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Steve Fanthorpe: My name is Steve Fanthorpe and I'm 55.

Interviewer: Could you tell me what your association is with Stevenage Football Club?

Steve Fanthorpe: I'm the safety officer for the football club.

Interviewer: Okay. That's great. Thank you. I like to start, though, by going back to your earliest memories of football if that's okay. Can you tell me when you became conscious of football? Is there any memory of when you became conscious of football?

Steve Fanthorpe: I think probably watching the FA Cup Final with my dad. That was probably the first time that I got to understand, that there was such a game as football. Then it was whichever team was the allegiance at the time. My family are all from North London. If you go back probably a generation and a half, there were 11 children in the family. Half of them lived in Edmonton and the other half lived in Islington. So it was fairly obvious that half would support Tottenham and the other half would support the Arsenal. I fell into the Arsenal half of them. So I can remember

things from there. Also my father was a gooner. They were called gooners in these days.

Interviewer: Did your dad go regularly to the football?

Steve Fanthorpe: No, not really. He wasn't a football goer as such. We did go to the 1971 game against Tottenham, where obviously Arsenal won the league double, but I don't recall ever really going on a regular basis to football with him.

Interviewer: Was that the first match that you went to?

Steve Fanthorpe: No. The first match that I can recall was, funnily enough, here. I think about 1963/64. I do remember it as I thought we were going to the FA Cup, but that was my dad's way of bigging up the day, but we came here and I do remember we played Shrewsbury Town. My late mother, in her effects, she still kept the rosette that we had, the red and white rosette with the little silver horseshoe for good luck in the middle. So that's probably the only time that I've actually been to the ground prior to the odd game, because I moved away from Stevenage and then moved back to Stevenage. During my senior school days I was living in Luton. So Luton was the team I would support really.

Interviewer: When you were watching on the television was it black and white TV, on fuzzy screens, to start with?

Steve Fanthorpe: Yes. Of course it was in black and white. It was in the days when the whole of the day was taken up from early morning. We used to always watch BBC1. The early morning one and people being interviewed going down Wembley Way. It used to be just my dad and I watching it. Good memories.

Interviewer: Did your mum watch?

Steve Fanthorpe: No. I don't know where she was. I suspect she was in the town somewhere shopping. I was an only child so it was just my dad and I would sit there and watch it.

Interviewer: Can you remember the first time you watched a football match on a colour TV?

Steve Fanthorpe: It was 1971. I think colour had not been out that long. A friend of ours in Wales had a colour telly. We'd actually watched some of the Commonwealth Games; was I think the first sporting event that was in colour and we watched that. In those days you hired tellies didn't you? You didn't buy them. We hired a telly. I was working then. As part of the deal, to get a colour telly, was that I'd help to pay for the rent. So after that we'd get to watch it in colour.

Interviewer: Right. That's interesting.

Steve Fanthorpe: You're making me feel old now.

Interviewer: Yes. That's not the intention. Did you play football at school?

Steve Fanthorpe: A little bit. Not a great deal of football. I wasn't particularly sporty. Let's put it that way. Despite my size now I was quite slight when I was at school, and they threw you in at the deep end. I can remember freezing on the pitch playing rugby. Then this great big oaf of a boy took me out. I thought, "I don't like this." Cross country running, those are the things that scar you for life I'm afraid. So I've been really more an armchair supporter.

The two main teams that I support is the Arsenal and funnily enough Manchester City. The reason for that is my dad got me tickets to the Man City/West Bromwich Albion league cup final, at Wembley. That was the days of Franny Lee and Mike Summerbee and Geoff Astle, who's unfortunately passed away now. Manchester United won. So, of course, you went with the team that won in those days. I think that was 1969 something like that but it's amazing now, from a social history point of view, that my dad dropped me off at my grandmothers in Harrow and I got the bus from Harrow, I must have been 14 or 15, to Wembley. Went to Wembley, watched the game, came back out, got on the bus, and went back to Harrow. You wouldn't want to do it today would you?

Interviewer: No you wouldn't but you went on your own.

Steve Fanthorpe: Went on my own. Sat there and watched it. Watched a few England games there because we got tickets.

Interviewer: How did you get tickets? Was it your dad buying tickets?

