



WHEN SATURDAY COMES

Football - the theft of a game

Mark Gilman

The first couple of football seasons in England in the early 1990's saw a notable reduction in the instances of violence among opposing fans. Many reasons were cited for this from improved policing to a general post-Heysel, post-Hillsborough attitude whereby English football supporters have lost their appetite for violence. Others pointed to an introduction of a European 'fun factor'. This was a fanciful vision that featured inflatable bananas and East Londoners partying in fancy dress as their team lost 4-0.

The middle class have won yet another battle over the working class. They have stolen the people's game.

My own ethnographic research that covered this period pointed to another contributory factor. That was the increasing use of cannabis, ecstasy and LSD amongst some of the main 'lads' in some of the major football crews. In the early 1990's 'chilling out' with the aid of cannabis and other psychedelic drugs became more attractive than using large amounts of alcohol and running around the streets looking for fights with opposing football fans (Gilman 1994).

However, another key factor was also at work at this time and that was the cementing of the embourgeoisement of top flight football.

Changing contexts

This process of removing the game's traditional clientele (young working class men) was simultaneously supported by the police, the clubs and the newly-formed Football Supporters Association (FSA). The message to young working class males was plain and clear. Football does not want you or need you any more.

Football wants to clean up its image. Football is to be a family game. Football grounds should welcome women and children first. Who can argue against this modernisation of the people's game? Surely, it is progressive and good that women and children can go to the match without fear of being verbally or physically abused. Of course this is progress. However, progress always exacts a price.

In this case, the price is paid by the working class and in particular the young working class male. The pursuit of the family game acts as a code. What it really means is that football wants to recruit the middle class family. In 1978 John Clarke reminded us that "although football is our national game the history of its development shows a long and very deep connection with one particular section of the nation - the English working class"

Changing cultures

For over 15 years this working class has been pushed and pulled to the point

where it is difficult to recognise who they are. It is much easier to see who the middle class are and who the growing 'underclass' are but the working class? Where are they? Who are they? What do they think/feel? In the football context one thing is sure, the working class entrepreneur attitude has been dominant among football's 'lads'.

Being one of 'the lads' or a part of a 'firm' requires a sophistication of survivalist instinct that you just won't find amongst 'the shirts' or their friends in the FSA. By virtue of having earned the right to be recognised as one of your team's lads you will, by definition, know a rip off when you see one. Modern football supporting is nothing if it's not a complete rip-off. Paying out extortionate amounts of money to attend an event at which you are most unwelcome is the preserve of the clown in the £40 club shirt not the preserve of the lad in a £100 designer shirt.

Changing priorities

Moreover, there are now much more exciting things to spend your money on. There are other places where you can be lifted to the heights of passion and plunged into the depths of despair. There are more and more alternative leisure pursuits competing for less and less disposable income. If you took it seriously, and weren't a 'part time supporter', football was never a very cheap option. But, nowadays it is downright extortionate - and it's BORING!

Old Trafford, the home of Manchester United, was once a cauldron of noise. The 'theatre of dreams' was an electric place to be on match day. The atmosphere acted like a drug. Once you had experienced it you just wanted more and more. Nowadays Old Trafford is unrecognisable. On most match days the atmosphere is as refined and genteel as a Harrogate flower show. This fits perfectly with the new clientele.

As young working class males are policed and priced out of the game, their places are being taken by the middle class's new found love of this working class game. These new age football fans would never have queued up for 2 or 3 hours to stand on urine soaked terraces, surrounded by beery boys mouthing obscenities at the fans at the other end of the ground.

Theft of a game

In short, the middle class have won yet



Stuart Kenworthy: CRSS, Leicester



TALKING DRUGS

another battle over the working class. They have stolen the people's game. Where you once went to learn about growing up, meet new people and make friends for life you go no longer. Instead you watch the games on satellite or cable at home or, preferably, in the pub - with your mates. In the pub you can curse all you like, drink as much as you want and do all the things that your older peers used to do on the terraces when the game still belonged to the working class.

