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HOW FANS AFFECT FOOTBALL

RESEARCH PAPERS FROM
SUPPORTERS DIRECT SCOTLAND

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FOREWORD

It is with great pleasure that we are publishing our first booklet of research, examining what fans think of a range of issues across the game. This booklet, the first of a series from the organisation, emphasises the importance of the thoughts and opinions of the game's key consumers on the most critical matters affecting football in Scotland.

While it might be clichéd, it remains true that football supporters are the lifeblood of the game. For many years it could be argued that fans have been engaged in a 'dialogue with the deaf', whereas in the past two years, supporters have not only had a voice, but through various decisions, we can see they have started to be listened to by football authorities. We have a long journey ahead of us; but we are confident that working with all the stakeholders in the game that we can have a very real impact in the game we love.

The views of supporters are critical to the future of the game and these seven papers begin to scratch the surface of some of the views of supporters on some of the game's key issues. We were delighted to be able to work with several organisations on the development of this booklet, particularly the Scottish Football Association, Football Research in Enlarged Europe (FREE), the Scottish Disabled Supporters Association (SDSA) and the University of Stirling, of which several past and present Sport Management students developed much of this research. We do thank all of these organisations for their support and look forward to working with them in the months and years ahead, as we as fans can really start to have a positive input to how our game can be improved.

Our inaugural publication has a range of subjects from looking at the match-day experience, the issues of the alcohol ban and safe standing, to the game's transparency with an examination of club's financial documenting and the governance of our clubs in Scotland. Many of the supporting results were taken from our survey conducted in association with the SFA and completed by over 3000 fans. If there are other topics you want us to consider for next year please contact us and get involved in the process.

We hope you'll find the outcomes of these papers interesting and look forward to any feedback through our Twitter feed (@ScottishFans) or Facebook page (facebook.com/ScottishFans).

Paul Goodwin
Head of Supporters Direct Scotland
June 2014

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SAFE STANDING

BY RICHARD FOY

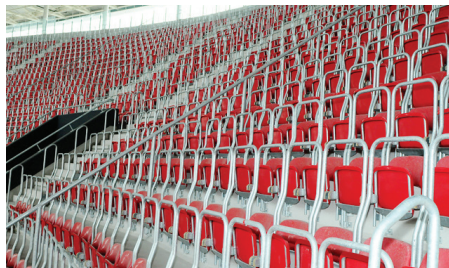


INTRODUCTION

The topic of safe standing sections is important as it is a major discussion point in today's football world. There have been increasing calls for standing sections to be reintroduced into British football from organisations such as the Football Supporters Federation. Slater (2007) shows how a poll conducted by the Football Fans Census (FFC) states that "92% of English football fans want clubs to bring back safe standing sections". The Independent (2011) highlights how in Scotland, recent calls for the introduction of safe standing areas have led to a change in policy. The Independent (2011) shows how the SPFL have relaxed their rules on standing following pressure from Scottish football fans. Slater (2007) notes that major concerns over ticket prices, an ageing crowd demographic and falling attendances, have increased pressure on the authorities to re-examine the all-seater requirement. Conn (2005) illustrates that it is felt that increased ticket prices within all seater stadiums have priced many football fans out of the game and is contributing to falling attendances.

HISTORY OF SAFE STANDING

The Hillsborough Stadium Disaster Enquiry Report (1990) is a key policy, and the effects can still be witnessed throughout UK football today. The most important recommendation made in the report that is still evident today was that football stadiums in the top divisions in England should be all seated; something which Scotland decided to use as advice and copy around the same time as it was made mandatory in England. Conn (2012), states that seating has never actually been compulsory in Scottish football. All seated stadiums have arguably reduced the level of



football hooliganism and increased the overall level of safety within football in the UK. Taylor (1989, pp 12), shows this by stating that "when a spectator is seated he has his own small piece of territory in which he can feel secure". Taylor (1989) also shows that with seated fans there is less likely to be crushing or swaying movements in the ground which results in accidents less likely to happen. Modern technology has also ensured an increase in fan safety. By knowing the capacity limits of stadiums, clubs and police can ensure that grounds are not over crowded. Women, children and families can now go to games and enjoy the visual aspect of football without their viewing being disrupted by larger supporters; this is something which has had an impact on fan demographics. Taylor (1989) shows how more comfortable seats have attracted an increasing level of women and children to football matches.

Frosdick & Marsh (2005), show that the reduction in crowd trouble and, more importantly football hooliganism is also linked to the new all-seater stadiums. The Taylor Report (1989) was seen to have a more sensitive understanding of hooliganism and as to why people were involved in hooliganism. Frosdick & Marsh (2005) also explain how all-seater stadia and improved stadium facilities allowed more families to go to football

matches and feel safer than they could before. Reilly (1996) argues that since Hillsborough there has been a downward spiral with football hooliganism, with even those who were unsure whether the hooligans were trouble or not, now changing their attitude and deeming hooliganism as unacceptable behaviour. In 1989, at the FA Cup semi – final between Liverpool and Nottingham Forest, BBC News (1989) shows how one of Britain’s greatest football disaster occurred. The match took place at a neutral venue, Hillsborough, the home ground of Sheffield Wednesday. BBC News (1989), states that a “crush resulted from too many Liverpool fans being allowed in to the back of an already full stand at the Leppings Lane end of the ground” which resulted in the death of ninety-six football fans. Although the HSDER (1989) highlighted changes which needed to be made to provide football stadiums with a significant level of health & safety, many clubs found it difficult to comply with these recommendations due to the economics of conversion to all seated stadiums.

THE SITUATION TODAY



Since 2007 there have been increasing calls for safe standing sections to be introduced in both Scottish and English top flight games. Conn (2012), states that German football has pioneered the way forward for safe standing sections with almost every high profile stadium containing a safe standing section. The Stadium Guide (2012) shows how

Borussia Dortmund’s Westfalenstadion boasts a capacity of 80,720 with 25,000 of these for standing places.

Tickets for the seated area range from £28 - £49 with a ticket for the standing area under £15. These safe standing sections can be transformed into reduced capacity seated areas if the teams who occupy them are playing in a European competition as UEFA require grounds to be all seated to compete in European tournaments; however McDermott (2011) shows that safe standing sections comply with UEFA rules for domestic fixtures.

The Daily Record (2011) has gained mixed responses from SPFL clubs on the safe standing debate. The research highlights that clubs feel that the financial implications of installing safe standing sections to be a major stumbling block when considering the move away from seated areas, to a safe standing section. As the campaign increases its intensity, the question regarding the authorisation of safe standing sections becomes more prevalent. Conn (2012), states that the current situation in Scotland is also being matched in England with clubs such as Aston Villa exploring the possibility of a safe standing section. Conn (2012) shows how Villa’s Chief Executive, Paul Faulkner, recognises that safe standing areas could improve atmosphere at matches and allow for cheaper ticket prices within the stadium to attract younger supports currently priced out of football. There is understandably caution when the debate arises with the memories of Bradford, Heysel and Hillsborough still fresh in the mind of football fans however with the increase of health and safety and modern technology it could be argued that football is safer nowadays than in previous years. Improved forms of policing football fans, as

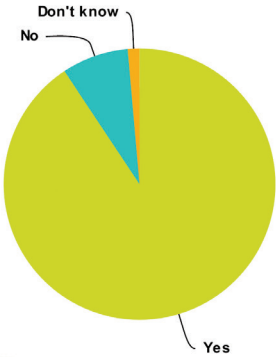
well as the increase of security technology such as CCTV, has also helped make football safer than it once was. The Daily Record (2011) also provides evidence from then Scottish police chief Les Gray, who insists that standing zones are dangerous and attract troublemakers. Gray argues ‘that people go into a standing area because they want to misbehave’, something which all seater stadiums have eradicated. The research will aim to establish whether fans feel that the introduction of safe standing would encourage misbehaviour and decrease the level of safety at Scottish matches.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, there is much literature showing

safe standing is a very contemporary topic. The literature shows how football has changed throughout the years and how fans have changed with it. With the actual football stadium modifying dramatically over the past twenty years it has allowed a pathway for businessmen, women and children to attend matches alongside the historically associated working class male. All seater stadia and improved facilities have made it more comfortable for the spectator which has increased the number of women and children attending matches, which paradoxically some believe has led to the downfall of atmospheres at a number of Scottish football grounds. With each week new information about the possibility of safe standing for many Scottish football fans is highlighted and this research

WOULD YOU BE IN FAVOUR OF SEEING AN INTRODUCTION OF 'SAFE-STANDING' AREAS IN SCOTTISH FOOTBALL?



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	90.68%	2,607
No	7.93%	228
Don't know	1.39%	40
Total		2,875

aims to seek the opinions and attitudes of fans which will either support or oppose the argument.

RESULTS

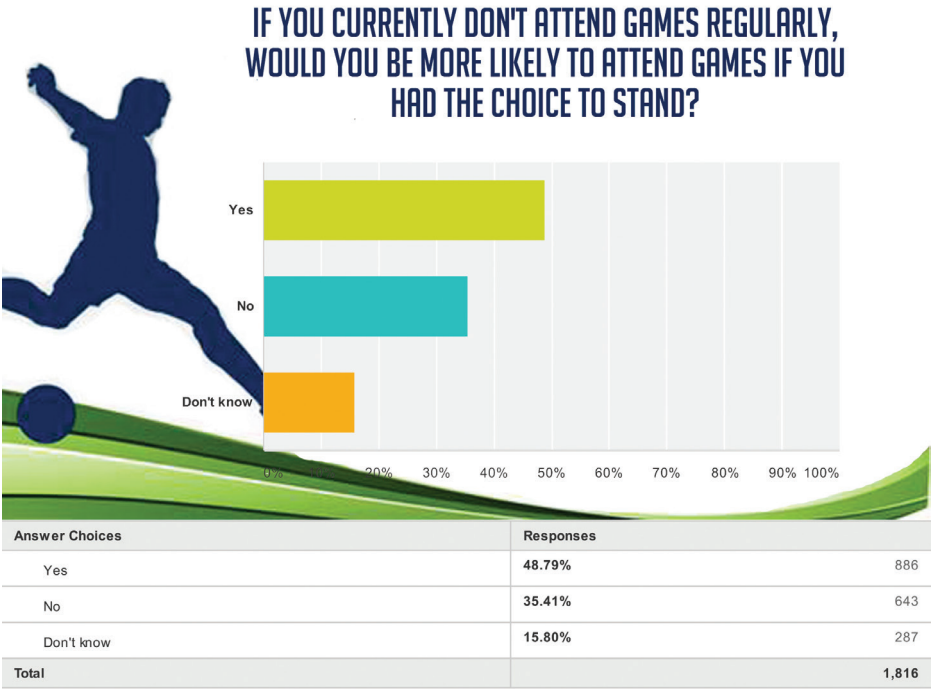
Fans were surveyed through the National Football 2014 Survey conducted by Supporters Direct Scotland and in association with the Scottish FA. The initial results show that an overwhelming majority of fans are in favour of safe standing areas at football grounds – over 90% in fact – and this further emphasises the need for a standing option as almost 49% of respondents said that they would attend games on a more regular basis if this was the case.

These results are echoed when the results of both questions are broken down. Of the 205 women which took part in the survey,

a staggering 172 said that they would be in favour of a safe standing section, whilst only 27 were against the idea – 83.90% and 13.17% respectively.

The men who participated strengthen this opinion. A massive 91.23% of male respondents – 2658 in total – were in favour of safe standing at football stadiums in Scotland and only 7.52% opposed the proposal that safe standing should be introduced to Scottish football.

The call for safe standing areas within football stadiums can be further strengthened. When asked if they were more likely to attend football matches regularly if they had the option to stand, 48.79% of supporters said that they would be more likely to attend matches. However, there was a large percentage of participants who said they would not attend



games regularly if there was a standing option. 35.41% of respondents stated they would not attend games regularly if there was a safe standing option.

Upon further analysis of the results, the argument strengthens. 88.24% of fans believe that safe standing would improve the atmosphere within the stadium – both men and women support this, with 88.86% and 80.88% in belief of this respectively. Only 222 of the 2861 survey participants said that they didn't think that safe standing would improve the atmosphere.

The final question on the matter of safe standing related to small scale trials. A monumental 92.05% of fans were in favour of small scale trials, and only 6.32% were not. Both men and women were behind the proposal – 92.45% and 87.38% respectively – as a total of 2640 of the 2867 fans who answered this question voted yes.

To conclude, the literature and survey results show indisputable evidence in support of the introduction of safe standing areas. The results from the National Football Survey give Scotland specific support to the English based research conducted by the Football Supporters Federation. It is clear supporters are of the opinion that the main desire for the implementation of safe standing areas is the added atmosphere it will add to the experience. Not only this, but the research also suggests that safe standing would encourage greater attendance at games. Considering this, the next step might be from authorities to establish some small scale trials of safe standing areas, of which there was unequivocal support from the survey participants.

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FINANCIAL TRANSPARENCY

BY BLAIR CONDIE





INTRODUCTION

This paper will detail the financial documentation of all Scottish Professional Football League (SPFL) clubs which were willing to participate in the study of publication of their financial records at Companies House, through direct communication with the club or the provision of records provided at club AGMs.

The paper looks to mainly increase the trust between supporters and their clubs board. This paper looks directly at financial transparency between the club hierarchy and the fans who very rarely have a say in how their club is being run. Fans provide almost all of the commercial funds which are needed to run a football club, whether this be in the form of season tickets, gate receipts, television subscriptions, merchandise etc. Almost all of the money which is put into the game relates back to the fan's pockets.

The research was carried out over several weeks throughout December 2013 and January 2014. Almost all clubs submitted their full annual accounts to Companies House, where we at Supporters Direct Scotland, were able to obtain copies of the latest accounts submitted by each club. Of the 42 SPFL clubs, 38 club accounts were downloaded electronically from the website, with one club member providing a paper copy from their most recent AGM, and two clubs unwilling to disclose the information. To avoid any corresponding actions by clubs on its members for releasing the documents, the members who have helped with the study shall remain anonymous. After we obtained the information of each club account, we read through the documents, detailing which information was given, the depth of the

information and how this was useful to the fans. Subsequently, the information we found in the documents was then compared between all clubs involved in the study and tables have been published to show a quick comparison of all clubs numerically, with detailed descriptions of the information found.