Steve Fanthorpe: My dad bought the tickets. I've been to one England international.

Interviewer: Does it make a difference supporting your team and supporting your country?

Steve Fanthorpe: I'm not sure. I think when you're with a team, because you're there week in week out, that's more inbred. It's more ingrained into you. I think you can fall in and out of love with a national team, depending on how they're playing and who's playing in them. I don't think even on the real bad times you can't fall out of love with your club. It's just the way it is. As they say you're a supporter until you die.

I have split loyalties as well. So I'm a very complex person. Football I support England. Half my family are Welsh. Rugby I've always supported Wales to the consternation of the people in my street this weekend, because I've had the Welsh flag up since we started on the rugby union. So that's the way I've always worked, but England's obviously the team that you would support and the English flag does go out, when they're playing in football but not in rugby.

Interviewer: Do you still go to games?

Steve Fanthorpe: No, in a sense that I don't actually go as a member of the fan base to clubs. I work here. I work at the Wembley National Stadium and I do assessing of stewards. So those are in a way paid visits to clubs. Certainly I can't remember the last time I actually went through a turnstile. Being a member of the Football Safety Officer's Association, we've got 96 football league clubs. So I've only got to pick the phone up and say, "Can I come along?" "Oh yes. You can come and sit with us in the control room." This job can be quite hands-on at times so it's a bit like a busman's holiday. You never watch the football. You watch the stewards all the time.

I had just taken my exams to be a safety officer, and as I say I work at Wembley and I work down by the tunnel. The story goes that he was the safety officer at Bristol City, and we'd been on the course together. He rang me up and he said, "You owe my wife a new dress." I said, "I've never met your wife." He said, "That's not the point." I said, "Why?" He said, "Well we were watching the England game and she had a glass of wine in her hand. The camera panned and they went past the tunnel." And there's me standing as bold as brass in the tunnel. "I know him." So she said because she's got the glass of wine that's gone over everywhere.

We were saying you can ask any of my stewards when they watch a game, "Did you watch match of the day last night?" They'll always say, "Did you see those stewards in the corner? Did you see what they were doing?" It's a sad thing. We just do. We get embroiled in that.

Interviewer: So can we turn now to the job. Can you tell me how you got involved in football from your perspective? Is it something you started out doing?

Steve Fanthorpe: No. My background was in sales. I got to a point in my career where I seemed to be doing sales, sales, and sales, nothing else. It was not seven days on but near enough. Saturdays were taken up with paperwork and all the rest of it. I sat down with my wife and I said, "I really need to find a hobby." I was just looking through the paper, and a very tiny advert in the corner of the local paper said, "Stewards required for Stevenage Football Club or Stevenage Borough." So I thought, "That would be alright. I don't mind football. Get me out of the house." The major thing was to get away from the office, I worked from home, which I did.

I think it was about 1997 or '78 something like that. Popped down here, saw Keith Glazebrook, who you have already interviewed because I've just escorted him off the premises, spoke to him, he showed me around and I started the following Saturday as a steward.

Interviewer: Right. What training did you get for that?

Steve Fanthorpe: Very little at the time. He gave me a grounding on the safety aspects and also the call signs and what's expected, because I remember one of the questions was, "What happens if there's a fight up in the terraces? What am I expected to do?" His answer to me was, "You do nothing. You're not paid to go up there and have a fight. That's what we have police officers for." So there was just the basic training but we're talking 10/12 years ago. Things have moved on quite a lot now. We do have NVQ courses, NVQ 2, 3 and 4. NVQ 2 is for stewards. NVQ 3 is for supervisors and NVQ4 is for safety officers. We now run, every year, an NVQ course because part of the football league

requirements, is that all stewards should either be working towards or have got their NVQ 2.

Interviewer: Right. So Stevenage runs the course.

Steve Fanthorpe: No. The courses are run by an outside agency. I, over the years, have foraged relationships with different organisations. When the NVQs first came out there was an awful lot of money floating about. It was the government's initiative to train everybody, to give them a certificate in whatever field they were in. That was a good idea on paper but everybody got on that bandwagon. There were an awful lot of assessment groups and different things set up. It drained, not this recession, the recession before, a lot of the funding. Your organisation will have felt the effects of that as well.