Nowadays, when Saturday comes, the smart working class kids get their real kicks out on the dance floor. This activity is fuelled, in most cases, by cocktails of illegal drugs often bought with the 20 odd quid they saved by not going into the match. Football is now a perfectly sanitised family game run by and for the middle class. Football has got rid of much of the trouble but in so doing it has got rid of the atmosphere that made the game so exciting in the first place.

The dance music scene is providing an alternative site where young working class men and women can meet people from an amazingly wide vista of different cultures. At the same time as football became ever more elitist, in the name of progress, the dance floors of the nation's house music clubs became ever more democratic. Football may not want or need the working class pound but the house music industry is more than happy to accommodate and entertain the masses.

It is interesting that one of the more popular cries of the DJ's or the MC's at raves was an encouragement to join in, to participate, to jump about and to: "Make Some F***ing Noise!" This at the same time as those middle class people in the sanitised seats at Football were saying, "Sit Down and Shut Up... Please!" Sort of says it all really doesn't it?

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Dr David Cowan, Director of the Drug Control Centre at King's College London, talks to David Kidd-Hewitt

Why and how was the centre established?

The initial involvement with drugs testing in sport began with cycling. The death of Tommy Simpson in 1967 prompted the British Cycling Federation to look at the misuse of amphetamines in the sport. Here at Chelsea we had good methods to detect amphetamine misuse. That's really how we got started. We were established as a Centre in 1978. We are the only laboratory in the UK accredited by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to analyse samples from sports competitors.

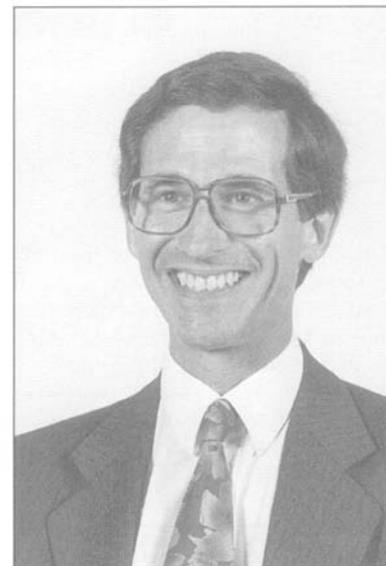
So are certain drugs banned in sport because they are illegal, because of the purity of the sport or because of the potential harm to the individual?

The philosophy is to deal with drugs which might be harmful when misused. There's an element of the purity of the sport, but it is the harmful side of drugs that is the prime consideration when most of them are banned.

Let's ignore for a moment those substances covered by the Misuse of Drugs Act because I think it's very clear about them. Let's go to the next phase: things like ephedrine. If the average individual is ill they stay in bed. If that individual is a sports person they don't stay in bed. They keep on exercising, they keep on running. Some diseases such as certain viral infections could be exacerbated if you don't treat them properly.

New medicines are tested on sedentary individuals not on exercising individuals. Plus the effect of a drug is usually dose dependent, so taking a huge amount of ephedrine is going to be equivalent to taking a smaller amount of amphetamine. Since most of the rules are qualitative - it's the mere presence that makes the offence - we have to ban ephedrine as well as amphetamine.

The reason we can't use quantitative limits for most drugs is that we work with urine samples not blood, and urine tells you what has been in the body, not what is in the body. The concentration of the drug in the urine is usually a very poor indicator of the effect of the drug in the body.



Dr David Cowan

Are you pro-active, looking for drugs that can enhance athletic performance so that you can assess their status and whether they should be banned drugs?

The rules used to say 'which could have the effect of enhancing sports performance...' but now it's realised that science and medicine are not refined enough to be able to show the differences. One per cent difference in a one mile race is a huge win, but we have to look for much bigger differences between drug and placebo before the drug can be licensed for use as a medicine. So I think it was realised at least ten years ago that this was not an appropriate approach.

Are there people working to find stimulants to supply to sports people?