INDIVIDUAL CLUB SUMMARIES

Aberdeen

For Aberdeen's annual report ending June 2012, the Public Limited Company gave a full breakdown of their incomings and outgoings within a 26 page document. The document itself included the number of shares at the club, a breakdown of shareholders amounts, a financial review, several statements from independent audits as well as a detailed breakdown of the profits and losses within the club and where these are being made/lost. Furthermore, there are notes on the document explaining some of the terms given beforehand. Finally, the club give information on the number of staff members and each area that they are in at the club.

Airdrieonians

Airdrieonians have produced a much less substantial document in their most recent accounts, the 2012 publication. The club have produced their abbreviated accounts, which is an eight page document. There are very little notes or statements on the paper, with only brief explanations of what the different types of assets mean. There is also a very brief summary of where money is spent and where money is being lost, but no detailed breakdown of how this is being retrieved.

Albion Rovers

Albion Rovers' most recent document is their year ending June 2013 accounts. Again, this is

just an abbreviated account but does contain some statements from the independent auditors. The League Two side are similar to Airdrieonians in that a brief overview of their assets and liabilities are given as well as the cost and depreciation of the club and its assets. All of this is presented in a seven page document.

Alloa Athletic

The most recent document found for Alloa is the accounts published for the year ending May 2012. This document is almost the exact same as Albion Rovers, with the exception of the figures given in each clubs account. There is a page from the independent auditor confirming that the documents produced are suitable for submission. Again, the Wasps have chosen to provide a brief overview of their assets and liabilities, including the cost and depreciation of these, all given within a seven page document.

Annan Athletic

The document submitted by Annan for the year ending May 2013 is a very detailed piece of accounting. This document gives a full profit and loss breakdown of the clubs profits and losses, including specific figures of each area where money was being spent, e.g. awards, advertising, TV etc. As with the other clubs, an overview of the responsibilities of each person on the board and the independent auditors have been noted.

Arbroath

The League One side have produced a copy of their abbreviated accounts for the year ending May 2012. Once again, there is a statement from the independent auditor detailing sections of acts which the published documents comply with and their objective stance for reviewing the documents provided.

Similarly, only a brief overview of the assets and liabilities is provided, as well as the costs and depreciation values of some of the assets. This information is found within a seven page document.

Ayr United

Ayr, although having a recent close affiliation with Supporters Direct Scotland, have elected to produce only abbreviated accounts, which is an eight page document for the year ending June 2012. Once again there is a statement from the independent auditor detailing their objectivity as well as an overview of the assets and liabilities, including the cost and depreciation of some of these.

Berwick Rangers

Berwick, listed as a Public Limited Company, have produced a 16 page document for the year ending May 2013. This publication gives several pages of statements and from directors and auditors. The accounts also contain a detailed cash flow, similar to Aberdeen's own publication. The club also provide a cost and depreciation statement, including notes on party transactions, wherein transactions occurred through a third party affecting the club.

Brechin City

The club were unwilling to release the contents of their accounts as they are a club, not a company. After discussion with the club, it was noted that all members who attend the AGM are shown the details of the accounts, and season ticket holders are welcome at the meetings.

Celtic

Celtic have produced a substantial document detailing their accounts for the year ending June 2012. A 17 page report containing

several pages of statements relating to the directors and the independent auditor(s). The account does not contain a cash flow statement, but does give a profit/loss account as well as further notes on what can be found inside. Finally, the report contains information relating to the cost and depreciation value of some of the club's assets.

Clyde

As is the case with most clubs in the lower divisions of Scottish football, Clyde (a Community Interest Club) have opted to produce their abbreviated accounts in the form of a 13 page report for the year ending June 2012. Within this article, there is a substantial statement from the independent auditors as well as information on the CIC report. The account contains a brief report on the assets and liabilities and information relating to the cost and depreciation of assets.

Cowdenbeath

For the year ending May 2012, Cowdenbeath have provided their abbreviated accounts in the form of a 10 page report. As with the others, there is a note from the independent auditor and several notes relating to the balance sheets. Once again, there is only a brief overview of the assets and liabilities, as well as information regarding the depreciation of assets.

Dumbarton

Dumbarton have elected to provide a six page document for the year ending May 2012. Within this document, there is a statement from the auditor which details the responsibilities of directors. In terms of figures relating to the accounts, there is a brief overview of where money is being spent and what this is on. There is also some details given regarding the cost and depreciation of

certain assets.

Dundee

Dundee have chosen to produce their abbreviated accounts for the year ending July 2012. This report provides a statement from the auditors detailing what the current accounts read and what the upcoming seasons predictions for revenue are. There is also a brief overview of the assets and liabilities, as well as a small statement detailing the cost and depreciation of some of the assets within the 10 page report.

Dundee United

What is interesting to note, is that Dundee United are listed as a Company, not a club like the football clubs mentioned previously. For the year ending June 2012, the company provided a 24 page document, including an extensive statement from the directors. In addition to this, there is also a statement from the auditor and the balance sheet and brief overview of finances. Crucially, a cash flow has been submitted, including detailed notes explaining the accounts.

Dunfermline Athletic

The club produced a 16 page document for the year ending May 2012, which was made up of the abbreviated accounts. The document also contained several pages of statements from directors and auditors, as well as several pages worth of notes regarding the financial statement and balance sheets of the club. These papers were produced when the club was undergoing the process of administration, and the debts causing this are shown at the end of the document.

East Fife

East Fife have, like many other clubs, opted to produce their abbreviated accounts for the

year ending May 2012 in the form of a seven page document. There is a statement from the auditor, detailing his objective in reviewing the submitted material. There is also a note on the depreciation provided, however there is only a very brief note on the accounts themselves and the details of these are also very brief.

East Stirling

For the year ending May 2012, East Stirling published their abbreviated accounts as a five page document. Within the document, there is a short statement from the auditors, an abbreviated balance sheet and a brief note on the depreciation value of some assets at the club. Overall, this is a very short document with very little information available to the public.

Elgin City

Elgin have produced abbreviated accounts for the year ending May 2012 which takes the form of an eight page document. Within the document there is a note from the auditors, several notes which relate to the financial statements and balance sheets as well as details of the club's assets and liabilities. This also includes a short note on the current depreciation value of some of the assets.

Falkirk

The document which we received for the year ending May 2013 was from a former member at Falkirk was a 5 page document which contained over a page statement from the director. In addition to this, a group profit and loss statement and balance sheet was also provided, however no notes or depreciation values were to be found. In addition to this, an earlier account was also provided which gave a more in depth overview of the accounts and notes detailing them.

Forfar Athletic

In the six page document submitted by Forfar for the year ending May 2012 a statement from the auditors has been provided. In addition to this, there is an abbreviated balance sheet and notice of the clubs assets and liabilities, as well as a note on the clubs depreciation values of some of its assets.

Greenock Morton

Greenock Morton have submitted an 11 page document for the year ending May 2012 which includes statements from the directors and auditors. In addition to this, the club provide detailed breakdowns of the profits and losses made within the club as well as information on the depreciation values of each asset. The values of each asset are also in place within the report.

Hamilton Academical

In perhaps one of the briefest documents submitted for the year ending June 2012, Hamilton have provided only a five page document, which in very short circumstances, seems to provide the absolute minimum of which they can provide for the fans. There are no notes relating to board members, responsibilities of each of these and in the most basic of forms, the accounts have been shown.

Heart of Midlothian

Again, a basic form of accountancy, perhaps even more so than the previous clubs. There is very little in the way of figures attributed to the clubs assets, as is the same for the liabilities. As the club was undergoing financial difficulties in the public eye through the media, this may have contributed to the reason for publishing so little in their year ending July 2012 accounts.

Hibernian

Unlike most other clubs in the survey, Hibernian submitted a copy of their year ending July 2013 accounts. In another comprehensive document, the club provide a lot of details on their profits and losses, as well as several notes suggesting why these may have happened. There are many extensive notes explaining some of the findings in the submitted material, overall a lot of information is available.

Inverness Caledonian Thistle

For Inverness' submitted documents for the year ending July 2012, the club have provided very little information on their accounting details. There is simply a figure next to a cost. In addition to this, there are limited notes on the material, detailing what each cost was, however there was a note on what is depreciating in value.

Kilmarnock

In a different looking document to all that has preceded it, the annual accounts for Kilmarnock are very promising for the year ending May 2012. A full detailed profit and loss is provided, along with the cost and depreciation figures for some of the clubs assets. In addition to this, there are extended notes from the directors and other members at the club. Once again, similarly to Hibernian, the document provides explanations as to why their figures have improved from the year before.

Livingston

In a four page document for the year ending June 2012, Livingston have provided a cover page, a half page with an abbreviated balance sheet, a page and a half worth of statements and policies before a final page or so of asset costs and depreciation values. The document

provided is amongst the worst found.

Montrose

Montrose have submitted an eight page document for the year ending May 2012, but as with most clubs, it is an abbreviated account rather than a full detailed profit and loss one. Like most other clubs, there is a basic breakdown of where money is being spent and loss, but the bulk of the material is made up by statements and policies.

Motherwell

A club which looks like it is on the way to being a fan owned club, Motherwell are already offering a lot of information to the fans in their annual accounts. The 18 page document for the year ending May 2012 contains a lot of figures relating to the costs, profits and losses which the club is making, in addition to statements explaining these. This document is precise in where money is being lost, staff numbers, amount of debtors, overall a comprehensive piece.

Partick Thistle

The accounts submitted for the year ending May 2013 are abbreviated like many others. A large portion of the document is made up of statements and policies, with very brief information given on the actual figures where money is being lost and made. However, within the accounts submitted from year ending May 2012, the document is twice as long, containing more notes, more policies, but crucially, a detailed profit and loss account from the club.

Peterhead

For the year ending May 2012, Peterhead submitted a copy of their abbreviated accounts. The eight page document had around three pages of statements and

policies, which also includes concerns for the future and terms of their stadium lease. This is a valuable point to be noted as the document is limited in terms of figures where money is being made and lost.

Queen of the South

Queen of the South have submitted a nine page document to companies house regarding their accounts. Just like many other clubs, these are the abbreviated accounts for the year ending May 2012. This submitted material is different from some of the others in that it seems to have an extended independent auditor report, stretching over 2 two pages while most others are shorter than one. Like all others, there are three pages containing account details as well as cost and depreciation values.

Queens Park

Queens Park have submitted a 25 page document, for their year ending December 2012. Unlike many others, there are meeting notes, a committee report and statement. Like the others, there is an independent auditor statement. There are 12 pages of the accounts which contain the actual accounts, hard numbers people can understand. Plenty of notes and cost/depreciation values complete the accounts.

Raith Rovers

The Championship side have, like many others, chosen to submit their abbreviated accounts. A seven page document for the year ending June 2012. As before, there is a page containing a statement from the independent auditors and a few pages with numbers that people can put a value to. The material is complete with cost/depreciation values and several finance notes.

Rangers

The documents submitted by Rangers rank among the best found in this research. A 47 page document has been submitted, of which 21 pages contain account details for the year ending June 2013. This has statements from several directors and even the manager relating to the club. There are business accounts and statements as well as financial statements and notes. A lot of information can be found in these sections, relating to the previous season. This includes all aspects, from media to catering and even hospitality.

Ross County

From one end of the spectrum to the other now. Ross County have submitted abbreviated accounts for the year ending June 2012. Three pages of the six page document contain numbers people can make sense of. The remaining pages are made up of financial statements, a contents page and a statement from the independent auditor. However, the document from 2006 has 15 pages and contains a lot more information that the latest document which was submitted.

St Johnstone

St Johnstone have completed and submitted abbreviated accounts for the year ending May 2013. The seven page accounts have only two pages of accounts which are written in numbers. Furthermore, there are a few pages of statements and notes, as well as the independent auditors statement. Like the others, there is cost/depreciation values.

St Mirren

St Mirren have submitted a 21 page document for the year ending May 2012. This contains a directors report, chairman's report and a statement from the independent auditors. Of the 21 pages, 11 of these contain figures

which can be made sense of, as well as several financial notes. Finally, there are notes on the cost/depreciation of some of the clubs assets.

Stenhousemuir

The League One side have submitted a 24 page document for the year ending May 2012. Unlike most of the lower ranked sides in the country, although these are termed as the abbreviated accounts. This is because only three of these pages contain accounts. A large portion of this document contains a Community Interest Company Report, which is made up of notes relating to directors, dividends and assets amongst other things.

Stirling Albion

The League Two side have submitted their abbreviated accounts for the year ending May 2013. The seven page document is made up largely of statements and notes. These include a contents page, independent auditor statement and financial notes. Only two pages of this account contain figures relating to the finances of the club, which is dissapointing for a supporter owned club.

Stranraer

Over a period of 3 weeks, continuous emails and phone calls were made to the club directly using the information on their official club website, however no contact was successfully made.

Quick Comparison of Results

Club	Detailed P/L or Abbreviated	No. of Pages	No pages detailing accounts
Aberdeen	Detailed P/L	26	12
Airdrieonians	Abbreviated	8	3
Albion Rovers	Abbreviated	7	2
Alloa Athletic	Abbreviated	10	3
Annan Athletic	Detailed P/L	14	8
Arbroath	Abbreviated	7	2
Ayr United	Abbreviated	8	3
Berwick Rangers	Detailed P/L	16	8
Brechin City	N/A	N/A	N/A
Celtic	Detailed P/L	17	6
Clyde	Abbreviated	13	3
Cowdenbeath	Abbreviated	10	5
Dumbarton	Abbreviated	6	3
Dundee	Abbreviated	10	3
Dundee United	Detailed P/L	24	13
Dunfermline	Detailed P/L	16	7
East Fife	Abbreviated	7	3
East Stirling	Abbreviated	5	3
Elgin City	Abbreviated	8	3
Falkirk	Detailed P/L	5	2
Forfar	Abbreviated	6	2
Greenock Morton	Detailed P/L	11	5
Hamilton	Abbreviated	5	2
Heart of Midlothian	Abbreviated	6	2
Hibernian	Detailed P/L	19	12
Inverness CT	Abbreviated	7	2
Kilmarnock	Detailed P/L	27	18
Livingston	Abbreviated	4	3
Montrose	Abbreviated	8	3
Motherwell	Detailed P/L	18	10
Partick Thistle	Abbreviated	8	3
Peterhead	Abbreviated	8	2
Queen of the South	Abbreviated	9	3
Queens Park	Detailed P/L	25	11
Raith Rovers	Abbreviated	7	3
Rangers	Detailed P/L	47	21
Ross County	Abbreviated	6	3
St Johnstone	Abbreviated	7	2
St Mirren	Detailed P/L	21	11
Stenhousemuir	Abbreviated	24	3
Stirling Albion	Abbreviated	7	2
Stranraer	N/A	N/A	N/A

N/A: club did not disclose information.