So now I go round to different colleges and universities and say, "Have you got any money to fund it otherwise we've got to pay for it ourselves? This club wouldn't be able to afford it." So at the moment, for the last two years and this year, we've used Telford College. They found a pot of money from somewhere and they come to me and say, "We've got this pot of money." Obviously the way it works is they would then get that back through the government funding. So they do the training and they also do the assessing. I assess but for different companies because it's something different.

Interviewer: Yes. It's quite a long way to go to get your stewards trained isn't it?



Steve Fanthorpe: It works out there's 16 hours of classroom training and then you've got the assessments, by obviously an assessor, over a two or three game period. Once you've got your 16 hours under your belt, which is in six modules, you've basically covered the basics. It gives you the competency to go out and do the job, and then it's basically on the job training because every week, every game, is different. You learn something. Even I do, even now. I've been safety officer four years. You come away from certain games thinking, "I must remember that for next time." Because it's different.

Interviewer: Absolutely. Can we go back to when you first became a steward then? You said that the one thing that you were clear about, is that the expectation was that you wouldn't go up into the stands and fight, but what were the expectations of things that you should be doing as a steward?

Steve Fanthorpe: The expectations were, to me, that it's customer service as much as anything else. Look to keep people safe. Keep an eye out for young children, and make sure they're not getting crushed or anything like that. The crowd dynamics are quite an in depth subject anyway, and learn not only how people move about but the type of people you've got in your particular area. So that was the major thing. You were there as the focal point. If somebody didn't know where the toilets are, they didn't know where to go for something to eat, then you were the person that you could talk to about that.

You do and still do have to go up and have a quiet talk to a few people. Depending on, what I call, how compliant they are with that particular discussion is whether they stay in the ground or not. As a safety officer that's my decision to make finally,

though I'm a great believer in giving the supervisors the responsibility because I can't, even in that control room now with all the cameras, see every part of the ground. I can't deal with everything. So I've said to the stewards or the supervisors, if you decide that there's reason to eject someone and you eject them, without asking me, I will back you up to the hilt. When the doors are shut I might say to you, "Perhaps you should have waited a little bit, but I would never ever..." because they have got the responsibility and they are a good bunch. They've got the responsibility to make that decision.

Generally speaking because the ejection of people tends to be fairly irregular, it's not a thing we do every week, I tend to be involved in it straight away. They will then say to me, "This is what's happened. I've told them this. He's said that. I believe he should be ejected." I say, "Well based on what you've told me let me put the cameras on you, get a few more bodies around and then effect the ejection." In general terms they do go. If they don't we ask the boys in blue to come and help us.

Interviewer: How easy, when you first started out, did you find it judging the crowd?

Steve Fanthorpe: It's such a long time ago now. One of my first memories I was absolutely petrified because, like most of us, we're doing it for the love of the game so you want to do well. Then somebody up high puts you in the brightest jacket they can find, so you can be pointed at and pointed out, but then it becomes a shield as well. You feel a bit safer because you've got it on. I think it's an instinct.

I work at Wembley. I see somebody come into the VIP area and I'm thinking, "You're not meant to be in here." Nine times

out of ten when I ask them for their tickets they haven't got them. You get that sixth sense. You've always got to be very thick skinned, because the way people talk to you and treat you is not pleasant. Though I do say to the guys when we have the briefings and we've had a particularly, the debrief, hectic game, those same people if, God forbid, something was to happen in this ground would be asking you to save them before anybody else, because basically they're bullies but you just have to say, "Okay this is how we deal with it."

Interviewer: Can you tell me then how you got to be part-time steward, just doing the job for a hobby, to safety officer?

Steve Fanthorpe: In essence I think, without being too big headed, I've got the aptitude to do it but also I do recognise I was in the right place at the right time. I was here for a certain period of time and then Keith obviously saw something in me, and I remember turning up one day, picked up the orange jacket, and we used to sign in, in front of him, he said, "You've got your wrong jacket on." I was quite perplexed. I said, "No this is my jacket. It's 53." "No." he said, "I want you to put a supervisor's jacket on." because one of the supervisors couldn't make it. So through that season that's what I tended to do.