We sometimes get that sort of feeling. I can't comment on particular cases. We provide evidence of the presence of drugs. We are not providing any evidence of intent.

So the sports person may have taken a drug innocently and you say it's there. But aren't you interested in whether they knew it was there?

It is an 'absolute offence' case. It was the Sandra Gasser case in 1988 in the High Court under Mr Justice Scott which decided this. The judge was persuaded that these rules were in the interest of sport, and that the absolute offence



TALKING DRUGS

principle was acceptable.

Sometimes I make a comparison with the drink-drive laws where you have an absolute offence when you are over the statutory limit for alcohol in your body whilst driving a vehicle. You can plead in mitigation that you thought you were drinking orange juice and someone spiked your drink. If you can provide evidence for that, the court is likely to be lenient but you are still technically guilty.

What about the quality of the testing? Is there a question of reliability in some cases because people are not following procedures? What about the Modahl case, for instance?

The Modahl case was a very special one, in that, in my opinion, it's questionable whether laboratory errors were at fault or whether the sample had degraded before it reached the Lisbon laboratory. I think it is important to understand that. The laboratory's responsibility starts when the sample arrives at our door, and our initial responsibility ends when we have issued our report. There will be a subsequent responsibility when we are called in for hearings. If a sample has been incorrectly treated before it reaches us we will try to reject the sample, and we are very strict. But I have to say that, on a number of occasions, the international body will come back, and say we want you to analyse it anyway, and since they are our clients we would do that, with certain provisos. We produce an analytical report, which will be scientific fact, and a covering letter, which will be our opinion.

What range of sport is covered by testing? I assume that Crown Green Bowls does not have drugs testing for example?

I think that there are some 360 governing bodies that we have dealt with at some time or another. The Sports Council does have a Drug Abuse Advisory Group and that Committee will decide which are the target sports. So if Crown Green Bowling wanted to do some tests, then the Sports Council would allow them a certain number a year, but I don't think they categorise Crown Green Bowling as a high risk sport.

Any penalties are imposed by the governing bodies of the particular sports, not the Sports Council. Sports are based on the club principles: if you want to be a member of the club you follow their rules.

Might there be instances of double jeopardy: you are disciplined by your sport's governing body, and then prosecuted by the CPS?

The Home Office and the Police take the view that the mere presence in the urine may be presumptive evidence of the formal possession of a controlled drug. But it is not used in the courts, not in the UK anyway. In some countries yes: you wouldn't get away with that, say, in Singapore. But the whole presumptive evidence approach is not one that is favoured in the UK. Perhaps just as well.

Are there some sports that are particularly involved with drugs testing? Is there a hierarchy of sport?

Yes, the Sports Council calls them 'risk sports'. In general terms power sports, power lifting, are in this group. Many sports competitors train in gymnasias where a lot of black market sales of anabolic steroids go on. Anabolic steroids are currently a prescription only drug, so it's the unauthorised sale, not the possession, which is the offence.

Now plenty of other people train in gymnasias, and there is concern about that. For example, studies done in America have shown that a number of American High School kids, about 6 per cent of males, have used anabolic steroids to impress their girlfriends. It is clear that they do not understand the different effects of anabolic steroids: they give you acne, azoospermia and shrinkage of the testicles. In the US they have become so concerned about anabolic steroid sales that they have made it a controlled drug under their regulations.

Do we do too much or too little drug testing?

In my opinion, the number of tests in human sports is trivial, much less than is done for instance in horse racing. World wide, only about 100,000 samples are tested each year. Many years ago I looked at the number of possible match play combinations in football in the UK. There were about 32,000, in that sport alone. In the UK we are testing about 4,500 samples a year.

And the positive results?

Between 1 and 2 per cent, and our findings are very similar to the other International Olympic Committee accredited laboratories. In the UK we feel we have got a fairly good system. A recent Sports Council survey showed that competitors think that as well.

When you test outside of the sports environment, is it literally random?