Club	No. of Shares and Breakdown	Chairman or Director statement	Chairman or Director signature	Business Review
Aberdeen	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Airdrieonians	Yes	Yes	No	No
Albion Rovers	Yes	No	Yes	No
Alloa Athletic	Yes	No	Yes	No
Annan Athletic	No	Yes	Yes	No
Arbroath	Yes	No	Yes	No
Ayr United	Yes	No	Yes	No
Berwick Rangers	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Brechin City				
Celtic	Yes	No	Yes	No
Clyde	Yes	No	Yes	No
Cowdenbeath	Yes	No	Yes	No
Dumbarton	Yes	No	Yes	No
Dundee	Yes	No	Yes	No
Dundee United	Yes	No	Yes	No
Dunfermline	Yes	No	Yes	No
East Fife	Yes	No	Yes	No
East Stirling	Yes	No	Yes	No
Elgin City	Yes	No	Yes	No
Falkirk	No	Yes	Yes	No
Forfar	Yes	No	Yes	No
Greenock Morton	Yes	No	Yes	No
Hamilton	Yes	No	No	No
Heart of Midlothian	Yes	No	Yes	No

	Directors report	Auditors Report	Trading Profit and Loss	Full Balance Sheet	Cash flow statement	AGM Notice	Total (/10)
	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	9
	No	No	No	No	No	No	2
	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	3
	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	3
	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	6
	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	3
	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	3
	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	7
							0
	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	5
	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	3
	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	4
	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	3
	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	3
	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	6
	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	5
	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	3
	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	3
	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	3
	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	3
	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	3
	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	5
	No	No	No	No	No	No	1
	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	4

Club	No. of Shares and Breakdown	Chairman or Director statement	Chairman or Director signature	Business Review
Hibernian	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Inverness Caledonian Thistle	No	No	No	No
Kilmarnock	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Livingston	No	No	No	No
Montrose	Yes	No	No	No
Motherwell	Yes	No	Yes	No
Partick Thistle	Yes	No	No	No
Peterhead	Yes	No	Yes	No
Queen of the South	Yes	No	Yes	No
Queens Park	No	No	Yes	Yes
Raith Rovers	Yes	No	Yes	No
Rangers	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ross County	Yes	No	Yes	No
St Johnstone	Yes	No	Yes	No
St Mirren	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Stenhousemuir	Yes	No	Yes	No
Stirling Albion	Yes	No	Yes	No
Stranraer				
Total (/40)*	35	8	34	4

N/A: Unaudited accounts provided.

*as two of the SPFL clubs did not take part in the research, there remains only 40

**This portion of the research was /39 as Inverness Caledonian Thistle state that

	Directors report	Auditors Report	Trading Profit and Loss	Full Balance Sheet	Cash flow statement	AGM Notice	Total (/10)
	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	7
	No	N/A	No	No	No	No	0 (/9)
	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	7
	No	No	No	No	No	No	0
	No	No	No	No	No	No	1
	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	6
	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	5
	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	3
	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	3
	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	7
	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	3
	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	8
	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	3
	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	3
	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	8
	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	3
	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	3
							0
	15	6**	2	17	8	3	

y 40 of the 42 clubs to review.
that it is their unaudited accounts.





THE ALCOHOL BAN

BY ANDREW JENKIN

INTRODUCTION

This research, conducted in association with the Scottish Football Association (SFA), explores consumers' perceptions of the alcohol ban, introduced as part of the Criminal Justice Act in 1980, preventing the consumption of alcohol at and en route to Scottish football games, and develops profiles of football supporters based on their receptiveness to the prospect of relaxing restrictions. This research proposes to fill a gap in knowledge regarding the understanding of the changing demographic of supporters; as gaining an understanding of consumer behaviours and attitudes is critical to influencing any potential alterations to legislation.

Prior to 1980 spectators were able to consume alcohol within stadia, however following outbreaks of violence among supporters during the 1980 Scottish Cup Final it was considered that "hooliganism was doing a great deal of harm to football" (McElhone Report 1977, p. 1.) and that this was leading to a decline in attendances. The ensuing report concluded a strong relationship existed between alcohol and violence and attributed a 'good deal of the disturbances' to alcohol consumption before, during and after matches (McElhone Report 1977, p. 5). This led to the introduction of restrictions regarding the consumption of alcohol at football and rugby games in 1980, however the latter have been able to serve alcohol since 2007.

The decision to research perceptions of the ban was made in light of recent requests to review the ban by senior public figures such as Peter Lawwell, chief executive of Celtic FC and

Ruth Davidson MSP, Scottish Conservative

party leader. It is thought by some, including Ms Davidson, that a relaxation of restrictions may prevent attendances declining (McLaughlin, 2009). Stating she believes the ban to be "out of date" (cited by Gilbride, 2013), Ms Davidson highlighted significant changes in the football environment since the ban was initially implemented and said:

"I understand why the ban was brought in all those years ago, but times have changed significantly since then. We now have modern stadia with excellent stewarding to keep spectators safer, allowing more families to attend matches. This has resulted in the football watching experience being a far more civilised experience than it was 30 years ago"

(cited by Archibald, 2013)

Ms Davidson believes that a change in regulation could help clubs grow additional income. The most recent report into the finances of Scottish football by accountants BDO (2013) stated that financial "excesses of the last decade or so are still working their way through the Scottish football sector", highlighting the importance of clubs being able to generate additional revenue streams. Similarly, it is thought a relaxation of restrictions may stop a diminishing atmosphere at fixtures across the country, an aspect of the football-going experience highlighted by former First Minister of Scotland Henry McLeish in his review and recommendations for the games' reform; "we've got to change the atmosphere - that's the next big challenge for the game" (cited by BBC, 2013). At the time of the ban's introduction, it was thought crowd disorder

was highly detrimental to crowd attendances and drove people away (Coalter, 1985, Ross, 2005); this was highlighted by Coalter: "Football hooliganism' must be regarded as the most popular and longest-running 'explanation' (for declines in attendances). Press coverage and popularly expressed fears tend to imply that football grounds are the sites of regular disorder that somehow football and 'hooliganism' are synonymous" (1985, p. 115) The Scottish Government said in November 2013 that there were no plans to lift the ban, while similarly Police Scotland has said it opposed any relaxation of restrictions although no reasons were cited (Whittaker, 2013). The SFA have asked Scottish Government ministers to investigate ending the ban, and have called for a "serious and robust debate" on the issue (cited by Whitaker, 2013). Any debate requires information and insight and this has led to a need to examine and provide a current overview of the football attending demographic and assess consumer behaviours and attitudes towards the legislation.

AIMS OF RESEARCH

To date there has been no specific research into the ban's benefits and disadvantages and whether in today's society, considering the shift of landscape in Scottish football, it is more detrimental or beneficial to the game. Therefore, this research will focus on assessing the attitudes and perceptions of consumers on the existing regulations to ascertain how opinions differ dependant on varying factors such as age, gender, regularity of attendance at games and motives for attending fixtures. This is important as it is these consumers who will ultimately dictate demand for alcohol at games and as yet there has been no consultation with supporter bases

on the matter.

ALCOHOL AND SCOTTISH FOOTBALL SINCE 1980

Alcohol's association with football stretches back to 1893, when an Anglican vicar commented that "football is a fascination of the devil and a twin sister of the drink system" with the two having a "mutually supportive" relationship in the 120 years since (Collins & Vamplew, 2002, p. 1). It has been considered that the activities of football and consuming alcohol have never existed entirely separately and their relationship has become increasingly intertwined. It has become clear that football offers the drinks industry a route to the lucrative market of young males (Collins and Vamplew, 2002). Their relationship became problematic in the 1970s when heavy, uncontrolled consumption seeped into the match-going experience and led to anti-social behaviour and occasionally violence. In Scotland, despite the ban of alcohol consumption at and in transit to matches since 1980, issues of social disorder and alcohol consumption have continued. Giulianotti wrote "'gett'n' skittled affor the fitba" is an integral part of Scottish football (1991, p. 505) and more recently Millward (2009) cites his experience with Rangers fans at the 2008 UEFA Cup final by highlighting the fact the term 'party' invariably meant getting 'drunk together' to most supporters. This relationship has been taken to the point where, for many fans, drinking and watching football tends to go 'hand in hand' and is an essential aspect of the match-day experience, with the alcohol infused 'craic' around games being as important to some consumers as the match itself (Townsend, 1997, Pearson and Sale, 2011).

The following section of this research will

outline literature clearly identifying the benefits and disadvantages of restrictions upon alcohol consumption within football and more specifically the impact of the 1980 Act.

ADVANTAGES OF RESTRICTIONS

There is a strong argument across literature for the need of restrictions on alcohol consumption at sporting events due to a documented relationship with anti-social behaviour (Lipsey, 1997, Marsh and Kibby, 1992, Shepard, 1989). The 1977 Report of the Working Group on Football Crowd Behaviour concluded that: “Nearly all those who gave evidence were firmly of the view that a strong relationship exists between alcohol and violence and that a good deal of the disturbances associated with football is due to the amount of alcohol consumed before, during and after matches” (McElhone Report 1977, p. 5).

This was followed by reports throughout the 1980s similarly attributing disorder to alcohol consumption (Shepherd 1989). Initial research following the 1980 ban (Coalter, 1985) highlighted the substantial reduction in the number of offenders being recorded and a decrease in offences such as fighting and missile throwing. At Aberdeen, for example, prior to the introduction of the Act, 61% of offences were recorded as being ‘drink related’, whereas after the Act this figure fell to 6%. At Glasgow Rangers, the percentage of offences recorded as drink-related fell from 92% to 52%.

While Coalter acknowledges other factors which may have contributed to a reduction in disorder, such as the introduction of seating, he also states the Act and its impacts had been perceived positively: “Club officials

and police officers interviewed gave praise for the contribution which the Act has made to the reduction of levels of disorder and in particular to the decrease in the incidence of serious offences” (1985, p. 116) Guillianotti (1995) notes that while the legislation has made little to impact on the culture around drinking and its association with football, the ‘drunkenness’ Scottish fans now present is far less of a threat to law. It would be fair to say that once where Scotland and Scottish fans had a bad reputation and association with hooliganism, perceptions of their behaviour have improved, despite the continued pattern of heavy drinking. Similarly Millward’s (2009) research concluded heavy drinking played a large part in the sequence of events of some Rangers supporters causing disturbances, however, this did not go so far as to attribute all disorder to alcohol consumption and the research largely disagreed with authorities who viewed alcohol as a primary ingredient that turned “relatively ordinary supporters into mindless thugs” (Frosdick, Marsh & Chalmers, 2005, p. 99).

DISADVANTAGES OF RESTRICTIONS

Despite the McElhone Report (referenced above) concluding that alcohol was the cause of many of the problems associated with the game at the time of the 1980 Cup final, many have questioned its validity (Collins and Vamplew, 2002, Pearson and Sale, 2011). Collins and Vamplew (2002) state the report includes no empirical evidence and uses alcohol as a scapegoat for the outbreak of violence. It is argued that rather than being fuelled by alcohol, sections of the young male population were going to engage in unlawful behaviour due to the nature of the occasion and the entrenched history of violence between the two Glasgow clubs and

not simply because of the consumption of alcohol. Additionally, the McElhone Report's explanation of crowd problems fails to account for situations where fans who were not under the influence of alcohol became involved in disorder (Pearson and Sale, 2011).

While there is no simple theoretical model that adequately explains the relationship between alcohol and violence (Bushman, 1997; Wilson, Cohen, & Derzon, 1997), research proposes that crowd disorder is in fact made possible by a shared 'social identity' among participants (Stott, Hutchison & Drury, 2001). This is influenced largely by external factors, most notably actions of the police or other fan groups that are perceived as illegitimate rather than being driven by single factors such as the availability of alcohol. This argument is reinforced by Pearson and Sale (2011) who strongly refute the notion that hooliganism is a product of alcohol consumption and contend that restrictions do not reduce the overall intoxication of fans and in fact increase potential for disorderly situations: "Restrictions are ineffective at reducing the level of drunkenness amongst fans, partly as a result of police under-enforcement. Furthermore, a by-product of a number of the restrictions is that the level of risk for violence between rival groups of fans is often increased" (p. 164). Despite the apparent successes of the ban in reducing crowd disorder and continued restrictions on consumption, Pearson and Sale's research is just one of several reports highlighting the negative contribution alcohol continues to make to football in Scotland. For example, 'traditional' drunken fighting remains among some Scottish fan groups (Marsh, Fox, Carnibella, McCann & Marsh, 1996); most notable are reports of Rangers (Millward, 2009) and Celtic (Van Der Laan, 2013) supporters being involved in anti-social behaviour while

following their club's progress in European competitions. Additionally, excessive alcohol consumption contributed to one in every five injuries that occurred at Celtic's home games during the 1999-2000 season (Crawford et al., 2001). Similarly, 27.6% of all charges reported under the Offensive Behaviour and Threatening Communications Football Act (2013) noted the accused were under the influence of alcohol thus demonstrating a failure of the legislation to prevent alcohol's impact upon crowd disorder.

The above analysis of the existing literature has shown it is hard to attribute crowd disorder as being a definite product of excessive alcohol consumption; however evidence suggests it should be considered a contributing factor to hooliganism (Millward, 2009). There is also a divide of opinion on the effectiveness of alcohol restrictions in reducing the overall levels of intoxication and crowd disorder. While Pearson and Sale (2011) go as far as suggesting restrictions such as the 1980 ban are counter-productive to preventing disorder and do not prevent the overall consumption of alcohol, there is sufficient evidence from reports to suggest they have made a positive impact in tackling crowd disorder and hooliganism (Coalter, 1985). As a result, what this report will seek to investigate, building on the existing knowledge discussed above, is consumer's perceptions of the effectiveness of restrictions and how they vary across typologies.