Then at the end of that season, because I used to do the car park first and then used to come in. Then unfortunately the car park supervisor, who'd been ill for a long time, passed away. I was asked would I go and do that. So I used to do supervising out there, change jackets, and come in. Then they thought, "Well that's a bit silly." So I became the supervisor out in the car park and then I come in and I do the West stand. So I was then by hook or by crook permanently a supervisor.

Keith left. Sean took over as safety officer, made a few changes, and said to me one day, "Would you like to be deputy safety officer?" My immediate reaction was yes but I said to him, "Yes but I'd like to think about it over the weekend." I remember him saying to me, "I thought you'd say that. Let me know Monday." So that's what happened. I went home and I said to my wife, "You wouldn't believe what's happened. They've only asked me to be deputy. Do I want to do it?" and all this. Then I said, "Yes." Then he said to me, "Of course then you've got to go on a course to take your NVQ 4, and you've got to become a member of the Football Safety Officer's Association." I'm thinking, "Hang on a minute. This is all starting to get a little bit too heavy."

There was a little bit of resistance within the group, because there are people here that have been here longer than me. There was a gentleman that was like a pseudo deputy safety officer who felt marginalised, and in fact he wouldn't talk to me for about three games because we were trying to work together. In the end as is my want I said, "Look we want to go into a room and have a quiet word." We came into one of the rooms here and I said to him, "We've got to work together. If you've got an issue it's not an issue with me. I'm still the same guy as I was last week. Sort it out with the safety officer." He went to see the safety officer and got no backing from him, so he decided to leave. That's how we run.

I was deputy safety officer. He was a safety officer. He was also the serving fireman. He got a promotion to a station commander and he couldn't do both. Then I had to apply to become the safety officer. They did ask, I understand, other people which put my nose out of joint a bit because I thought, "I'm already here. Who's going to train the safety officer?" There's a protocol that goes with this. There was a particular game where the safety officer finished, and at half past four on

the Saturday night when the game finished at quarter to five, the Chief Exec came in, slapped me on the back, and said, "Hello Mr Safety Officer." So that's how I got it. It was a gradual move up.

You talk to a lot of safety officers, and I was at a premiership club doing some assessing on Tuesday night, I know the safety officer very well, she was exactly the same. She started off as a gate steward many years ago. Obviously there are people that suited to move up, and there are other people that are quite happy to stay put. She widdled her way up and now she's safety officer at a premiership football club.

Interviewer: At this point did this mean giving up your main job? Had you given up sales by this point?

Steve Fanthorpe: No. Again this job is not full-time. It seems like it but it is not. My contracted hours are slightly fuzzy on the sides, but I do Saturday and then I'm supposed to do a full day, but that full day can be over the week. I do have protocols to come in on a Friday. I do testing the alarms here and in the other buildings, do a walk round the ground and make sure everything is safe. Then match day I'm in here at 9 o'clock and I leave at 7.

So I get a salary for that, but Tuesday I'm at the police station at a strategy meeting for the Sheffield United game. Next time the Chief Exec will ring me up, "We've had a slight problem overnight. Can you come and look at the CCTV camera for us, and go through those to see if we can find what silly Billy's done over the \_\_\_[0:24:24]." So it's not full-time. It's certainly not paid full-time but it takes up quite a lot of time, depending on what other things are doing, because I've also got all the wages to do for the stewards, the deployment, signing them in

and all of that. So there's quite a lot of paperwork. That's before the FA get involved and the Football Licensing Authority, and the Safety Advisory Groups.

Interviewer: So there's a lot of goodwill working it sounds like.

Steve Fanthorpe: Oh yes there is. I think that's indicative of the lower leagues anyway. Some of your colleagues will have interviewed stewards that started here long before me and did it for free. You've got the spectators at the hard core and you've also got the stewards. They don't get paid a lot of money and I've put that on record before. They don't get paid a lot of money. They do it for the love of the club. So from that point of view it also produces very good, loyal, stewards.

A lot of other clubs, particularly in the higher leagues, use contract stewarding. Yes they're paid better. They're trained the same but I don't believe, and I deal with a lot of them at Wembley, they don't go the extra mile for Wembley Stadium. They certainly wouldn't go the extra mile for Stevenage Football Club. Mine do. I can ask them to do things. I don't think they would do it if they weren't in love with the football club, not the job. There's a line there.