The British Athletics Federation have the aim of what they call 'nil notice testing'. There are trained sampling officers who have a particular protocol they have to go through, so that if you say it is not convenient at the moment it could be recorded as a refusal. Sampling officers use their judgement as to whether it's reasonable or not. They always avoid telephoning in advance, especially as top sports competitors will have their agents and won't speak to you on the telephone. And if you tell the agent it's



David Kidd-Hewitt

EURO HOOLIGANS

not 'nil notice' any more.

There is a difference between drugs that are banned out of competition and in competition. You have a cold and you have ephedrine; that's acceptable. If we found an ephedrine out of competition, we would still have reported it, by letter, but not for penalties. We would just point out that there was ephedrine in the sample and you would not want to find its presence at competition time. It's aimed to be helpful.

What about targeted testing?

I am very much in favour of targeted testing. You win a world record: you must be a logical person to be sampled. You suddenly put on a lot of weight, suddenly increase your performance: you should be sampled, in my opinion. Some international federations agree, others decide that 'random' has got to mean totally random. There should be nothing to fear: target me if you like. Provided you don't always try to get me up at an awkward time, or pull me out of a disco, or just make my life difficult, then I see no problem with targeting.

INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE MEDICAL COMMISSION

Prohibited Classes of Substances
and Prohibited Methods
January 1996

Doping contravenes the ethics of
both sport and medical science
Doping consists of:

1. The administration of substances belonging to prohibited classes of pharmacological agents and/or
2. the use of various prohibited methods

I PROHIBITED CLASSES OF SUBSTANCES

- A. Stimulants
- B. Narcotics
- C. Anabolic Agents
- D. Diuretics
- E. Peptide and glycoprotein hormones and analogues

II PROHIBITED METHODS

- A. Blood doping
- B. Pharmacological, chemical and physical manipulation

III CLASSES OF DRUGS SUBJECT TO CERTAIN RESTRICTIONS

- A. Alcohol
- B. Marijuana
- C. Local anaesthetics
- D. Corticosteroids
- E. Beta-blockers

Football, violence and Euro '96

John Williams

Italy and England: when football worlds collide

I was invited recently, on the tenth anniversary of the Heysel disaster (May 1995) to go to the Police Training College in Brescia, northern Italy, to talk about the 'revolution' which the Italians take to have occurred in English football spectating since 1985 and which, they believe, has radically changed the style of football spectating and the management of soccer crowds in this country. How had the English quelled their own formidable fighting gangs? How was order and safety maintained in the bright new English stadia? Could the Italians learn from the English about moving from a 'control' to a 'safety' culture inside the football stadium?

In fact, by the time I arrived in Italy Englishmen had already 'rioted' at an international match against the Irish in Dublin causing such disturbances that an England match was abandoned for the first time in the history of that country's football fixtures. Far right political organisations were popularly implicated in these events but, arguably such scenes also highlighted more general aspects of the troubling condition of English masculinity in the 1990s, (Williams and Taylor, 1994). English 'ultras', politicised or not, could still, clearly, 'perform' internationally, even though central aspects of supporter culture had been changing, in some ways markedly, in domestic club football in England since 1990.

Brescia v Cremonese

My hosts took me to see Brescia v Cremonese; a 'minor' local derby in Serie A. The Brescia stadium seems now quite old to British eyes, so used to recent major rebuilds, and it is beginning to show its age; it is graffiti-stained and is starting to crumble in places. Unlike at similar stadia in England, fans inside the ground are mainly unstewarded and they watch from open benches which are some distance from the pitch. Inside, everyone watches from behind a large, spiked groundside fence, which some of the visiting *ragazzi* spent most of the game

clambering up. Home fans are strongly segregated from visitors.

The Brescia stadium - and its organisation - would certainly fail safety criteria now routinely in force in England and would almost certainly not be licensed to stage matches in front of 'live' spectators. Eventually, the local 'ragazzi', clearly bored and itching for at least some action, gathered, first to pelt opposing players with rubbish, and then to move, unopposed and scattering other local fans, towards the Cremonese end of the stadium where they picked up whatever debris they could find - cans, plastic bottles, stones - and heartily tossed it over a line of inert police officers and into the away pens.