RESULTS

Overall, based on the results of 2876 participants (191 participants skipped the survey question), there is a majority of people (61.68%) in favour of lifting restrictions on alcohol in Scottish football.

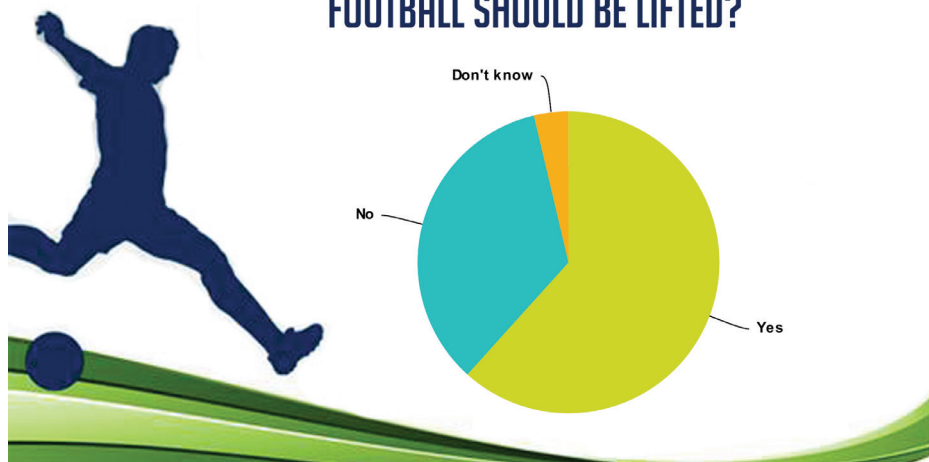
Analysis of other comparisons between background information and attitudes generally followed the overall trend of being



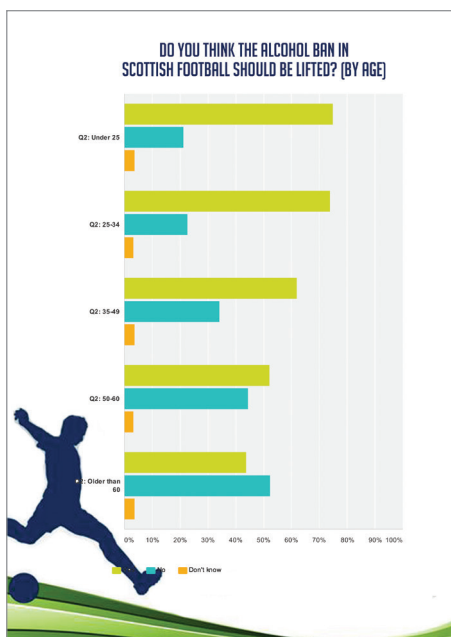
Word Cloud of Supporters responses to why they think the ban should be lifted

mostly in favour of lifting restrictions, with only a few exceptions. Findings revealed only eight clubs' supporters were more opposed than in favour of lifting the ban with fans of Ayr United, Berwick Rangers, Elgin City, Forfar Athletic, Hamilton Academical, Montrose, Queens Park and St Mirren all keen to keep the status quo.

DO YOU THINK THE ALCOHOL BAN IN SCOTTISH FOOTBALL SHOULD BE LIFTED?



Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	61.68% 1,774
No	34.63% 996
Don't know	3.69% 106
Total	2,876



REASONS FOR

The most popular factor in favour of relaxing the ban among both men (88%) and women (85%) was the additional revenue people perceived it would bring clubs. This opinion trended across most demographics and variables with few exceptions. While all supporters in favour of lifting the ban believed it would make a positive contribution to clubs' revenue, the only variations on it being the most popular response was with the majority of Berwick Rangers, Brechin City, East Stirling, Peterhead, Ross County, Stranraer and Stenhousemuir supporters (who predominantly believed a relaxation would best contribute towards creating a better atmosphere) and fans of Albion Rovers and Stenhousemuir who mostly cited relaxations as encouraging more people to attend games.

Over 50% of all respondents under the age

of 50 and in favour of lifting the ban believed any reversal of legislation would help improve the atmosphere at games. Those over the age of 50 were only mainly in favour on account of the revenue and far less positive about the other perceived benefits a relaxation might bring.

An analysis of the qualitative answers given by respondents reveals six recurrent themes as to why the ban should be lifted:

- The provision of alcohol works in other countries'. Many participants cited England and Germany as examples of countries that have been able to incorporate alcohol into the match day experience.
- 'A shift in demographics and a change of times'. Many participants highlighted that since the ban was introduced, types of people attending fixtures have changed and there has been a change of culture. Also noted was the fact that hooliganism was the cause of disorder, not drinking, and that element of the game has since disappeared.
- 'It works in Rugby'. Respondents cited the fact that rugby fans have been able to drink at games since Rugby games were made exempt from the Act in 2007. Many responses question why football is restricted by specific legislation. Some believe that the current legislation is unfair and specifically targets working-class people. One particularly pertinent example is that those at fixtures as hospitality guests have the chance to drink and this was cited to be 'un-Scottish' and creating a 'two-class system'.
- 'The social aspect of football has been damaged'. One particular respondent commented, "before-game drinking

(responsibly) has always been something I've done and it puts me off going to games knowing I don't socialise with my friends as much before the games as I used to". This highlights the role of alcohol as a social stimulant.

- 'An ineffectiveness of restrictions'. A recurrent theme throughout responses was that fans who want to get drunk would binge drink beforehand and restrictions were ineffective in preventing excessive alcohol consumption. This provides evidence of the legitimacy of Pearson and Sales (2001) claim that restrictions have greater disadvantages than benefits. One response read relaxing restrictions "may stop people downing drinks before they got to the game, and also encourage them to arrive earlier".
- 'Why should we suffer for others' mistakes?' The most common response was that questioning why fans of non 'Old Firm' clubs should be punished for the misdemeanours of supporters of Celtic and Rangers, as the most referenced incidents of alcohol and crowd disorder have been on their behalf.

REASONS AGAINST

Results show that those against the ban are of the opinion the disadvantages of any relaxations would include increased crowd disorder, the creation of an unpleasant atmosphere and it being a deterrent to attracting families to matches. The reason listed most overall was that of it acting as a deterrent to attracting families with the majority of women citing it as a reason not to relax existing legislation.

When reasons were compared with age groups results show those aged under 25s

were most opposed on account of alcohol potentially deterring families (75.94%, a higher percentage than any other age group). Therefore, results would suggest that people are most concerned about the impact that lifting legislation would have on attracting future audiences, with any relaxation of legislation opposing the efforts of many clubs to encourage a more heterogeneous supporter base.

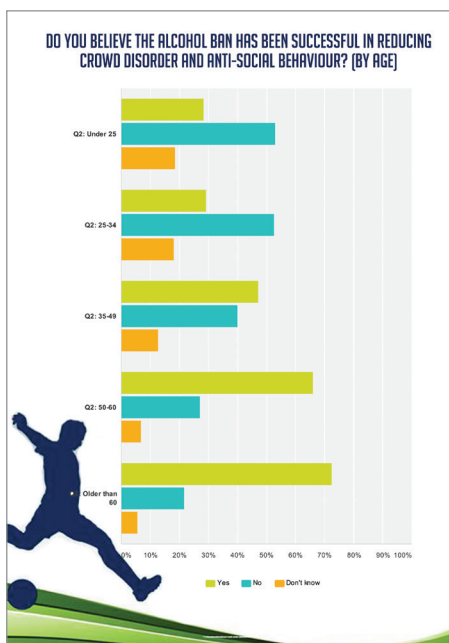
An analysis of the qualitative answers given by respondents reveals four recurring themes for opposition of any relaxation beyond the reasons given within the survey:

- 'No need to change'. This popular response among survey participants believed fans had sufficient access to alcohol prior and after games and suggested spectators should be able to survive two hours without a drink with there generally being little need to lift existing legislation.
- 'An unpleasant experience'. Many respondents suggested allowing a bar to open would cause disturbance throughout the game with people frequently leaving their seat, and affecting the experience of others in the process. Similarly, responses of some who attended games prior to 1980 cited poor experiences of others drinking, such as vomiting, urinating and the general smell associated with alcohol.
- 'This is a society thing'. Numerous comments suggested that restrictions are required as there are enough problems within Scottish society related to excessive drinking and allowing alcohol within football would only heighten these. One comment read, "It works elsewhere in Europe where social attitudes to alcohol differ greatly from here".

- ‘The Old Firm Factor’. Similarly to reasons to lift the ban, there was frequent reference to Celtic and Rangers supporters with many responses suggesting these fans would only cause disruption and disorder if allowed access to alcohol. Many responses did however suggest that access to alcohol might work at smaller clubs.

PERCEPTIONS OF THE ACT'S EFFECTIVENESS

Participants of the survey were also asked for their views on the effectiveness of the Act in reducing crowd disorder and anti-social behaviour.



As results show, overall, there is indecisiveness on the effectiveness of the legislation with perceptions neither over 50% positively or negatively. Further analysis of the results by age group reveals a much

clearer theme. Similarly to people's increasing reluctance to see a lift of the ban with age, the table opposite highlights an increasing approval of the effectiveness of the ban with age. Segmentation of results by club supported revealed fans of Aberdeen, Alloa, Dunfermline Athletic, Elgin City, Falkirk, Greenock Morton and followers of Lowland League sides believed the legislation to be unsuccessful in reducing crowd disorder, however, the vast majority were more positive about its impact upon behaviour at games.

SMALL-SCALE TRIAL

As a final question, survey participants were asked if they would be in favour of the implementation of a small-scale trial of allowing access to alcohol within Scottish football stadia.

When asked about a complete lift of legislation, all age groups were predominantly in favour of a trial; however, resistance grew with age groups. While women had been mostly against a complete lift, they were more in favour of seeing a small-scale trial. Importantly, a small-scale trial has the support of each of the created profiles.

DISCUSSION AND PROFILES

Based on most recurring themes of responses compared with participants' background information, a series of profiles illustrating supporters' receptiveness to relaxation of regulations can be produced. Six basic profiles of supporters have been produced. These do not make up the entirety of responses but represent some of the most common themes.

Profile One: The "Ultra"

"Ultras" are self-proclaimed 'Diehards'

attending every one of the team's games. They are under (the age of) 25 and have an average income between £10,000 and £24,999. Although an Ultra is largely in favour of lifting the alcohol ban, they do not believe the existing legislation has been successful in reducing crowd disorder. Most ultras are motivated to attend because of the social and emotional arousal aspect of the sporting fixtures. They are the profile most strongly of the opinion that the allowance of alcohol would help create a better atmosphere at games.

Profile Two - The "Homeboy"

The "Homeboy" holds a season ticket or attends the large majority of his team's home games. He is between the ages of 35 and 49 and earns between £25,000 and £39,999. He is largely in favour of a relaxation of restrictions. He strongly believes alcohol provision could help increase clubs' revenues and believes the ban has been successful in reducing crowd disorder. He is very strongly in favour of seeing a small-scale trial of alcohol provision at a ground.

Profile Three - Females "Focused on Fixtures"

Females "Focused on Fixtures", between the ages of 35-49, are strongly opposed to a relaxation of restrictions and are against proposals to see a small-scale trial of alcohol provision. They believe the ban has been successful in reducing disorder and a lift would deter families from attending. They are motivated by the 'True Fan Factor' and events on the pitch more than any other aspect of the match-day experience.

Profile Four - The "Oldboy"

"Oldboys" are 60 years or older and retired. They consider themselves a 'committed regular' and attend the majority of home

games, motivated by supporting their team and a social element. "Oldboys" strongly believe that the legislation has been successful in reducing crowd disorder but are in favour of proposals for a small-scale trial. They attended football in Scotland at a time when hooliganism was rife and do not wish to see a return to those days.

Profile Five - The "Whippersnapper"

"Whippersnappers" are young people under (the age of) 25 who will mostly likely form the future support base for any club. "Whippersnappers" are mostly students motivated by the enjoyment of the game itself. They are concerned about the disorder a relaxation of regulations may cause. One respondent categorised in this profile worries about the impact alcohol may have on children who attend games with adults: "It may be horrible for children to witness their parent or guardian get drunk and, as a result be drawn away from the beautiful game".

Profile Six - The "Romantics"

Between the ages of 39 and 49, "Romantics" do not attend fixtures as much as they use to, but hark back to a rosier time in Scottish football. They are strongly in favour of seeing a lift of restrictions accessing alcohol as they believe it could help improve a poor product. Outside of the "Ultras", they are most in favour of a relaxation and could be encouraged to attend more games if they were able to enjoy a beer with the game.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

To conclude, this report shows the issue of access to alcohol within Scottish football to still be highly contentious. Previous literature showed two clear paths of thought; one that alcohol restrictions had made a

positive contribution to reducing anti-social behaviour and crowd disorder, although evidence suggests alcohol related disorder has been far from eradicated, and one that implies restrictions are more detrimental than beneficial in reducing issues.

This research sought to build on these studies and provide substantial evidence of the perceptions of the sport's key consumers. The research has revealed that, through segmentation of supporters into profiles based on their likelihood of attending fixtures and additional variables, there is a split of receptiveness towards the prospect of a lift of current legislation preventing the consumption of alcohol in football stadia.

Fans are overall largely in favour of a relaxation of legislation. However, some profiles of supporters ("Ultras" and "Homeboys") are very much in favour of a relaxation of legislation, while others ("Females Focused on Fixtures" and "Oldboys"), are far less receptive to the prospect. Fans in favour of the proposal suggested that by allowing football clubs to serve alcohol, as in rugby, clubs would be able to substantially grow their revenue streams. It was also suggested that since the ban was originally introduced, football, stadia, its supporters and times have changed, implying that such regulations were no longer necessary. Those most opposed cited the availability of alcohol acting as a deterrent to encouraging the attendance of families and other groups. Additionally, many were of the opinion there is simply no need to change the existing legislation. Interestingly, the key reason for those in favour of a relaxation and those opposed was not based around being able to access alcohol. The fact that supporters thought it would increase revenue for clubs shows that supporters are primarily

concerned about the financial wellbeing of their club, with the atmosphere element only a secondary factor. Similarly, those opposed were not seemingly against the idea of alcohol, but instead more concerned about the impact its provision may have upon future attendances and families. These results suggest that supporters are more concerned with the wellbeing and future of their club, rather than their own desire to consume alcohol. Indeed, the most cited motive for attending fixtures was that of the 'True Fan Factor', implying fans are more driven by supporting their team than any other factor.

