

Stewarding

There have been issues and concern raised about stewarding and match security on social media and message boards from March onwards. The Co-op met with the Club on 20th June to discuss these issues.

In attendance:

Rick Simkin – Director of Operations
John Giles – Vice Chair
Ian Brown – Communications
Paul Thompson

The Club provided a briefing that they and their employees have experienced a high number of incidents which have involved a considerable amount of alcohol, cocaine usage or a mixture of both. There has been issues with coins being thrown, spitting, smoking and use of marine grade flares, which burn at extremely high temperatures and are very dangerous if thrown. Anyone caught with a flare could receive a banning order of up to 3 years.

The Co-op raised the following questions;

1. Can the Club investigate the incident at the Solihull game on 18th April? We would like CCTV of this incident to be checked and made available to Co-op board members for independent verification.

There was a very serious incident at the Solihull game, which has resulted in a one year banning order and a police caution for the individual.

The incident was captured on CCTV and has been investigated by the police, they are satisfied with how the incident was handled. The Club cannot allow the Co-op to view the recording due to GDPR compliance.

2. Can the Club ensure that all stewards and security staff employed by Praetorian Security Solutions or any other agency, wear, and display SIA identification badges clearly, regardless of whether this is a legal requirement or not?

There are a minimum of 45 stewards required on a match day. The Club are using two agencies; Pretorian for the Cheadle End, who are also utilised by the EFL and Ultra Sec for the away supporters.

The Club have a minimal police presence, because of the robust stewarding and security operation in place. It is expected that around six games will need to be policed next season.

All SIA accredited security staff must wear their SIA identification number on their arm or on a lanyard around their neck. Stewards need to hold a minimum of level 2 in Crowd Safety.

All stewards are expected to provide their name, if requested by a supporter.

3. Can the Club publish a Code of Conduct that stewards and the security team are expected to adhere to and ensure that this is compiled by all members of staff?

The Club can publish a Code of Conduct for stewards and Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), which will be available on the website and will be on display inside and around Edgeley Park. This will advise how stewards can be identified and their level of authority, reporting structure, complaint procedures, timescales for responses, etc.

4. Can the Club provide assurances that all supporters will be treated with respect and that excessive and unreasonable force will never be used in any situation?

The number one focus is on Customer Service and the Club provide regular training to all stewards and security staff. The Club can provide assurances that excessive and unreasonable force will not be used in any situation.

5. Is the Club responsible for monitoring / managing security team? What is the reporting structure?

Rick Simkin, Director of Operations heads the match day security operation. The Ground Safety Officer reports into Rick Simkin. Head Stewards report into the Ground Safety Officer.

6. What standards are the security team trained to and what licences and badges do they carry? What checks and balances are in place to ensure that third party agencies are conducting themselves to expected standards required by the Club?

The security team are accredited to SIA standards and are fully CIB checked.

County have invested £17,500 in steward training and look for stewards to be trained to the required mix of level 2, 3 and 4 standards.

7. What is the complaint / grievance procedure for supporters? What is the reporting structure? Can supporters approach the Head Steward if they have any issues?

Supporters can write directly to Rick Simkin at richard.simkin@stockportcounty.com.

On a match day supporters can complain to the stand supervisor or manager.

8. What is the timescale for complaints to be investigated and a response provided?

The Club would normally look to respond within 2 working days.

9. Is the security company a permanent fixture at Edgeley Park? What is the reason the Club is using a third party security company, we've never had this in place at Edgeley Park before?

The Club need a minimum of 45 stewards on a match day. The process of recruiting employees is very difficult and out of 50 applicants, around 10 to 15 will attend a trail/shadow shift and only 2 or 3 will take up the role. We will also get no-shows on the day which is why we need to work with trusted third-party companies who have a greater amount of resource.

The match day safety and security operation needs to meet the requirements of the Safety Advisory Group.

10. Can the Club use their own in-house stewards, rather than a third party security company?

The Club doesn't have the resources or ability to recruit the numbers of staff they require to take stewarding completely in house but this is a primary, and ongoing, focus of this department to grow as much in-house as logistically possible.