CROWD CONTROL AND SAFETY: THREE LESSONS FROM EUROPEAN FOOTBALL

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[Slide 2] As a stadium enthusiast, it's a real thrill for me to be in Rome, home of perhaps the most famous stadium the world. I've never visited the Colosseum before – and thanks to 'print at home' technology, I already have my ticket.

The Colosseum is famous for the way its design and ticketing – bits of broken pottery – enabled the crowd to access, be accommodated and egress quickly and safely.

[Slide 3] Today's third and fourth generation stadia may be more sophisticated than the Colosseum, but the basic principles of crowd management remain the same.

My subject today is crowd control and safety. So what I want to do in this presentation is to share with you three important lessons from European football. My overarching thesis is this – listen up – that the wrong kind of security can be bad for safety.

[Slide 4] First, then, I want to deal with the linguistic problem of understanding the difference between safety and security so that you can maintain the right balance between their different requirements. Second, I want to explain how UK-style stewarding works so you can think about how to adapt it for your own jurisdictions. Finally, I want to demonstrate the success of the 'friendly but firm' policing style, which is challengingly counter-intuitive for traditional public order approaches.

[Slide 5] So let us begin by saying that there is a problem of language. La sicurezza; la sécurité; die Sicherheit; la securidad: in Italian, French, German and Spanish there is only one word to translate the two concepts of 'safety' and security'. The same is true of various other languages. This is important because it may be that the linguistic differences prevent a full understanding of the concepts. This is turn may inhibit stadium operations from optimising and maintaining a balance between both 'safety' and 'security'.

[Slide 6] So let me try and summarise the differences between 'safety' and 'security'. I think 'safety' starts with the design and maintenance of the structures so that they don't collapse or catch fire. It's about knowing how many spectators can be safely accommodated in each part of the venue. 'Safety' involves getting people in and out of a complex space in a short period of time. It addresses aspects of behaviour such as over-crowding, surging and climbing on structures. 'Safety' means being ready to deal with emergencies, including those which may require an evacuation. And the people who do the 'safety' work on the ground are of course the stewards.

'Security', on the other hand, refers to the 'policing' task, whether this is carried out by the public police or by private security staff. This addresses the prevention and detection of crime, the terrorist threat and the maintenance of public tranquillity. In the event of a serious emergency or disaster, 'security' takes over from 'safety' to clear up the mess and find out what went wrong. And the agents of social control here are both the public police and those stewards with 'security' duties.

Referring back to my central thesis, let me illustrate what happens when there is a lack of balance between these two essential elements. Please be warned that these slides contain images which some people may find disturbing.

[Slide 7] In this first example, 56 people burned to death trying to get out of the exit gates which had been locked to prevent people getting in without tickets. Great security – nobody could get in. Appalling safety – no one could get out.

[Slide 8] In the same year, 38 Juventus fans died when a wall collapsed. The stadium was dilapidated and unsafe, the segregation was badly planned and the policing was inept. Bad safety and security both.

[Slide 9] The nadir for England was in 1989. The pitch perimeter fence did its security job very well – nobody could get onto the pitch. But it was fatal for safety and 96 fans were crushed to death against it, unable to escape the crowd pressure behind them.

But let us not be under any illusion that these sorts of problems have gone away.

[Slide 10] No this is not Hillsborough but the Stade Felix Bollaert in Lens only last year. In the interests of containment, too many away fans have been squashed into one corner even though there are available spaces nearby in the away zone. People are being crushed and those who try to escape are being beaten. This is overzealous security resulting in disgracefully bad safety.

[Slide 11] I have no wish to offend our kind hosts here in Rome, but these scenes represent the same story. Those of you who have seen the video footage will remember that the police commander is seen trying to get his officers to stop their disproportionate and indiscriminate use of force on the fans.

[Slide 12] Finally, only a few weeks ago – and, I have been told, knowing what the fans planned to do – the authorities allowed large quantities of toilet paper into the stadium. When the fires got out of control, the continuous Plexiglas screen prevented most people from exiting onto the pitch to escape the smoke. Only a small number were able to climb over. As for the rest, there was uncontrolled crowd migration backwards to try and get away. Fortunately, there were few injuries, but it seems clear to me that inadequate access control couple with the security fences – both the wrong kind of security – were very nearly very bad for safety.

There are plenty of other recent examples. Many of you will have read Ian Drury's article on access control in the April edition of *Stadium & Arena Management* magazine. Ian reported that at last year's *Stadium & Arena* event, delegates were discussing the inadequacies of both 'safety' and 'security' at the 2007 Champions League final in Athens.

This year, both the UEFA Cup and Champions League finals went well as far as the stadia were concerned, although there was an attempted pitch invasion by the Zenit fans in Manchester. But there were certainly problems with the crowd at the fan park in Manchester, and I shall say something more about this later on.