The issue for sport decision makers comes with balancing the conflicting desires of identified profiles while also considering their social and community value. For clubs and sport managers, there is the additional element of trying to grow a more diverse fan group while considering the majority opinion of supporters'. Based on these results, there are some clear outcomes and suggested recommendations for sport policy makers and sport managers to consider. Firstly, while it is undoubted that 'True Fans' are unequivocally in favour of lifting the legislation, the research gathered on their motives for attending fixtures shows their attendance is not affected by additional factors such as access to alcohol, therefore, in the interests of continuing to grow a more diverse supporter base, it is the views of 'Casual' supporters which may be more valuable. Based on this, there are sectors opposed to a lift of legislation and it is worth considering the impact of any decision on their experiences and decisions to attend games. The profiles created within this report help condense recurring types of supporters to aid any decision. Secondly, in light of the results showing a large preference to see a small-scale trial implemented, it is suggested that a

feasibility study to ascertain how a small-scale trial might work be carried out. Additionally, a cost-benefit analysis comparing potential income versus potentially lost support could be considered.

Finally, it is the personal belief of the author that the notable progress of clubs in attracting new audiences since 1980 could be lost should any decision to reverse legislation take place. As the research has shown, 'Traditional' fans will attend all fixtures regardless of additional factors, however, that is not seemingly the case with 'Modern' fans whom clubs may isolate should they start allowing access to alcohol. Similarly, while there is an acknowledgement of a shift in football-going experiences since the bans' introduction, making alcohol provision a more feasible prospect, it is proposed clubs should not sell their social value short in promoting healthy and active lifestyles to their consumers by lifting restrictions.

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SUMMER FOOTBALL

BY KEVIN MCLUSKIE AND GEORGIOS VAGENAS



INTRODUCTION

The question of whether or not we should introduce 'Summer Football' to the Scottish game is never far from the minds of fans across the country. The argument has three main proponents, namely; the hazardous weather conditions that can make playing football an often impossible task, the decline in attendance during the cold winter months as fans choose to stay away from games rather than sit in freezing temperatures to watch an often below-par product, and the cost to clubs of postponements or from having to turn the undersoil heating on. This last point also carries with it an environmental issue which will also need to be addressed at a later date.

Returning to the issue of 'summer football', Scotland is known to endure fairly severe winters with temperatures regularly falling below zero and large snowfall not an uncommon sight. It is therefore worth noting that the current Scottish football season runs from July to May, and takes place during the period of December to February – the winter months with the harshest weather conditions. During this period, as the research will show, it is not uncommon for the weather conditions to cause damage to football pitches or for games to fall foul of the conditions resulting in postponements and re-arranged fixtures. It is the latter point that causes the most concern due the potential loss of income from smaller attendances and reduced corporate sales that has led many to suggest that rescheduling the football calendar around more favourable weather conditions would have financial benefits for the clubs. Not to mention the potential for a better product on the pitch with games being played on better surfaces for a longer period of the season. However, as with all arguments, there is a flip-side as not

everyone is in favour of such a dramatic change to the Scottish football landscape. A large percentage of Scottish fans do not wish to move away from the current calendar stating preservation of traditions and other fears associated with 'summer football' as their main reasons to oppose any such change. Hence the need for proper debate and consultation across the national game on this matter in order to decide upon the best way forward.

The role that this paper aims to perform is to identify the key arguments for and against 'summer football' in Scotland and to put across the views of the fans, the lifeblood of the game. As the great Jock Stein put it, football is nothing without fans, and their opinions must be listened to as Scottish football goes through its current period of change. With this in mind it is imperative that clubs do all they can to attract fans to the stadium to watch their games. Clubs regularly offer incentives to fans to encourage increased turnouts such as cheap tickets for children, however one persistent stumbling block to attracting crowds can be found in the severe winter weather conditions. While there is little that can be done to alter the weather, one proposal that may be beneficial to the Scottish game would be a switch to 'summer football'. A season running from the beginning of March to the end of November, for example, would avoid the worst of the winter period, allowing games to be played during the best weather conditions, and therefore reducing the likelihood of postponements. A similar model has been tried in Scandinavia, Russia, and Ukraine; countries that also suffer from a severe winter during which time it can sometimes prove impossible to stage football

matches. Whilst the Scottish winter may not be just as severe as the winters experienced in the above mentioned countries; it is severe enough to result in reduced attendances across the winter months. With this in mind, a summer league may prove to be an attractive proposition for Scottish fans that are otherwise put off attending matches due to poor weather conditions.

Season 2011/12 may have arguably seen the best winter in Scotland for several years however the disruption caused by cancelled and re-arranged fixtures of the previous two winters, which resulted in clubs losing vast sums of revenue, should not be forgotten. Research has shown that fixtures rescheduled for midweek can result in attendances of 40% lower than at games played on a Saturday. The reduction in attendances also equates to a similar reduction in revenue which can have a major impact on the clubs, especially smaller community run clubs. The lost revenue is money that the clubs cannot recuperate and is therefore money lost to the Scottish game. There are of course positives and negatives to any changes to the current schedule and this article will go some way to looking at the potential impacts that summer football may bring about.

SCOTTISH PREMIERSHIP

Analysis of the postponed match average for the Scottish Premiership identifies the winter months as being the period for most postponements and disruption to the fixture list. For example, after round 22 of season 2011/12 only 5 of the 12 SPFL sides had played all their scheduled matches; the remaining clubs having all lost at least one fixture to the weather. Furthermore, the statistics from season 2007/08 through

to season 2011/12 show that there were 52 postponed league games with the vast majority due to inclement weather conditions.

A further problem brought about by the poor weather conditions during the winter period relates to the drop in attendance of matches that beat the weather and went ahead during this time. Two questions that need to be addressed regarding this area are:

- 1) How many people attended matches during the winter months and how does this compare to the number that attended at the beginning or the end of the season when the weather was better?
- 2) How many people attended rearranged matches during winter that had been rescheduled for midweek?

A look at the attendance statistics for the SPFL in season 2011/12 can provide us with enough information to make educated conclusions for both questions. The following table provides information on the lowest recorded attendance for each SPL side in 2011/12. From the table it can be identified that 5 clubs experienced their lowest attended fixture between December and February – the harshest of the winter months. 4 clubs experienced their lowest attended match in May where potentially neither side had anything to play for. It is worthwhile noting that the lowest attended game of the season was a rescheduled fixture that took place on a Tuesday night in December, with a forecast of snow making it difficult for fans to get to the stadium. Thus, it can be deduced that the possible factors resulting in poor attendance can include weather conditions and games being played in midweek.

Further analysis of SPL average attendance figures shows that the season-by-season

average attendance for the league has seen a decline in attendance in the period 2009/10 up to and including the current 2013/14 season. While it is difficult to provide a definitive explanation for this, it is feasible to suggest that weather conditions and the negative impact that they can have on the standard of football and quality on offer to the customer plays an important role in determining whether or not fans turn out for matches. Of course, one factor that must also be considered is the loss of Rangers to the league as their large fan base would obviously have an impact on the average attendance for the league as a whole. What the attendance information does clearly show though is that attendances are on the decline as a whole and in particular during the winter period. Any drop in attendance has the knock on effect of reduced revenue for clubs and therefore summer football, or at

least a winter break, must be a consideration for Scottish football in order to maximise attendance and match-day revenue. This is a view that is supported by the administrator Bryan Jackson who states that:

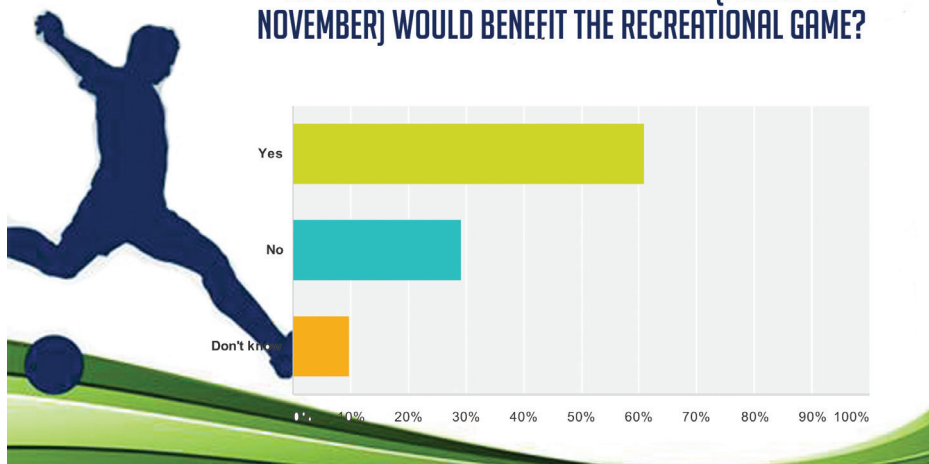
“From a financial perspective, I would say yes to summer football. Whilst Administrator at Motherwell and Dundee, I experienced games being postponed and rearranged which gave an immediate hit on the cash flow.”

- Bryan Jackson, Administrator (Dundee, Motherwell, Hearts & Dunfermline)

THE FANS OPINION

The most important voice to be listened to in any debate regarding significant change to Scottish football is that of the fans. As has

DO YOU BELIEVE A CHANGE OF SEASON (MARCH TO NOVEMBER) WOULD BENEFIT THE RECREATIONAL GAME?



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	60.94%	1,777
No	29.25%	853
Don't know	9.81%	286
Total		2,916

already been stated, the fans are the lifeblood of the game. If they do not back any changes to their game then the change will have been in vain.

In order to ascertain the views of Scottish football fans on the matter of summer football, the Scottish Fans website published an online question to the pieandbovril.com forum on 9th December 2012 lasting until the 16th December 2012. During that time a number of fans provided their responses with the majority of fans replying that they were not in favour of a change to a summer league. Reasons given for the opposition to change included;

- The current structure traditional to Scotland
- Fans did not want to lose the matches over the Christmas period
- The unpredictability of the weather may act as a leveller for smaller clubs against the larger clubs in the league
- There is always the feeling that next year will be better
- The summer is a holiday period where fans fill their leisure time with other pursuits and will not attend football matches; and
- The summer time is for national team competitions and therefore this may provide an obstacle to a summer league.

Not all responses were negative with some fans and football professionals seemingly open to a change to summer football. David Mackinnon, who has performed the roles of General Manager at Kilmarnock and Chief Executive of Dundee, is one high profile fan who is in favour of summer football. Mackinnon is of the view that 'if we were re-inventing the game today we would play over the summer months'. He also makes an interesting point regards performance in

European competition by stating that 'we now seem to play from June onwards to pre-qualify, unsuccessfully, for Europe so changing the season will have a huge impact on attendances, skill levels and maybe, just maybe, would see us qualifying more as we'd be in the middle of the season and not trying to get match fit in these crucial Euro games'.

Results of the National Football Survey also showed an overwhelming favour for Summer football with 61% of participants stating a season of March to November would benefit the recreational game.

Another high profile supporter of a move to summer football is Donald McGruther, Director of Insolvency, Scotland at Mazars. McGruther is of the belief that 'If ever there was a no brainer in Scottish Football then to me this is it.' He qualifies his view by adding that during his time at Falkirk it was often impossible to find decent training facilities in the winter months and that he sympathised with fans having to sit in dark, freezing stadiums in winter, watching two teams battling against the conditions whilst trying to put on an entertaining spectacle.

CONCLUSION

Scottish top-flight football is currently witnessing a decline in match day attendance. As a direct consequence of this clubs are losing out on vital revenue from ticket sales and other match day commercial activities. While it may not be the sole cause of falling attendances, there is a definite body of evidence suggesting that fans are less likely to attend matches played during the winter months. Therefore, although we cannot change our weather system we can, perhaps, change our football calendar in order to boost

attendances and revenues. A summer league would, in theory at least, be beneficial in achieving increased attendances. Having said that, there are still several factors that will need to be overcome before this can become a reality; convincing the majority of fans who are afraid of change is possibly the biggest hurdle to overcome.

Without the support of all stakeholders in Scottish football a change to a summer league cannot happen and the possible benefits that it could bring will never be seen. Should the recent trend of declining attendances continue into the future then maintaining the status quo will inevitably see clubs suffer from further reduced match day income. This paper cannot predict the future and cannot guarantee the success of a summer league however it does suggest that a move to summer football opens up the possibility for increased revenue and match attendance by playing games in more advantageous weather conditions. Thus, there would be fewer postponements and less fixtures being played during the severe winter months.

Of course, any change of this magnitude needs a plan and a strategy in order to ensure its smooth implementation. This paper was not aimed at providing such a strategy but rather at presenting the advantages and disadvantages from a practical point of view and from a fans perspective.

It is the opinion of this paper that, when considering the financial advantages, potential for increased match attendance, and the possibility of an improved product on the pitch, then the implementation of summer football is one that should be seriously considered at the very top of the Scottish game. Despite the current opposition from the

fans, with the right marketing and approach to selling the new concept then it is entirely possible to get fans onside and in favour of the proposal. It is also worth considering that football fans are extremely loyal to their club and the lure of fandom would probably ensure that a significant number of fans would continue to attend games regardless of when they are held.

Further to the opinion that summer football should at least be given proper consideration, it is also the view of the authors of this paper that other changes to the league structure be considered at the same time. For example it may also be worthwhile implementing a structure that moves away from the current monotonous system of playing the same opposition four times a season; a structure that the fans are not in favour of and one that may be a contributory factor in the current low level of attendance.

BENEFITS OF SUMMER FOOTBALL

Through the research carried out in producing this paper the authors suggest that the following reasons for change and benefits could be achieved through the implementation of summer football in Scotland...

Changes to the dynamic of the current stale set up:

- It offers a change to encourage new fans;
- It could work to attract families;
- provides an opportunity to sell more summer focussed merchandise;
- Would help clubs market to a different (family) audience. Two scenarios a) come out in a freezing cold December day where it is so windy the football entertainment is curtailed or b) come along in spring,

summer, and autumn when the grass is green the temperatures are warmer and there is the chance of making it a far more enjoyable experience.