The Cremonese enthusiastically responded in kind, with other fans looking on, resignedly. Immediately after the match, virtually all the travelling and taunting Cremonese were dramatically whisked off to the local railway station in

Are we heading for a major hooligan-fest over the summer?

specially converted buses complete with wire grilles where glass might once have worked.

Now, let me make it clear that hooliganism of a more serious kind than this still occurs in connection with the staging of some football matches in England. It almost always occurs outside stadia now, does not always involve fans of the 'big' clubs by any means, and sometimes has a self conscious, 'semi-detached' feel about it. But the next day in Italy nevertheless, I told young Italian police cadets and the Italian press that what I'd seen had reminded me most of aspects of English football culture in the 1970s and early 1980s: poor and unsafe facilities, non-existent stewarding; ugly and dangerous fencing; unhindered mobility for young, disorderly fans inside the stadium; little crowd monitoring, management or deterrence; battle lines drawn between rival groups of fans inside and outside the ground; non-hooligan fans disturbed by the incidents; and an expectation and ritualistic acceptance, it seemed, that some young male fans were likely to want to 'engage' with rivals at some stage during the match proceedings.



EURO HOOLIGANS



Stuart Kenworthy: CRSS, Leicester

England, England

Such a shift especially in the management of supporters, perhaps not surprisingly, seemed almost unimaginable to my Italian hosts. 'But,' said one young police recruit, for example, 'the 'Ultras' won't accept stewards. No-one dares intervene in their 'show'; and what of the rights of fans who don't want CCTV? And, play without fences? Impossible!' Some of this will sound familiar to English ears. Some of it is also important; controls over the uses of CCTV and over police 'intelligence' at football, for example, are very necessary (Armstrong and Hobbs, 1994). In England, CCTV and the 'privatisation' of public space seems increasingly to be seen by administrative criminology as the answer to controlling or reducing violence in both public and private spheres with little real debate about the civil liberties or 'citizenship' aspects of such developments. Most football people also want young fans to put on a show, to create 'atmosphere' at matches, and they don't want excessive policing. But, increasingly, identifiable, cheaper, spaces for louder, younger male fans - the traditional football 'ends' - are being eroded, massaged away, by pre-ticketing and the new configuration of 'placeless sporting bowls' (Bale, 1994).

Supporters in England are already registering concern about the alleged passivity of crowds at 'new' football; about the determination of the sport to exclude 'undesirables' and to convert football into a product for high spending football 'customers', *not* supporters. Fan concerns in England, too, about the status and accuracy of police hooligan

'blacklists' and the effects at football of the new (1995) Criminal Justice Bill have some justification. But, most people at football also want safety and well-being for all spectators 'at the match'. Before the Hillsborough disaster in 1989 most police forces - and fans - in England would have echoed Italian scepticism about staging games without perimeter fencing. Now we, in England know that, in certain circumstances, such fencing can kill. UEFA is coming round on this, too. Also, some of the machismo associated with watching football in England, especially as an away fan, has been dissipated recently; this often involved 'blaming' hooliganism's victims for 'not knowing the score', or else an apparent willingness to endure the privations and threats of some football venues as an important badge of manly respect. Today, older fans and female fans are more common amongst most away followings in England and this is no simple post-Nick Hornby embourgeoisement; they are attracted by reasonable facilities, decent policing and the knowledge that simply being a visitor at some venues is not sufficient reason to be implicated in what were once routine struggles among 'the lads'.