[Slide 13] I mentioned that stewards can perform both 'safety' and 'security' tasks. Because the UK is widely regarded as having led the way, and because I know that various delegates here today come from countries which would like to make a success of stewarding, I want to highlight six points which I think you could find helpful.

[Slide 14] The first is this – make sure your stewards are smart and look the part.

[Slide 15] They need to provide a white shirt, black trousers and black shoes – not a t-shirt, jeans and trainers. You need to provide a good quality waterproof and reflective jacket and perhaps a clip on tie and protective cap – not just a shabby old tabard. If your stewards look professional, they will feel and perform better and be more likely command the respect of the fans.

[Slide 16] A professional appearance is an essential pre-requisite for moving from high profile policing to high profile stewarding, supported where appropriate by low profile policing. In the UK, we have seen the police and stewards change places.

[Slide 17] Most 'policing', inside and even around the stadium, is done by the stewards.

[Slide 18] Even for this high risk local derby, where the police presence inside the stadium was comparatively low key.

Many UK matches – and indeed several matches which I have seen in France – are 'police free', which means that there are no police at all in the stadium bowl, although they may be in the control room and at important points on the approaches to and from the venue.

[Slide 19]. My fourth point is that it is very helpful to have the support of stewards from the away club.

[Slide 20] Outside the ground, they can help with ticketing, customer care and access control. They know their fans and their fans should know them.

[Slide 21] Inside the ground, they can help supervise their own supporters. Of course the French system is that the away sector is treated as part of the away club's ground and is only stewarded by the away club. Any problems which arise are the responsibility of the away club and it is the away club who are punished by the League for any infractions. The French system has advantages and disadvantages but we will have to leave those for another day.

[Slide 22] There are various types of stewards. Some work in the car parks and others in the hospitality areas. Some have a fire prevention role and others look after the disabled. But the two main types of stewards cover the two main aspects of 'safety' and security'.

[Slide 23] In the UK, the security stewards usually wear a different coloured jacket, although there is no consistency in what the colours are.

[Slide 24] Rather obviously, the safety stewards do tasks like ticket checking and crowd monitoring, whilst the security stewards carry out searching and any necessary ejections from the stadium.

[Slide 25] In order to do these important tasks well, stewards must be competent, that is they must have the knowledge, skills and experience to do the job.

[Slide 26] The 'learning platform' for our stewarding qualifications are the eight modules in the *Training Package for Stewarding at Football Grounds*, of which it is my privilege to be the editor. Essentially, this is a Powerpoint presentation of 336 slides, delivering 56 topics, each of which has learning outcomes, trainer's notes and sample assessments. The duration of the classroom and practical training should be at least 20 hours, although I know that people do deliver it more quickly.

Having completed the learning and practiced their skills, the novice stewards are individually assessed in the workplace. Clubs are free to choose one of the available stewarding qualifications at Level 2 in the UK National Qualifications Framework and their successful candidates are then qualified as safety stewards.

Regulatory requirements means that private security stewards also have to be trained as 'door supervisors' – bouncers – and licensed by the Security Industry Authority. In-house security stewards are exempt, providing they have been trained in 'hands on' conflict management.

[Slide 27] In summary then, the UK system comprises the learning package, formal assessment at work, national qualifications and – for private security stewards only – additional training and licensing.

[Slide 28] Let me turn now to the question of policing style and why this is so important.

[Slide 29] If you are going to make a success of stewarding, I think that the fans' experience of social control needs to be consistent. If the police are harsh and arbitrary on the way to the ground, the fans will be unhappy and agitated when they arrive. It's now too late to try and steward them in a friendly and welcoming style.

[Slide 30] This is an English police force's first deployment to 'protect' a group of well-behaved away fans. My point is this: if you bring a peaceful group of fans to the stadium like this …

[Slide 31] Then you cannot welcome them like this – and this is the access control for the away fans at a high risk match on the final day of this season.

[Slide 32] So we're back to my thesis again. Oppressive security just doesn't go with safety and customer care.

[Slide 33] Let's look at how policing style has evolved over the years.

It's certainly true that in the UK, the historical concern was with football hooliganism. As a police officer myself in London in the 1980s, I remember to my shame how badly we used to treat football fans. We treated them all as a security risk and used inappropriate levels of force on them. I will always remember escorting one group of fans, manhandling them and verbally abusing them. A middle-aged man walking with his young son turned to me in obvious distress and said to me, "Why are you treating us like this". The truth is, his safety and comfort meant nothing to me – I only cared about security.

The 2000 European Championships in Belgium and the Netherlands saw two very different policing styles adopted. The Dutch set out to create a carnival atmosphere in which fans could enjoy themselves rather than to confront, contain and repress them. The Dutch police removed objects that might be thrown (such as tables and chairs) from town squares and arranged for local bars to serve low-alcohol beer in plastic glasses. They set up large sound systems to play popular music and, when fans became boisterous, they simply turned the volume up until people quietened down. The police presence was unobtrusive, friendly but firm if needed. This carefully planned approach resulted in no reports of serious problems.