- Fans can travel home from away matches for a few hours of daylight rather than in a dark, wet night.
- Far less postponements means less chance of losing money and helps reduce the uncertainty of budgeting.
- It has worked in the Scandinavian countries where they ALL have a higher co-efficient than Scottish clubs and ALL their national teams are ranked higher than the Scotland national team.
- Could revitalise the game and get more people talking about it and playing the game. The school holidays for example provides a fantastic opportunity during the 8 week period to get the community programmes working at full tilt to engage with the next generation through coaching and by bringing them into stadiums and out from under the feet of the parents.
- Potential for more lucrative TV deals in summer.
- Ground maintenance costs reduced in the summer

can be overcome if Scottish football is willing to take the first step and seriously debate the possibility of summer football and realise the potential it could have for our national game.

A switch to summer football is one that Scottish football needs to consider as the current format does not seem to be attracting the fans. It also has the support of several high-profile football industry professionals and is therefore a topic that needs to be fully discussed at boardroom level. While the paper is in support of the concept of summer football, there is a realisation that to implement it would require a great deal of planning to overcome problems such; as a transition season, how a winter pre-season would work, and when do the players get a summer holiday? These are all hurdles that



DISABILITY ACCESS IN SCOTTISH FOOTBALL

BY GRAEME TAYLOR AND KEVIN MCCLUSKIE - WITH THE SDSA



INTRODUCTION

The Scottish Government reports that nearly one in five of the Scottish population (1 million) is disabled, and furthermore a report by The Herald newspaper in 2010 confirmed that there over 100,000 registered wheelchair users in Scotland, a figure which represents 1.8% of the population. With those figures in mind, and considering football's prominent position in Scottish society as the dominant sport and leisure activity, it is therefore feasible to suggest that a large number of Scotland's disabled population follows football in general or a specific club. This therefore imposes a duty on Scottish football clubs to lead the way in terms of making the sport accessible to all; thus improving the image of Scottish football and providing a model for other sports to follow. Furthermore, and from a more cynical point of view, it is also advantageous for clubs to make their stadia more accessible to disabled fans as, like all other fans, disabled supporters provide a source of revenue for the clubs. By making their stadia more accessible the clubs are also increasing the likelihood of disabled supporters attending matches on a more frequent basis and therefore spending money. As Alan Dickson, Chief Executive of Capability Scotland points out; disabled supporters represent "a group of people who, if they can access the ground, will be more than happy to pay to see the game." It is therefore the responsibility of all clubs to ensure that their stadia provides equality of access to all supporters, and that provisions are taken within the stadium and its outlying grounds to assist disabled fans in their efforts to attend live football matches. This paper will therefore assess the relevant criteria that clubs need to meet to make their stadia more accessible and the guidelines that have been laid down by UEFA and CAFE in order to

assist in this process.

"Football is a sport for everyone no matter what their creed, colour, or religious belief and as such the experience of witnessing a live football match, and the highs and lows it brings to fans around the world, should also be accessible to all – and yet it is not."

Gianni Infantino, UEFA General Secretary

HOW TO CREATE AN ACCESSIBLE STADIUM

Guidance on creating an accessible stadium can be found from a number of different sources such as UK and European legislation, and good practice guides concerning creating accessible stadia; for example the Green Guide, Accessible Stadia, and the UEFA and CAFE Good Practice Guide to Creating an Accessible Stadium and Matchday Experience guidebook. The purpose of such documents is to make football stadia safer and more accessible to a larger audience, including disabled supporters who may find that physical barriers impede their ability to either attend or enjoy a live match.

LEGISLATION

The main legislation concerning disability access at football stadia affecting Scottish Premiership clubs includes the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA), Rights of Access, Goods, Facilities, Services and Premises (Disability Rights Commission 2002), and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Protocol. The single aim of these separate pieces of legislation is to provide equality for disabled persons and to ensure that they are

treated reasonably and fairly. With respect to creating accessible football stadia, this means constructing stadia that invite and encourage disabled fans to attend, knowing that they can enjoy a game in comfort, and that there shall be little or no physical barriers impeding this from happening.

Part 3 Section 19 of the DDA 1995 states that it is unlawful for a facilities provider (i.e. the stadium owner(s)) to refuse to provide, or deliberately not provide, any service to a disabled person which he provides, or is prepared to provide, to other members of the public. Going further, Section 21 (2) deals with service and facilities providers being required to make reasonable adjustments, where possible, in order that disabled users of the service or facility are not disadvantaged or unable to use the service or facility. In this instance the Act stipulates that:

‘where a physical feature (for example, one arising from the design or construction of a building or the approach or access to premises) makes it impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled persons to make use of such a service, it is the duty of the provider of that service to take such steps as it is reasonable, in all the circumstances of the case, for him to have to take in order to:

- (a) remove the feature;
- (b) alter it so that it no longer has that effect;
- (c) provide a reasonable means of avoiding the feature; or
- (d) provide a reasonable alternative method of making the service in question available to disabled persons.’

Thus, furthering the responsibility of football clubs to provide stadia that meet the requirements of their disabled fans.

Part 2 of the Equality Act 2010 extends the duties on football clubs to provide suitable

disabled facilities by stating that “reasonable adjustments” must be made to ensure that disabled spectators are not substantially disadvantaged in any way when at the stadium.

The Rights of Access, Goods, Facilities, Services and Premises (Disability Rights Commission 2002) Code of Practice provides further supplements the need for equal treatment of disabled supporters and supports the relevant legislation by further highlighting that all efforts should be made to ensure that disabled spectators are not disadvantaged or poorly treated whilst at a football venue. Finally, the aim of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Protocol is to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity.

GUIDE BOOKS AND CODES OF PRACTICE

Alongside the relevant legislation there are also a number of guide books and codes of practice aimed at ensuring football stadia meet necessary levels of accessibility. One such guide is the Green Guide which highlights Part M of the Buildings Regulations (1992) which outlines the number of seats that must be made available for disabled supporters in any newly constructed sports ground, or any completely new section of a sports ground. The Regulations call for a minimum of 6 wheelchair spaces, or one for every 100 seats of the stadiums capacity, whichever is the greatest. It is however acceptable for ‘larger’ stadia, those with a capacity of over 10,000, to provide less than one wheelchair space per 100 seats, however no acceptable alternative number has yet been forthcoming. The Green Guide also states that disabled

fans should not be discriminated against in terms of viewing accommodation, circulation, and means of escape. This follows the legal framework outlined above as it would be deemed as discriminatory behaviour to house disabled fans in areas with restricted pitch views, hinder their movement around the ground, and by not providing adequate safety or evacuation means for disabled fans in cases of emergency; especially when all other fans are placed in areas with good pitch views, can freely move around the stadium, and have easily accessible emergency exits. However, perhaps the most important and detailed code of practice comes via UEFA and CAFE's 'Access for All' paper which is intended to provide a benchmark of good practice and sets out minimum stadium requirements. The paper covers a wide number of areas concerning disability access including:

- Providing Different categories of disabled fan – Not all disabled fans are wheelchair bound and therefore have need different facilities on offer in order to enjoy the game;
- Approach to the Stadium;
- Movement Around the Stadium;
- Viewing Areas;
- Accessible Information – for deaf, blind, and partially sighted fans, and
- Accessible Amenities

RESULTS

Results from the Supporters Direct Scotland 'Disability Access Survey' asked disabled Scottish football fans to answer questions about their home team's provision for disabled fans, and therefore does not suffer from the potential drawbacks of the SDSA data. Almost 42% of fans believe that the car parking facilities at their home club are accessible

or very accessible for disabled supporters, with a further 42% of fans believing that the parking facilities were inaccessible or very inaccessible.

Over 65% of disabled Scottish fans indicated that it was easy or very easy for them to order and collect tickets from their home ground, whereas only around 19% believe that their club make the ticket collection process difficult or very difficult for its disabled supporters.

Further evidence that Premiership clubs may not be doing all that they can to make their grounds more accessible can be found on the CAFE website. Similar to the SDSA, CAFE have also carried out reviews of the facilities on offer at Premiership grounds – excluding Ross County's Victoria Park – and have found several areas where a majority of Premiership clubs fail to meet expected levels for equality and disabled accessibility:

- Poor sight lines for both home and away disabled supporters and their PA's;
- Sheltered seating;
- Lack of audio-visual commentary, and
- Lowered kiosks for wheelchair supporters.

Results from the Supporters Direct Scotland 'Disability Access Survey' reinforce these beliefs, with 59% of disabled supporters indicating that they struggle to see the game at their home stadium due to poor line of sight, and 40% of supporters stating that the poor view of the game from disabled areas stops them attending more home fixtures.

A further potentially disappointing statistic comes via the previously mentioned Herald report in which Alan Dickson of Capability Scotland proposed a minimum number of spaces that should be allocated for wheelchairs at Scottish football stadia. This



quota, unlike that set out in the Green Guide, is based upon the size of the wheelchair using population of Scotland and suggests that Celtic Park should house over 1000 wheelchair spaces, Tynecastle around 300, and Ibrox over 900. At present none of these stadia meet that proposed quota however as there this is merely a proposal and not backed by legislation, it is difficult to say that the clubs are failing to meet this criterion.

Having pointed out some of the negatives associated with disabled access at Scottish football grounds, it is worth pointing out some of the positives. Most noticeably, all clubs do provide facilities for wheelchair and partially sighted supporters and their PA's. Furthermore, a small numbers of clubs allow guide dogs into the ground to assist partially sighted fans. It also appears that clubs are taking notice of the needs of disabled supporters and are continuing to improve facilities where possible. For example, Celtic has recently created a new elevated platform in the North West quadrant of the stadium to accommodate 29 new wheelchair spaces with provision for 29 companion places; the new facility provide disabled supporters with greatly improved sight lines. In addition to this the club has also introduced a comfortable new lounge, created for the exclusive use of disabled fans. Thus, showing that steps are

being made to make Scottish football more accessible.

CONCLUSION

From the data available it would appear that, whilst Scottish Premiership clubs have taken steps to improve the accessibility of their stadia, there is still some way to go in order for Scottish Premiership clubs to boast an acceptable level of disability access across the board. Those key areas which have been identified by disabled Scottish football supporters as those which need addressed are:

1. Car Parking and Stadium Access
2. Better View from Disabled Areas / Better Positioning of Disabled Areas
3. Stadium Safety (lack of railings on stairs / lack of shelter in poor weather conditions)
4. Attitudes of Fans and Clubs towards Disabled Supporters
5. Better Communication between Clubs and their Disabled Support

The regulations found in the legislations and guidelines, however, are mainly appropriate to newly built or renovated stadia, and therefore may not be applicable to some of the older grounds in Scotland. As a result, it may be difficult for some clubs to remove the physical barriers to access and/or to bring the current facilities up to the level set out by the 'Access for All' guidelines. However, by addressing the 5 key areas outlined above, Scottish football clubs can ensure they do not alienate their disabled supporters.



SUPPORTERS PERCEPTIONS OF GOVERNANCE

BY JO WELFORD AND FREE FOOTBALL PROJECT



FREE

Football Research in
an Enlarged Europe

INTRODUCTION

What do football supporters think about how Scottish football is run and governed? How are they getting involved, and to what benefit? How can fans affect football in Scotland? The FREE project tries to give some answers to these questions by speaking to fans across the country about football. This is a study done with the fans in mind, where the voice is given to those who follow football.

The FREE (Football Research in an Enlarged Europe) project is a pan-European study, funded by the European Commission's 7th European Framework Programme for Research (FP7), investigating what football means to fans across the continent. Eight countries are working together on the project, and in the UK the project is specifically investigating the relationship between fans and the governance structures of football. By 'football governance' we mean anything to do with how the game is run, managed and organised at club, national and international level. We are asking:

- Are fans getting involved in governance themselves?
- Why, and if not, why not?
- What are the benefits of getting involved in football governance for fans?
- How can clubs benefit from fan involvement?
- How could football governance be improved?

Fans of Scottish clubs were asked to take photographs and keep diaries over a 4-6 week period in the 2013-14 season to a) show what football means to them; b) demonstrate the extent of their involvement in football; and c) comment on aspects of football governance.

We then met up with them and chatted about what they had submitted, discussing fan involvement in governance in more depth. This is what Scottish fans had to say.

WHAT DOES FOOTBALL MEAN TO YOU?

Before thinking about if and how fans CAN affect football, it is important to consider WHY fans might even want to. Trying to understand why and how fans connect with football and their clubs reveals the strength of their attachment, both to their individual clubs and to the game. Although this may seem obvious, policy calls for fans to get more involved in governance will only work if they actually want to. And one needs to gain an understanding of the willingness of supporters to spare time to get actively involved in the running of their clubs. We argue that the passion supporters have for their club and the wider game should be seen as a sound basis for developing fan engagement in football governance.

Without a doubt, football plays a major role in the lives of all fans in the study. All watched live matches whenever they could. For those that lived away from their clubs, this meant a lot of travelling combined with watching other local teams to get their 'fix'. They also played, coached, volunteered and spoke about football in their free time.

"Only my wife and immediate family mean more to me than football. My wife might say the football means more to me"

Through discussing football, three main aspects of 'being a fan' emerged as key reasons for their continued support. Firstly, football is a social event. The social

dimension of football is just as, and maybe even more, important for supporters than what happens on the pitch over 90 minutes. It is a way to be together with other people, something to be enjoyed and shared. Fans described how matches provide an excuse to catch up and spend valuable time with family and friends; activities before the game are particularly valued by supporters. Parents spend time with their sons (and daughters). Friends who live miles apart meet up in the pub before the match. The extended family come together for an away trip. All of this happens because of the football match – it is the focus of the day, so the motive to get together – but it is the ‘everything else’ that fans spoke to us about more than the match itself.

“Looking back on it, football is, the most social thing that you can do, in Scotland certainly... Football can bring a family together, and be a focal point for them”

“To me it’s the family, it’s the tradition, it’s everything. There’s also the coming together before and after the game”

Secondly, football clubs are an important part of fans’ personal identities. They tie them to a home, a community, family and personal histories. All fans spoke about their memories of football as a child – positive memories that had stayed with them throughout their lives. Football is what we call, an articulator. It helps people to give structure to their memories. It is also an anchor of identity, as it provides vectors of identification with communities. Being a fan of a football club makes you a part of that club, that community, and can bring an enormous sense of pride and belonging.