Home fronts and national styles

So, will this do for Euro '96; a nation's sporting decency reborn? Not so fast. For one thing, patterns of *domestic* hooliganism are not always the best guide to the character of support for the *national* team. True, the Germans have domestic hooliganism, *and* troubling racism and violence which sometimes follows the

national team, even away from Germany. But Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, Portugal and Turkey for example, have, sometimes, serious domestic club hooliganism, but little sustained evidence that the *national* side of those nations attracts major hooligan problems, especially away from home. It is, intriguingly, the English position in reverse; here, in England, there are, at last, some really positive signs at club supporter level, but support for the national team seems to stand in denial of wider international decline; it remains a strong focus for aggressive, often bellicose, nationalism and racism, combining a cocktail of metropolitan viciousness and sharpness with a small town drunken and narrow patriotism and a collective, voluble and startling thirst for adventure.

And, be sure, these are no simple problems of misguided youthful excess; the image of 'typical' hooligans suggested by some social projects in continental Europe of directionless, rootless, vulnerable youths is difficult to apply to at least some members of many of the best organised hooligan 'firms' in England. Indeed, the frequent designation on the continent of the hooligan problem as one, generally, of 'youth' and 'youth cultures' seems much more difficult to fit to England, where serious hooligans are often men rather than youths. Older male drinking crews in England - based around local football clubs, neighbourhoods, pubs and bars, for example - seem only moderately, if at all, restrained in their post-20s search for excitement and 'honour' (Armstrong,

Support for the national team... remains a strong focus for aggressive, often bellicose, nationalism.

1994) by the supposed 'de-masculinising' responsibilities of partners and children.

So, are we heading for a major hooligan-fest over the summer? Well, cultural shifts in the sport in England (Williams, 1995), coupled with sophisticated and, in part, successful anti-hooligan strategies adopted by the British police, and the accelerating rise of lucrative informal leisure economies in Britain, have served to move on at least

THE THIN BLUE LINE

some experienced hooligans into booming sectors of the 'grey' and licit economy, where the material rewards for muscle and street smartness can be considerable (nightclub and pub private security firms, for example, have shown a massive growth in Britain even over the last five years), or into drug and dance related cultures and businesses. Also, there are signs that young working class men - excluded from football by price or by the game's new cultures or its marketing approach - are now locked into a largely symbolic relationship with football but may be becoming more deeply entrenched in cultures of disorder, crime and violence away from the sport (Campbell, 1993). There are depressing signs here, perhaps, of the terminally qualified 'successes' of sport in the USA, which has managed effectively to segregate the market for sport from the routine - and extremely serious - violence of massively alienated and largely workless working class neighbourhoods (Williams, 1986). However, in England this closure is still far from complete. Price, labyrinthine arrangements for tickets, and foreign discretion may keep some problems at bay at the stadiums in the summer. But away from the matches, can we be sure that our city streets and pubs and clubs will offer hospitality - rather than just heat - to our foreign guests? ■

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Policing English football hooliganism in the nineties

Eddie Bannon

Violence at football matches is as old as the game itself. Disturbance and disaster have periodically shadowed the beautiful game, reaching a crescendo in the mid-nineteen eighties when pundits and politicians alike talked incessantly about the 'terminal decline of our national game'.

The nineties saw the dawning of a new age. Surprisingly, professional football stepped back from the impending abyss. Three footballing catastrophes are commonly held to be primarily responsible for the revolutionary change in football supporters' behaviour and attitude to crowd violence, resulting in today's relatively well behaved fans. In May 1986 the Bradford fire claimed fifty lives and in the same year thirty nine Juventus fans died under a collapsed wall retreating from chasing Liverpool fans in the Heysel Stadium, Brussels. However the disaster that undoubtedly had by far the most searing impact on the nation's psyche was the carnage of Hillsborough in 1989. Unlike Heysel this was not some far off place in another country. This was not some 'other mother's son'.

Taylor reports...

The subsequent inquiry by Lord Justice Taylor resulted, among others, in recommendations for improvements in stadia.

Taylor noted that where perimeter fencing - erected to prevent pitch invasions but proving to be a death trap at Hillsborough - was to remain, it had to meet very keen safety standards with escape gates that would be left open. Taylor observed that nobody had died through a pitch invasion yet 95 people had died against a fence installed to prevent such an occurrence. Perhaps the most revolutionary and certainly the most

Quality picture portraits of hooligans can be instantly transmitted to other police football units in other parts of the country, or indeed Europe.

expensive recommendation of the Taylor report, was the call for all seated stadia; a medium term prerequisite for Premier League clubs.

