



Mark Roberts QPM

Deputy Chief Constable

Our ref: mr/ma

7 January 2021

By email to: [REDACTED]@efl.com

Mr R Parry
Chairman
English Football League
55 Blandford Street
London
W1U 7HW

Dear Rick

Re: Opportunities re security and tackling racism in football

I hope you are keeping well in these challenging times. Whilst the ongoing situation continues to present unique challenges, this current period without fans does offer us a window of opportunity to progress a range of options which I feel can make a major contribution to tackling racist and criminal behaviour at football. Each of these issues has previously been raised at various times by the UKFPU and myself but I thought it was an opportune time to brigade them and seek a consolidated way forward. I would welcome your thoughts and support in seeking to progress them.

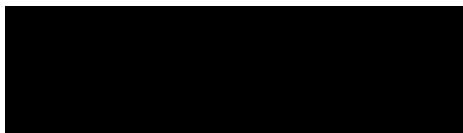
1. An information sharing agreement between the EFL and the UKFPU which allows you to provide us with details of incidents, disorder and racist incidents on a weekly basis in order that we can agree joint responses. This is particularly important as so many games are now police free and unless we have a common, agreed picture of issues then our joint efforts will be weakened. I do not feel such an agreement would be unduly troublesome to formulate given a focussed effort and would gladly have my Force Solicitor draft a proposal.
2. Building on this the UKFPU have previously offered to make one of their staff available on match days to provide an immediate link to policing for emerging issues. Where a match is police free and an incident occurs, the UKFPU could provide direct access to the local police force, briefings to the Counter Terrorism network in the case of a terrorist incident and a joined up media response to high profile incidents. This would support the above point as we would have a live time shared situational awareness.

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3. A League-wide approach to “club bans” to foster consistency, a more comprehensive sanction and a system which can have greater synergy with the Football Banning Order process for more serious offences and for lesser offences (particularly involving young people) the wide range of diversionary and education activity offered by forces across the country.
4. Working in conjunction with Kick it Out, a joined up approach to tackling racism both at grounds and on social media. It would be straightforward to agree a mechanism for the reporting of on line abuse to the UKFPU’s dedicated officer if we can agree effective thresholds and protocols which would enable us to take prompt and effective action against offenders which would send a powerful message. Kick it Out are keen to progress this approach and I do feel it is the single most effective measure we could collectively take. If we could agree to have a UKFPU representative working with you on a match day it would also allow us to ensure forces are sighted on, and react to, racist incidents at the time. Post event investigations are more challenging and are less likely to succeed than when an offender can be identified and apprehended at the time.
5. Linked to the above point I would be keen to explore a single reporting mechanism for racist incidents. Currently reports go to forces, leagues, Kick it Out, clubs and Crimestoppers to name the obvious ones. This inevitably leads to confusion on the part of the public, fragmentation of the information and inconsistencies in response.

I believe the above measures would provide a significant enhancement to the current position and tangible measures to tackle racism. I would welcome your views and ideally support for these proposals. As fans return I believe there will, rightly, be an increased focus on tackling racism in football and it is incumbent on us all to take every available measure to combat its threat.

Yours sincerely



Mark Roberts
Deputy Chief Constable
NPCC Lead Football Policing & Covert Legislation and Guidance

Cc: Mr M Johnson, UKFPU