

PRESS STATEMENT - FANS GROUPS OPPOSE OLYMPIC TEAM

1st October 2006

JOINT STATEMENT FROM

- The Association of Tartan Army clubs (ATAC - Scotland)
- Football Supporters Federation (FSF - England)
- Football Supporters Federation Cymru (FSF - Wales)
- Amalgamation of Official NI Fans Clubs (AONISC - Northern Ireland)

Fans groups representing all of the home nations' teams today released a joint statement, stating the opposition from 'real football fans' on the formation of a GB football team for the 2012 Olympics.

Spokesman Tam Ferry said:

"What is clear from discussions with our members, the real fans of Scotland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland do not wish to be footballed in this political stunt. As fans, we are proud of our individual teams and Countries and enjoy the friendly rivalry with our close neighbours."

"The four British Football Associations have a privileged and unique independent status Within world football as the founding fathers of the game and due to saving FIFA from bankruptcy in 1947. For many years now there has been pressure from the International Football community to merge under one team, with one FA and with single membership of FIFA and UEFA."

He continued:

"The Olympic Football competition is a low profile Under 23 competition that no-one in this country has ever shown any interest in. Who can remember the winners? None of the fans groups want to be a part of anything which might jeopardise the future of our national teams. We back the SFA and FAW stance against the forming of an Olympic Football team and would ask the FA and the IFA to ignore the unwelcome political pressure and remove their backing for an Olympic Football team for the 2012 Olympic games."

FSF England Spokesman Malcolm Clarke added;

"The FSF is opposed to a single UK team in the Olympics. We believe that such a team would be an entirely artificial entity given the existence of separate teams from each of the 4 countries in the UK in all other forms of International football, which is a tradition of very long standing which fans from the 4 countries wish to retain. We share the fears of fans from the other UK countries that this precedent might be used to challenge the separate existence of those teams in the future, notwithstanding the assurances given by FIFA that this will not happen."

AONISC Spokesman Philip Smyth continued:-

"The Amalgamation of Official NISCs is opposed to the concept of a United Kingdom representative team participating in the 2012 Olympic Football Tournament. We feel that such a move would undoubtedly lead to increased lobbying for an end to the present individual representative status of the four British Associations, a scenario which International fans throughout the Home Nations would be opposed to."

FSF Cymru Spokesman Paul Corkrey concluded;

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"The Olympic side has our best wishes but it could mean the death of a country's football team and the Welsh should not have to pay that price."

The 4 home nations fans organisations met at a historic first meeting in May 2006 at Hibernian's Easter Road Stadium, Edinburgh to discuss 'common issues'. The meetings will continue on an Annual basis and the fans groups are in constant contact, dealing with issues that affect all International footballfans.

ENDS

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