The popular view that Hillsborough plus the implementation of Taylor's report is more or less responsible for the cleaned up, family orientated and prosperous English Premier League, is not a view shared by the men and women who police this country's professional football matches. Unlike the 'bobbies' of the eighties and before who volunteered for a bit of overtime and a chance to see a free game of football, the officers who police today's fixtures are likely to be hand picked, specially trained, and highly motivated. They will be supported and assisted by 'state of the art' technology.

Each regional police force enjoys a



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THE THIN BLUE LINE

football liaison unit with a specific inspector charged with the responsibilities of policing matches that fall within her or his patch. On Merseyside for instance, there are three major clubs, Everton, Liverpool and Tranmere. Each club has its own designated police football inspector operating within the football liaison unit. The unit is linked to the National Criminal Intelligence Service Football Unit (NCIS) which studies and stores relevant data. After every professional football game countrywide a comprehensive report containing facts, figures and of course documentation relating to hooliganism and any other useful information, is fed into the national unit. In turn, at the press of a button, a regional police football unit can call up all and any of the millions of information bits contained in the memory of NCIS.

Intelligence and surveillance

The preventative aspect of the unit is intelligence led. Information gathering and dissemination of the ever growing national, and latterly international, database is a key component in the fight against violent hooliganism. Cameras are utilised at every match to scan for known troublemakers. Closed circuit television (cctv) which can produce instant pictures or video footage of virtually every person in just about every location

We know who they are. Most importantly they know that we know who they are.

within, and immediately outside of the stadium, is installed at every Premier League club. The quality of the camera technology is first class. Known villains can be videoed along with anyone sharing their company. Transactions can be observed with a precision that is able to spot the denomination of a bank note from the far side of a football stadium. Quality picture portraits of hooligans can be instantly transmitted to other police football units in other parts of the country, or indeed Europe. For example, an Everton hooligan caught out on camera at Highbury watching Arsenal versus Everton might find Merseyside police waiting for him on his arrival back home. Alternatively he might be at Everton's next home game where his face will be



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scanned out from the crowd and matched with the mugshot from London.

This kind of detection is a major deterrent to perpetrators of violence at football matches. To quote Inspector Tom King of Merseyside Football Liaison Unit, "the fear of knowing you will be caught is the best deterrent of all. When anonymity is removed, opportunity is also removed". Complementing the high tech cameras, police officers known as 'spotters' relay information to the football unit policing a particular match. Spotters are at every game; they travel when the club is playing away, sitting in on the briefings of the host police unit. Their job, as the title suggests, is to spot their own home town villains. Dressed as regular supporters, spotters mix with fans around the ground and in the pub before the game; always listening, always looking. When the game commences the spotters - from the home and away club - are perched on top of a gantry or perhaps the roof of a stand looking through those powerful cameras - spotting.

Security and legislation

Today's policing of a football match is akin to a military operation. Radio, for information or command links every officer with the big picture. Playing an ever increasing role in the operation are the clubs' own stewards, trained by the police and totally integrated into the method and ethos of modern policing. The head stewards are also technologically linked by radio and computer to the command structure as well as to the emergency and

safety procedure of the operation.

Recognising bad practice and being able to do something about it are often two different things. In this regard new legislation has aided and abetted the policing of football matches. Regulations covering the movements, routes and parking of coaches have significantly lightened since the tragic fatal stabbing of a fan alongside the coach after last year's Aston Villa/Manchester United Coca Cola Cup match. Coach firms that do not toe the line are flagged up by the police to the traffic commissioners thus putting their licence at risk. Equally the legislation outlawing ticket touting is rigorously implemented by the police. Touting has always been a primary source of trouble as well as a common bane to the football bobby. Bail restrictions - pending court appearance - result in what amounts to at least a month's ban from the ground where the arrest was made.

