans was reported to the UEFA delegate Alan Hutchings, and it was made clear that it was Scotland fans who were attacked. The restraint of the Scotland fans was praised by DK.

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A full stadium inspection took place on the morning of the game, including toilets and met Uefa's criteria. Sometimes matches are categorised as "high risk" and a separate Uefa Security Officer is sent purely from a safety point of view.

On match day there were 3000 Uniformed police, 1000 public order police as well as plain clothed secret police. DK stated that in the future he would request a dedicated interpreter alongside him before kick-off and throughout the match.

ATAC will wait from feedback from DF before deciding any further course of action with regards to the safety of visiting fans to the Ukraine.

4. Security of Fans in the Future:

DK will pursue every avenue to make fans safe: DF has contacts in Georgia for background information and DK will perform his Security assessment.

DK would like a meeting with ATAC scheduled for AFTER his Security Assessment trip to discuss security.

5. Fans Embassy:

Due to the number of TA in the Sport hotel at 1pm, the FANS Embassy consisted of a few ATAC people talking to the TA in the queue and getting info and feedback.

In the future the Fans Embassy will be set up near to the collection of tickets and ATAC plan to run a Fans Embassy in Italy in conjunction with Whyte and Mackay and have an embassy Representative on hand to discuss any issues. Ukraine has shown the need for a mechanism like the Fans Embassy for people to drop in, pass on information and then get the info out to the wider body of the kirk, and ATAC see the Fans Embassy as a concept which will compliment the SFA/SSC efforts.

Scotland fans will tell other Scotland fans things they might not wish to discuss with the SFA.

It was agreed that ATAC may look at issuing some additional guidance information to fans to supplement the SFA/SSC guide. It is important however, to ensure that there are no mixed messages within.

6. Racist chants at France match:

A few individuals in the SSC section of the North Stand were subjecting the French players to a torrent of racial abuse, despite the best efforts of the real tartan army around them asking them to stop.

The seat numbers and video evidence will be passed on to the SFA as this behaviour is totally unacceptable and an embarrassment on the TA.

The SFA will deal with the offenders as they see fit.

7. SSC Ticket collections:

Why? - Tickets were late in arriving from the Ukrainian FA and were not perforated but had to be manually cut.

This was seen as a good excuse for a "spot check" as perhaps games like the Faeroes will not have enough tickets to meet demands.

The queuing for tickets worked out well apart from the "chancers" turning up and giving the SSC team abuse for doing their jobs.

There were "kids back in hotel rooms", Ukrainian lassies being sent in by TA to try and collect tickets and trying to pass off as Scottish. Guys with beards trying to collect a ticket for a Juvenile.

Abuse of the SSC staff "will not be tolerated"

Every SSC member is the same regardless of how long you have been a member, too many older members expected preferential treatment just because they have been in the club a long time.

The SSC asks for courtesy from the TA and try and bring some of their "Friendliest, best supporters in the world" reputation to the counter when they are speaking to the SSC staff.

AS queried the time taken to process SSC applications. Three PTA members had applied two months before the Ukraine game, but had not received membership packs until after returning from Ukraine. AJ confirmed that there had been no delay in turn-around times before the France and Ukraine games.

There were 500+ UNCOLLECTED tickets brought back from the Ukraine. THIS IS UNACCEPTABLE and shows the level of abuse that goes on with points harvesting. ATAC groups will be told approximately how many members from their groups, if any, were involved in this.

The system was brought in to reward fans who genuinely spend their money traveling to support the team. This may lead to fans, who have genuinely traveled to games, missing out on tickets in future ballots. This is not fair on fellow supporters.

Single form per ticket worked out fine logistically and SSC are likely to adopt this in the future although you can apply with multiple single forms to get seats together.

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All 500+ received letters from the SSC stating they would not be getting a point or a refund. The SFA has to pay the Ukrainian FA for the tickets they requested (3000+), therefore there is not money to go back.

As a direct result of the abuse of the system in Ukraine, the ticket procedures are currently "Under Review" and the SFA are really disappointed with this situation.

ATAC recommended that collection of tickets in the host city is the only way to stop the abuse of the system.

ATAC also suggested that the points total be reduced to 0 for offenders and further investigation if any of the uncollected tickets members are on 10 or near 10 points. The SFA listened to this suggestion, however, this action is not something that they are looking to implement at this time.

Given the attacks on Scotland fans, it was decided at the last minute, and purely on reasons of safety that a few tickets would be sold to non-SSC members.

This was a one-off decision taken purely for safety reasons, to avoid putting these individuals in harm's way in the Ukraine section.

Also included in the SFA review will be the possibility of a cap on SSC membership. There is the possibility of one ticket per member for home games if demand continues to rise.

8. Lithuania tickets:

Top price ticket was £30 for the Lithuania away match, which means that the SFA CAN charge the Lithuania fans a comparable price for Hampden.

ATAC asked what was there in place to stop opposing FA's from charging what they want for matches. The SSC will keep an eye on ticket priced from other FA's

9. ATAC Campaigns:

• 60-day rule for naming venues.

SJ explained that ATAC sent letters to FIFA and UEFA requesting change to the rules for naming of host stadium. SFA requested more notice at the fixtures meeting and France/Faroes/Georgia/Lithuania were all for this but Italy and Ukraine were against.

Italy are currently being pushed by the SFA to name a venue.

SJ explained that the letter was endorsed by the Spanish/English/NI and Welsh fans groups and that we will push for more fans groups before sending a reminder email to FIFA/UEFA in the next few weeks. DF suggested if no response within 28 days to chase up.

• Fans against Olympic Football team:

ATAC will need to raise the profile of their Campaign as we weren't too successful with the press release.

10. American Friendly:

A brief discussion took place about the possibility of an away friendly with the USA. there is NO TRUTH in the rumour. USA matches are all based around TV schedules and there are no slots for a Soccer match.

the SFA want a friendly match before the Faeroes away match. Any match is likely to be on 29/30/31 May.

11. U20 World Cup in Canada:

U20's will visit Canada in the spring to have a look at logistics of the trip.

12. Standing at matches:

DK asked that we inform all SSC that by law, they need to sit in all seater stadium and would like the TA to conform voluntarily.

13. Euro 2008 Security Group:

DK will be OCB next week at a home office Security Group meeting in London. DK asked for fans rep in London to make contact with about this forum so Scotland fans could get involved.

Loony Alba member will be put forward by DK and report back to ATAC.

14. Upcoming away games:

The venue for the France match has been confirmed as Le Parc des Princes, Paris.

The venue for the Italy match has still to be confirmed.

Eire B match in Dublin on 14th November, still waiting decision on tickets for match.