“[You have] a connection with the club, not

just emotional and the almost tribal sense of identity that you get at some of the bigger clubs but in these smaller clubs, there is also a sense of personal connection with the club where you are a devoted fan”

This connection, and the feeling of community, is vital when considering the potential for fans to involve themselves in governance. If fans feel part of a community, which they often do (particularly at smaller clubs where this is one of the main features of fandom), they may be willing to help preserve this. This is a socio-cultural bond; it is a very personal and subjective relationship. This is, however, the great value, as the feeling of belonging can compel fans to get involved in what they feel it is theirs, because it is part of their lives.

Thirdly, and perhaps considered as common-sense and therefore rarely acknowledged, is how football makes fans happy. Of course, football also brings disappointment, anxiety and even anger. Fans acknowledge that they do not have an easy life! But these can be, and normally are, easily forgotten. Happiness – the buzz of beating a local rival, a last minute equaliser, hearing the crowd roar – is what fans take from football, and what keeps them going back for more.

“A feeling of being part of a crowd like that is probably the best thing, the big sort of dramatic emotional kind of atmosphere moments, you know, those kind of things are, are the best bits about going to the football”

Football is, on the whole, a positive experience for fans. We said before this may be common-sense. However, this is not always the case for some. Thus, we believe it is important to stress the positive aspects of the game, as policy makers often focus on the negatives

of football: what is 'wrong' with it. There is no denying that there are a number of problems associated with modern football – the fans talked about these as well, as explained further below – but to ignore the positivity and happiness that football can mean to fans overlooks one of the greatest things about the sport.

So, in a nutshell, what does football mean to these supporters? It means happiness, it means being in company of other people they like and it means, to certain extent, belonging to a family and community. It is a very important part of their life, and one that helps them to structure and connect with their own history. If football is that central to our participants in the project, what do they think about the way in which it is actually managed?

WHAT DO FANS THINK ABOUT FOOTBALL GOVERNANCE?

Fans unquestioningly showed us that football means a great deal to them, and is a hugely gratifying part of their lives. But once discussions moved outside of the personal level to the wider world of football governance, fans were much more critical. Supporters like football, but not THIS football.

Dissatisfaction with football governance is widespread amongst fans, and is no secret. It is therefore unsurprising that fans who participated in the FREE project took the opportunity to give their opinion on a number of different aspects of football governance in Scotland. It is clear to us that supporters are eager to voice their opinions, but may not always find the appropriate avenues to do so. This does not override the love fans stressed that they have for the game and their clubs, but it creates a difficult and contradictory

position for them. On the one hand, their club makes them happy, match-days are social events that they look forward to and they take pride in their club. Yet balanced with this, aspects of their club's (and wider football) governance frustrate and anger them. In this tension, is there a possibility that they will 'give up' on football? This is highly unlikely. Actually, the participants in the project made clear they are very eager to avoid being in a position where they have even to consider whether to do it or not.

The most common theme across all fan contributions to the FREE project is money. It did not matter if their club was big or small, or if they were talking about their own experiences or football in general, financial issues cropped up time and time again making it the single biggest concern fans had with football governance. It is impossible to discuss money without acknowledging the cause and the many effects that it has on all levels of the game. From the cost of watching football to the distribution of TV income, money permeates football from the bottom to the top and was at the root of many of their concerns.

"[SPL club] is a horrendously expensive day out, especially if I'm taking one of the kids, you know, for me and a kid to get into [club], I'm not getting any change out of 40 quid. And then I've got to pay fan charge prices on the food"

Due to its centrality in fans' thoughts, the issue of money will not be discussed further as a topic in its own right but will be acknowledged as a horizontal and inherent dimension to many of the problems that fans chose to highlight.

At the club level, ownership is a particularly

difficult issue for fans. Concerns were raised over the Fit and Proper Person test, the lack of transparency, the ease in which clubs can be bought and sold, the lack of connection between owners and clubs, financial corruption and mismanagement. The concern with owners who are unrelated to the clubs' history and traditions can be clearly linked to the personal importance that football has for the fans, as discussed earlier. In this respect, ownership is a management/governance issue that goes to the very core of what football means to the supporter. It is unsurprising, therefore, that our participants felt so strongly about it.

"You can't rely on oligarchs, because people like that could just turn round and go, do you know what ... because they operate on a totally different level, there's no emotional connection to it"

Money is again an inherent factor. Fans were concerned that owners were not transparent with where money came from and where it was spent, and that risks were taken with 'their' club without any consideration of the impact this can have on the fan base and community.

"[Owner] had the majority of the shares and hadn't really invested any of his own money, as far as I could tell, he'd invested the bank's money and the bank lost all that money"

However clubs are financed or governed, fans want greater financial transparency.

A topical issue throughout the UK right now is the notion of integrating safe standing areas into all-seater stadia. Although not all wanted to stand themselves, fans were unanimously in favour of a standing area to give a choice

of sitting or standing. Reasons for this support revolved mostly around the impact on atmosphere. 'Standing area' appears to be synonymous with 'singing area', and fans believe that a move to safe standing would enhance the atmosphere in grounds, believed to be key for the enjoyment of the match-day and attracting more fans to the stadium.

"There are the [group] who never sit, they just, they bounce non-stop and they sing and they chant. I think they should be allowed, there should be a standing only section ... you go to a rock concert, how often do you sit down? ... And no one comes in and arrests you for, because you're standing, they don't have stewards who say they must sit. I think football should be the same."

"I think if we could, obviously it would be great if we could create a proper standing area"

The safe standing campaign is irrefutably linked to issues of fan regulation and control. Fans spoke fondly of their experiences at smaller, lower league grounds where they could stand and move around, free from the restrictive nature of all-seater stadia. Fans feel they should be treated with more respect. Although there are many aspects of this, being given the choice to sit or stand at a football match would indicate a greater level of freedom, and this is something that is important to them .

Fans were also critical of the lack of fan involvement, consultation and engagement by clubs and authorities. Smaller clubs were more often than not commended for attempts to build relationships with their fan base, but the bigger clubs were criticised for not engaging with or considering the needs of the fan.

“Directors must give fans more say in the running of [club], they must have more transparency in the workings and they must spell out their plans for the club”

However the most vocal criticism was for the football authorities outside of the club.

“I honestly believe that Scottish football authorities have absolutely no regard or thought for the ordinary fan. Unless the hierarchy at a national level and at club level change their attitudes towards those who make this great game of football what it is, then I fear for the future of the game. Yes, television pours an amazing amount of money at football, but if there’s no fan participation then there is no atmosphere at games and that would signal the death of football completely”

Fans expressed an understanding that they are central to the future of the game, and again money features in their concerns. Fans invest emotionally as well as financially in their club, and they want the necessity of this to be recognised. Sports economists refer to ‘fan equity’ – the loyal customer base football clubs have due to the unwillingness of fans to switch allegiance and their connection to the local community – and stress that fans are an intangible asset and should therefore be treated as stakeholders.

Fans unanimously expressed dissatisfaction with several aspects of football governance. They are worried about issues of ownership, over-regulation of the fan experience or lack of transparency. But, crucially, how eager are the fans to take action to affect change?

FANS AND THEIR INVOLVEMENT IN FOOTBALL GOVERNANCE

Joining and making a financial contribution to a Supporters Trust, and therefore working towards supporter ownership (either full or in part) of their club, is one way that fans can get involved in governance. Yet as this is not the only way – many clubs have fan forums, councils, supporter groups, and other associations that have a degree of interaction with their club – so this section will consider the benefits of fan involvement in any aspect of governance. Whilst Trusts have been essential in keeping many Scottish clubs afloat, it is important not to exclude fans that are not in the position to contribute financially. We feel that supporter involvement in governance can be more effective if it is inclusive. It needs to facilitate a diversity of ways in which supporters told us they are willing to get involved.

WHY DO FANS GET INVOLVED IN GOVERNANCE?

Although not all felt that they were in the position at this moment in time to become more actively involved, all participants in the study believed that fans should have a greater involvement and representation in football structures. If fans are dissatisfied with football governance, engaging with their club where possible is a step to affecting change. Fans in our study understood this.

“I became frustrated when it became obvious that the club was being dreadfully mismanaged” JG

Getting fans involved themselves in governance is to most a natural progression from the dissatisfaction highlighted in the previous section. But it was also recognised that although many fans only consider getting involved with their club during times of crisis, this reactive move may be more successful

(and enjoyable) if it was instead proactive – if fans did not wait for something to go wrong at their club to get involved, either on or off the pitch.

“There’s years and years and years of apathy and people just turning up, saying, well you know things are going good on the pitch and all the money’s there and enjoy it”

The motivation to get involved in football governance for proactive reasons differs considerably to the response to dissatisfaction. Fans in this study expressed a willingness to give back to something that gives them pleasure.

“Try to invest in the place you live and everything you take part in, and I don’t just turn up, pay my money, get pissed off for an hour and a half and then go home”

“I would like to contribute more. I’ve always been a doer. You get out of something what you put in”

The reasons fans gave for their involvement in governance therefore fell into two areas: dissatisfaction with aspects of their club, or a more personal desire to contribute to their community. Acknowledging these contrasting motivations is useful as the latter category encompasses all fans from all clubs – everybody can relate to this. However the former only applies to fans that either acknowledge or recognise a personal dissatisfaction, which may not be relevant to all. Indeed, even at clubs with governance problems, there may be fans that do not recognise these or consider them as important. In attempting to encourage supporters to engage with clubs, focussing on the personal motivation to ‘give back’ to their club may therefore be more effective

than waiting until a time of crisis. Fans value the community aspect of their club, and if their motivation for getting involved is to be a part of (and preserve) this, proactive fan engagement may be more likely.

WHY DON'T FANS GET INVOLVED?

Equally as important as why fans do get involved, is the issue of why they don’t. Again, having knowledge of the reasons fans do not get involved is essential to increasing the numbers that do. Are these barriers real, or perceived? Are fans aware of the benefits of getting involved in governance, for both them and their clubs?

Some of the fans in the FREE study were not involved in governance, despite having a great passion for their club. One reason given was not living in the locality. Living away from their club can detach a fan from what is happening, so they may feel that they cannot contribute fully by not being there. Others would argue that this is simply a perceived barrier, as some fans in the project were members of a Trust or another group despite living away. Further, some thought that they did not have enough time to become involved in governance – again a problem that could be very real, or could be challenged by asserting that a contribution can still be made without a significant time investment. Finally, there is the feeling especially at bigger clubs that fans cannot make a difference; such is the lack of power or voice afforded to them.

“Fan representation’s a kind of tricky thing though because it can be tokenism and more often than not it is”

Whilst the barriers above may be very real to fans, they could still be used to the benefit

of supporter groups to try and increase membership. Convincing fans that supporter groups can affect change may be difficult at clubs where fan representation is minimal or non-existent, but to attract fans who feel that they could not contribute whilst not living close to their club, groups could look for ways to make exiled fans feel more involved. Considering what fans told us about the importance of clubs in tying them to their home, this is clearly a solid platform for building calls for fan engagement that will apply equally to those supporters who do not live in the locality of the community as those who do.

In order to engage more fans in governance, it is important to understand and promote the benefits gained, both to fans (individually and as a collective) and to clubs.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF FAN INVOLVEMENT TO THE CLUB?

Aside from the obvious benefit of financial contributions (although being involved in governance does not necessarily require the fan to donate money) there are numerous ways in which football clubs can benefit from involving fans in aspects of governance. Clubs can use numbers of fans becoming involved behind the scenes – they can represent and promote the club, and become an important source of help to the club if they feel a valued part of the community.

“We’re offering people the opportunity to be club ambassadors, and that’s really just a way to get people more engaged and also get the club free staff, free volunteers”

This is important as it shows that clubs should not fear fan engagement – supporters have

the best interests of their club at heart, always, and many will do all they can to help out.

Whilst ‘free staff’ may not be the best way to describe fans willing to give up their time to help out, the human capital that supporters as individuals and as a collective can offer to their club is huge.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF FAN INVOLVEMENT TO FANS?

Fans who were involved in football governance were quick to stress the personal benefits they gained from this. A feeling of contributing to your club’s success, of giving back, and feeling more involved and connected to the club were important reasons suggested to us. Fans who were involved definitely gave the impression that this should be a give and take relationship: as well as benefiting from any changes that help fans, keeping your club afloat or simply helping out on a match-day can bring an immense source of personal and community pride as well as being vital to the day-to-day running – and even survival – of the football club.

“I enjoy the games more now, because I’m more interested in the club overall, I’m more interested in the games. And I actually sit at [ground] now and feel a lot more pride in what’s going on because when [previous owner] was running the club, you really didn’t get that feeling”

An increased awareness of the benefits to fans personally might be critical in helping to engage more fans. As well as personal benefits, fans who get involved in governance themselves can also help to ensure that other fans can have their voices heard within the club. One aspect of football that fans feel particularly frustrated with is that they don’t

feel listened to. Getting involved themselves, whilst not ensuring that the fan voice is heard, represents a big step towards this: being 'on the inside' allows fans not just to have their own say but also gives a greater insight into the extent to which clubs may actually listen to fans more widely.

"I have the opportunity to advance the involvement of fans in how the interests of fans is best served, and that their club would listen if approached in a reasonable manner"

"We [supporters group] want to give all of the fans a genuine voice"

Mutually supportive relations in the community are a form of social capital which can bring pleasure to the individual as well as those who benefit more directly from contributions. Supporter groups and clubs should comprehend and build on this. If fans only see their involvement as benefiting their club and not themselves, they will be less likely to engage; yet all fans in the study that were involved equally emphasised the personal benefits. Supporter groups and clubs might consider how they can stress these benefits. This may involve thinking creatively about how they might structure opportunities for fans to engage in governance to develop their own skills or to reward particular contributions.

Supporter ownership and Supporters Trusts
Whilst all of the above can relate to Supporter Trusts as equally as any other method of fan engagement, the notion of supporter ownership deserves individual consideration due to the importance of Trusts to the continued survival of many Scottish football clubs.