A testing time

Communication with the fans by the police officers at the game is central to the new philosophy. A quiet word in the ear to 'cool down sir' is a far cry from the 'snatch squads' of the eighties. Meticulous briefing sessions where officers are 'wound up or wound down', to precisely meet the strategical requirements of that particular match and those particular fans, are an integral part of a successful operation.

So how did the police get by in the days before football units, new technology and dedicated football police officers? Inspector Ray Johnson, with



THE THIN BLUE LINE

some years' experience, holds a view consistent with a great number of modern football police officers. "I would hear the older bobbies talking of how they used to draw up the plans for policing a football match on the back of a cigarette packet. Write a few numbers and names down and toddle off to the game. They got away with seventy four thousand crowds at Goodison Park and sixty odd thousand at Anfield. They just got away with it. Then they didn't get away with it anymore. We started to have hooligan problems and football disasters and they didn't know how to cope."

Some police officers believe that the football hooligan has been forced to find another stamping ground, out in the community perhaps. Others think violence is still around, just under the surface, controlled but not banished. The view that football hooliganism is no longer fashionable, and therefore no longer with us to any significant degree, has little currency with police officers.

In deference to Hillsborough, and consequently Taylor, it appears the tragedy gave the police precious time to organise. The opportunity to take the initiative against the violent hooligan was seized, an initiative that will not be easily surrendered. This summer sees the finals of the European Nations' Cup, staged for the first time in England. Tens of thousands of continental fans will be heading for the south coast of England. From the north the Scottish droves will invade for the first time in over a decade savouring the clash with the Sassenachs. A test by any policing standard.

Intelligence is aware of neo-nazi activities among both continental and British clubs. Information that led to advanced knowledge of the neo-nazi organised riots at the Ireland/England game in Dublin of February last year still failed to prevent the chaos. Will we witness similar sights this summer in the stadia of our major cities? "I don't think so" a leading London police officer told me. "We know who they are. Most importantly they know that we know who they are".

Here's hoping the summer sees England's last line of defence still intact.

Eddie Bannon is a freelance writer.

EURO 96

Euro96 is the biggest sporting event to be held in this country since the 1966 World Cup and will take place in England between 8-30 June 1996. Sixteen successful nations will compete to be European Champions. Detective Inspector Peter Chapman, head of NCIS (National Criminal Intelligence Service) Football Unit looks forward to the European Football Championships this year, and talks about how they will affect police forces.

"With matches taking place in eight venues around the country it is anticipated that most police forces will be affected to a greater or lesser extent. There will be large movements of supporters travelling around the country, as each competing country will be required to play at more than one venue and it is expected that foreign fans will visit tourist sights when not watching matches.

The staging of such a major event involves a tremendous amount of forward planning. An Association of Chief Police Officers' (ACPO) working group, under the chairmanship of Assistant Chief Constable Malcolm George of Greater Manchester Police, has been meeting regularly for the past year to co-ordinate strategic planning. The National Criminal Intelligence Service is represented on this group.

Four other sub-committees have been looking at information technology, the media and specific issues for both senior investigating officers and police commanders such as a common prosecution policy, crime prevention, and a common policing philosophy for the venue grounds.

Intelligence will play a key role in ensuring the success of Euro96. The NCIS Football Unit already liaises closely with colleagues from law enforcement agencies in many European countries in connection with club matches that take place every season in European competitions and when the national side plays abroad. Our liaison and co-operation for Euro96 will build upon these excellent working relationships. Nationally, we have established an intelligence gathering network of football intelligence officers and 'spotters' who will be operating throughout the championships from New Scotland Yard. NCIS officers will evaluate and analyse intelligence received from foreign countries before sending it to police command centres around the country. One of the means of transmitting this intelligence will be by 'photophone'. The photophone is a still video image capture, storage and transmission system, which allows visual material - such as images of individuals, fingerprints, documents and passports - to be sent around the world."