The Dutch policing style contrasted markedly with the Belgium, where there were good examples of serious police over-reaction. In one notorious incident, Belgian police threw tear gas grenades into a crowded bar and indiscriminately arrested everyone inside. The deportees who arrived back in England included an American tourist and a Swiss businessman who just happened to be in the bar at the time.

What is significant here is that, of the two countries, it was Belgium and not Holland which experienced the public disorder.

This led the Dutch police scientist, Otto Adang, to begin work with English colleagues such as Clifford Stott to develop the 'friendly but firm' approach. The Dutch experience suggested that it worked, but the hypothesis had not been scientifically evaluated.

Adang and Stott's work began to be noticed. For example, the UK authorities were able to point to the Dutch experience to persuade the Japanese and Koreans to soften their own policing style for the 2002 World Cup.

The pair secured European funding and, by 2004, were able to carry out a large-scale scientific experiment at the European Championships in Portugal.

The police force covering the small towns and countryside – the GNR – adopted the traditional public order policing model – and experienced problems with public disorder. Meanwhile the urban police force – the PSP – policed the host cities using the 'friendly but firm' style – and had no incidents of any particular note.

[Slide 34] The experiment concluded that it was the fans' perceptions of legitimacy which was the key determiner of whether there would be serious disorder. If the ordinary fans perceive policing as targeted and proportionate, then the fans marginalize the hooligans and even start to police them themselves.

Conversely, where policing is perceived as indiscriminate and excessive, then the ordinary fans identify with the hooligans against the police. Those ordinary fans thus find themselves drawn into an escalating situation in which public order breaks down, property gets damaged and people get injured.

[Slide 35] In summary, then, the wrong kind of security can be bad for safety. And remember, once the police have lost it on the way to the ground, you have no hope of stewarding successfully at the ground.

[Slide 36] Notice the relative absence of police from the main square in Lisbon during Euro 2004.

I love this quote from a Portugese riot squad Commander which so clearly shows his realisation that the wrong kind of police intervention could itself be the cause of violence. "We have to be sure that we were not the cause, you see?" It is extraordinary to see this change of mindset from someone who must have been brought up with the traditional model of public order policing. But he had found out what worked best.

[Slide 37] So what are the elements of the 'friendly but firm' policing style? In brief, the seven elements first involve understanding the fans – how will the ordinary fans behave in your city? Whilst you want to keep a close eye on known hooligans, you must help the ordinary fans do what they legitimately came to do – not spoil their occasion with unnecessary controls.

Officers in ordinary uniform should make friendly contacts with the fans. Such officers should be ready to intervene to communicate when behaviour is getting out of hand and to explain what the police are going to do.

Absolutely key is that fan groups should be policed on the basis of their actual behaviour and not on their reputation. If a particular fan group has a poor reputation, of course you will have the appropriate resources available. But that does not mean you deploy them. And if you do deploy, you focus on the people who are actually misbehaving and you use no more force than is reasonably necessary.

The Portuguese PSP found that a four-level graded response for deployments worked very well indeed – in fact they never got to level four throughout the tournament.

Finally, you should make use of police officers from the visiting teams/countries as they will be able to tell you who the real hooligans are and whether the fans' behaviour really presents a risk. Visiting police can also make early interventions to advise fans about their conduct.

[Slide 38] As a result of Euro 2004, the European Union handbook on policing football matches was amended in two important respects. So some of you may now be wondering why there was still trouble at the 2006 World Cup in Germany. The underlying issue was political in that, for obvious historical reasons, the police forces from the Länder were reluctant to be told how to police by the police forces from the Bund. As a result, relatively little use was made of the visiting police from the participating nations.

Police in two cities adopted elements of the 'friendly but firm' style but did not do enough to intervene in the early stages of problems. In two other cities, the police adopted a more traditional policing model and – surprise, surprise – experienced greater problems as a result.

Please don't think that I am saying that there is no place for the deployment of the riot squad. Police in Manchester deployed riot police to deal with the violence at the fan park in Manchester at this year's UEFA Cup final. Even those politicians who initially criticised the police for over-reacting changed their minds after they had seen the CCTV pictures. The flashpoint may have been the large screen breaking down, but the subsequent violence was serious and had to be quelled –it was a 'level four' situation.

[Slide 39] If you want to know more about the 'friendly but firm' policing style, I would recommend this recent book by Clifford Stott and Geoff Pearson – I can give you the details if you come and find me at the *Stadium & Arena Management* stand. I can also give you details about my own three books on safety and security at sports grounds.

[Slide 41] To conclude, I've tried to share with you today these three lessons from European football.

[Slide 42] There are significant challenges ahead – particularly for Italy, for South Africa and for Poland and Ukraine. I hope that these lessons will prove useful for you as you prepare for these tournaments.