As perhaps evident from this chapter so

far, fans were mostly in favour of supporter ownership – not necessarily wanting fans to have full control, but to have an official, formal say in the running of the club and board representation as a minimum.

"[Club is] partly fan owned from the 1990s, that we were in some financial difficulties and about to fold, so we do have some representation of supporters that are on the board, which is really good"

However fans understood that the supporter ownership model was not a smooth ride to success, and recognised some of the difficulties clubs and fan organisations face. Firstly, and arguably the most critical question for Trusts, is how to act in the interests of all fans – fans who have divergent opinions, experiences and hopes for the future of their club.

"Football supporters are such a divergent bunch ... we get this from the Trust as well incidentally, half the people are wanting you to be hammering the club much harder, the other half don't want you to be criticising them at all" Following on from this is the concern of how to engage the RIGHT fans in governance. Whilst this may be exclusionary in a sense, our participants expressed concerns over whether all fans could fulfil the roles required to run a football club.

"Just because you're passionate and it's your life, doesn't make you a good manager or natural diplomat"

Trusts must also follow their own advice concerning transparency, fairness and representation, even if this can create difficulties with the club. We feel this is a perfect example of the difficult balance

Trusts have to operate within. On the one hand, some of our participants thought that involvement of supporters may be more beneficial to the club and the Trust. Naturally, other people will disagree. Be that as it may, the reality is that we are faced with a large variety of opinions and preferences. In our opinion it is necessary that the wider supporter community recognises the inherent difficulties of structured participation in football governance. But, crucially, in order to facilitate this recognition it is also necessary to have a structure that is transparent and may facilitate different levels of engagement.

“In these situations, the fans have to be front and centre of what’s going on. You have to be transparent, so it’s always, the lack of transparency that kills the Trust”

“I also think that there is increasingly an anti-Trust mentality at clubs, that they tend to see them in a very kind of adversarial way. We’ve had quite a lot of flack about saying critical things about the ownership”

Discussions surrounding supporter ownership were very interesting. Despite a wide and strong criticism of existing governance structures in football, and a unswerving belief that supporters should be more involved in governance at club level (and perhaps beyond), the fans who took part in this study recognised that this was not a quick fix answer to problems in football, and needed to be done properly to be a better alternative to the status quo. Football fans are passionate about their club, and this comes first. This should be considered an encouraging conclusion, as fans are not only in favour of increased supporter involvement in football governance but they believe in doing it the right way, with caution and an understanding of the potential

barriers that need to be to be effective and sustainable.

CONCLUSION

The common perception of supporter involvement in football clubs, one that is dominantly enacted in the media, is of dissatisfaction and protest, or fans rallying round to save clubs ‘in crisis’. Negativity surrounds this – things are wrong, and as fans recognise this, they will take action.

But this does not fit neatly with what we know about how fans feel about football. It is (on the whole) a positive experience, and that is what keeps them going back for more. There seems a disconnect between this and the adversity that is required for fans to take steps to get involved with their club that they have such a deep and personal connection with.

Therefore, from trying to understand what fans have told us, it seems that supporter involvement in governance could be understood differently. The reasons fans give for why football makes them happy – feeling part of a community, sharing an identity with a group and the social experience – should be the basis for fan engagement. Things that make them unhappy – dissatisfaction with how their club is being run – should not be the primary motivator, yet it is so often a time of crisis that draws fans into their club. As has already been stressed, proactive fan engagement is much more sustainable as all fans can relate positively to their club. Reactive engagement may not last beyond the period of dissatisfaction.

Football is a positive experience. It makes fans happy. Clubs and supporter groups should not take this for granted, or be afraid to ‘rock

the boat'. This is should be the foundation for supporter engagement in governance: to preserve positivity rather than to challenge negativity.



WOMENS FOOTBALL

BY GRAEME TAYLOR



INTRODUCTION

Typically, when people think of women's football they automatically associate it with the United States' Women's National team, who have been considered a "superpower" in women's football since the 1990s, finishing in the top 3 of every Women's World Cup (winning twice in 1991 and 1999), winning a medal in every Olympic games since 1996 (4 gold and 1 silver), and winning 6 out of 7 CONCACAF Championship and Gold Cups since 1991. Although the UK was responsible for the first "golden age" of women's football in the 1920s, the National Teams from the UK have failed to match the success of their American counterparts. Since the formation of the English and Scottish domestic leagues in 1992 and 1996 respectively (and their current professionalised incarnations in 2010 and 2002 respectively), women's football appears to have once again begun its journey towards a new "golden age".

This paper will examine the current state of women's football in the UK, as well as examining the attitudes surrounding women's football and the growing influence of women as spectators, volunteers and coaches.

STATE OF WOMEN'S FOOTBALL IN THE UK

England

Since the foundation of the FA Women's Super League (WSL) in March 2010 and the completion of its inaugural season in 2011, women's football has been experiencing something of a "revolution". Although the WSL is currently a semi-professional league, the English FA believe that if the league continues to be successful then it will be in a position to become fully professional and compete with the women's football leagues in America and Germany.

What is no doubt aiding the FA WSL's push towards professionalism is the level of publicity and exposure it has been receiving in recent years. Before a ball had even been kicked in the Women's Super League, the FA and ESPN agreed an exclusive broadcast rights deal for television coverage of the new league, while in 2013 the BBC agreed a deal to broadcast four FA WSL programmes for the upcoming season, providing goal round-ups, highlights features and previews of England's World Cup qualifiers across all its media outlets. Arguably the biggest boost to Women's football in England came in May 2013, when the FA announced that BT was to become one of the founding partners of a new commercial programme for women's football from 2014-2018. This unprecedented level of media coverage for women's football in the UK allowed the WSL to expand in 2014 to include 18 teams across 2 divisions, which the FA and WSL hope will continue to increase participation and deliver a closer connection to supporters of the women's game.

The success of the WSL has also had a positive 'knock-on' effect for women's football at grassroots level. Following the successful launch of The FA WSL in 2011, the rise of the England Women's Senior Team to seventh in the FIFA World Rankings and the unprecedented success of the London 2012 Olympics, women's football is the largest growth area of the national game and is now the third biggest team sport in the country.

Scotland

The Scottish Women's Premier League (SWPL) was founded in 2002 and is currently the highest level of women's football in Scotland. Although the SWPL is a standalone league,

the format of the competition still allows for relegation into the Scottish Women's Football League (much like the SPL and SFL prior to the SPFL merger in 2013), composed of a national Division 1 and regional Division 2. Similar to the FA WSL in England, the SWPL is a more professionalised league competition, which was created to try and increase interest and participation in women's football in Scotland. Unfortunately, unlike women's football in England, women's football in Scotland is still considered largely as an amateur game, with almost all of the emphasis being placed on the professional male leagues. The lack of media coverage offered to the SWPL, or indeed women's football in Scotland in general, has meant that, like the men's game, the Scottish leagues are considered of a much lower standard than the English league set-up, as there is a distinct lack of investment in the infrastructure of women's football in Scotland.

Despite the lack of attention given to women's football in Scotland, there is one distinct similarity between the men's game and the women's game. As it is in the men's game, the top tier of women's football in Scotland is dominated by a club from its largest city, Glasgow. Where the difference lies, is that the Glasgow giant in the SWPL is not a member of the Old Firm, but Glasgow City Ladies Football Club. Despite the relative lack of investment in the SWPL, in recent years, Glasgow City FC have continued to represent Scotland well in European competitions. Glasgow City FC were the first Scottish club to reach the Quarter Finals of the UEFA Women's Champions League, and have reached the knockout stages for three consecutive seasons, despite having a much more difficult path to the latter stages of the competition than their English counterparts

(the Champions of the SWPL are required to enter the Champions League Qualifying Rounds, and therefore have to play several games before reaching the group stages).

ATTITUDES TO WOMEN'S FOOTBALL

There are several academic papers which have examined the attitudes towards women's football, and indeed women in football. Unfortunately, the attitudes which have historically followed women's football have often been quite negative. Pfister (2001) observed that one of the earliest beliefs surrounding women in football was that the sport "was not suited to the female disposition, looked anomalous and deforming, and therefore should be left to the male of the species". Thankfully this type of attitude toward female participation in football is no longer the norm, however, it could be argued that there is still some way to go in order to improve the views of women in football. Cox and Thompson (2001) observed that "women who play football consistently encounter the assumption that their participation in this sport is an indicator of their sexual identity, and that identity is homosexual. These assumptions seem to be based on a fallacious logic positing that women who cross socially constructed gender demarcations, by playing a sport that has historically been dominated by men, must somehow be 'pseudo men' defined in sexual terms. This assumption is also laced with large doses of misogynist homophobia that becomes part of the culture of sport and the ways women experience football".

Of course, the media can be particularly influential in representing sport as a resource for 'masculinity'. Portrayals of female athletes have differed significantly from those of male

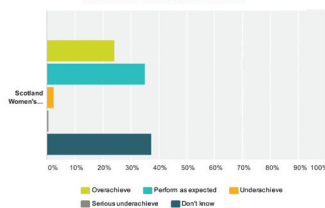
athletes in the media, with emphasis typically placed more on women's physical appearance and domestic relationships than on their physical action or achievements. While we are seeing less and less of this type of media reporting (Andy Gray and Richard Keys not included), it is important to note that the media can be extremely influential in helping to change the attitudes surrounding women in all sports, not just football.

Scotland

As can be seen below, there would appear to be a great deal of ignorance surrounding women's football in Scotland. While almost 60% of fans believe that the Scotland Women's national team is performing as expected or better than expected, there is still a large percentage of supporters (37.44%) who don't know how the Women's international squad is performing. As was mentioned earlier, Glasgow City Football Club had an excellent season in 2013/14, finishing the domestic season undefeated (with 20 wins and 1 draw), amassing a goal difference of +103 (only conceding 3 goals in the league), and making it to the quarter final stage of the UEFA Women's Champions League, where they lost 6 – 2 on aggregate to the ever impressive Arsenal Ladies FC. Incidentally, 2013/14 was the third season in a row that Glasgow City FC has made it to the knockout stages of the Champions League, and the second time they had reached the Quarter Final Stage. However, despite the excellent progress of Glasgow City FC in the Champions League, almost 53% of Scottish football fans indicated that they don't know how Scottish women's clubs are performing in European competition.

What also helps to demonstrate the lack of interest towards the women's game in Scotland also comes from the SDS National

HOW DO YOU RATE THE PERFORMANCE OF THE SCOTTISH NATIONAL TEAMS AND CLUBS?



	Overshine	Perform as expected	Undershine	Serious undershine	Don't know	Total
Scotland Men's National Team	6.75%	44.85%	39.18%	7.94%	1.18%	2,061
Scotland Women's National Team	24.39%	35.96%	2.59%	0.82%	37.44%	2,959
Scotland National Youth Teams	19.86%	45.25%	11.73%	1.14%	22.02%	840
Scottish clubs in Europe	3.17%	27.55%	40.85%	37.88%	6.89%	2,034
Scottish Women's clubs in Europe	11.89%	25.66%	7.61%	1.87%	52.97%	2,892

Football Survey (2014). When the survey went live on March 30th 2014, Scotland's women had played 4 matches of their World Cup Qualifying campaign, winning all 4 games and scoring a total of 20 goals (14 of which came in the first two fixtures against the Faroe Islands and Bosnia and Herzegovina) while conceding only 2. When the survey closed on April 28th 2014, Scotland had recorded a further 2 wins to move to top of their group with 6 wins in 6 games. However, despite almost being mathematically guaranteed to qualify from their group (or at least reach the playoffs), over 30% of supporters believed that Scotland would fail to qualify for the 2015 Women's World Cup in Canada.

FEMALE FANDOM IN FOOTBALL

Of course, female interest in football extends beyond the pitch. In a survey conducted by Football Insights (2012), it was discovered that nearly 60% of female respondents were active football supporters, while 11.1% were employed by football clubs and a similar number were involved as football volunteers. Love for the game of football was clearly evident, as 92.6% of respondents took part in football simply because they had an interest

in the sport . The results from the survey also showed that the majority of fans (54%) believed that football clubs did not engage effectively with their female supporters, however, it is uncertain whether these figures are comparable with those for male supporters.

The Football Insights survey also revealed that 41% of female supporters attended between 1 and 10 men's football matches each season and by and large enjoy the match day experience – with the majority of people ranking the match day experience at their clubs a 8/10 (31%) and a 7/10 (22%). This would indicate that these supporters are advocates of their clubs and would recommend the match day experience to colleagues. However, the biggest obstacles to attending matches from women were dominated by pricing of the match day and travel arrangements (44.2% and 34.6% respectively). Of those who do attend matches, 32% of people attended about a quarter of their team's away fixtures.

With the current emphasis in football of providing “fan friendly” stadia and a “family environment”, as well as the seemingly constant increase in ticket prices, it is becoming increasingly evident that football fandom has moved away from the hooliganism era of the 1980s. It isn't unreasonable to believe that this shift in ideology in football fandom has at least contributed to the increasing number of female supporters in Scotland. Pope (2011) discovered in her research that even in an era of globalization, localism is still an important factor in determining sports club support, with the majority of female supporters in her survey sample indicating that they supported their local team . However, she also observes that

it would be wrong to label female fans as ‘new consumers’ or ‘inauthentic’ as many female football supporters in her study demonstrated attitudes associated with ‘traditional’ or ‘authentic’ fans.

CONCLUSION

So what's next for women's football in Scotland? The data presented in this paper shows that women's football in Scotland is, unfortunately, largely ignored. This is especially disappointing considering the relative success of Scotland's women's teams, at both national level and club level, compared to their male counterparts. In order for change to occur, however, there has to be buy in from supporters, football officials, and the media alike, in order to help develop women's football in Scotland. Additionally, the negative attitudes which have historically surrounded women's football, and indeed women in football, need to be addressed in order for progress to be made.

With all of the controversy which has surrounded Scottish men's football in recent years and the absence of the Scotland men's national team from all major competitions since 1998, you would be forgiven for thinking that Scotland has entered a bit of a dark period in its football life cycle. However, with the success of the women's national team in the 2015 World Cup Qualifying campaign, the fantastic showing from Glasgow City FC in the Champions League recently and the increasing number of women participating and volunteering in football, perhaps it is time that Women's football in Scotland started to get the attention and recognition it deserves.

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