Interviewer: Do you feel that, although you're not getting paid necessarily for all the work you do, the club takes care of you in other ways that makes this worthwhile? You don't have to answer that if you don't want to.

Steve Fanthorpe: No. I'll leave that one.

Interviewer: Okay. Fair enough. Can we turn to then the stewards themselves, the people in your employ, the people that you supervise, can you say to start off with what qualities do you look for? Presumably you do the employing.

Steve Fanthorpe: I do the employing. I do the interviews. What we're looking for, and there are two major things, one is we're looking for people they're temperament must be that they're calm. We do have the odd one that has tried to join us- and there's a lot of intelligence goes on as well with regards to I can talk to other stewards. I quite like, when we need stewards, putting it out into the stewards domain, "I'm looking for people." because if I get a personal reference it's- but I also get ones where, "I understand so and so is coming up for an interview. Did you know that...?" So from that point of view looking for people that have got a good temperament, that are not going to go wading into the crowd and gung ho and all the rest of it.

On the other hand you don't want shrinking violets because it is a stressful job at times. There is confrontation. Not always violent confrontation but verbal. You'd have to turn that off if I told you all the things I've been called over the years. It's not nice and even I get angry at times, but you have to put a smile on and you have to take it on the chin. Those are the physical qualities and the other one is I need reliability. We have around about 50 stewards. Rules and regulations require me to have between 44 and 48 stewards on most games. There are rules to this. I can't afford people not coming every week.

I have had a little system. If they do 100% by the end of the season, because I have it all logged down, the very nice safety officer buys them a bottle of champagne and a box of

chocolates for their wives. It's only a little incentive but it's there. I can't sack people because they're not on a contract, but I can not invite them back again. I quite often do if they drop me in it too many times. The bit that gets me is Friday afternoon to tell me they've had a bad back all week, or it's Friday "I've got the flu. I won't be in tomorrow morning." I haven't the time to get anybody else in should I need them.

So as we are a little group, all for one and one for all, they've not only let me down, they've let all their colleagues down, people who are actually out in the coalface because I'm stuck up in a nice warm room. So for me it's a case off when it's pouring down with rain and they're all wet, but one of them has got to run around doing two jobs because somebody hasn't turned up, possibly because he saw the weather. No. We can't have those people so I won't have them.

Interviewer: What do you expect specifically from the stewards?  
Presumably they watch the crowd...

Steve Fanthorpe: Yes. The job is to watch the crowd, to be aware of anything untoward. That's not only the crowd. Keep an eye on the burger bars. You might see something that's not quite right there particularly with fires and things like that. So be alert but also they have to, in a way, keep an eye on the pitch as well. We have designated stretcher bearers. So they need to be aware when a player goes down, for the physio to say to come on but also, and I have had experience of this, when you're hit with a football that's been kicked from a player it hurts. So if you're on the perimeter fence I get the stewards to go side on. So they can keep an eye on the game so if it comes towards them they've got half a chance to get out of the way. Obviously



what we don't want is them standing there watching the football.

Interviewer: Do they?

Steve Fanthorpe: Only the once do they do it. They take the walk of shame up to my office. I will do it if it needs be. I will get the supervisor. We can see all. If I see a steward standing there watching the football, and literally just watching the football, I get the supervisor, "Could you ask so and so to come to the control room." They know. It's as much a punishment to do the walk of shame, because everybody else knows he's walking towards the control. He's in for a telling off. I just bring him up and I say to him, "Do you know why you're here?" "Yes." "Are you going to do it again?" "No." "Away."

Interviewer: That's as much as it takes.

Steve Fanthorpe: That's all it does. It's something I've worked on over the years because I praise to the multitude and I tell off to the singles, although there are other people in the control room. They're all individuals so you have to deal with people. You do become a little bit of a mother superior as well, because I get told all sorts of personal problems and taken into their confidence, for a number of reasons. One it could be the fact that it does mean it impeaches on their ability to work a particular week, things like childcare and stuff but there's also a sounding board that I'm away from the family. I don't know whether it's a compliment to me or otherwise but I sit down with...

Mainly if it's the ladies we'll talk about marital issues. They'll come and, "Can I have a quiet chat?" We sit up in the control when everybody's gone and we talk. That is on a one to one. We just talk things through and hopefully they leave a little bit with the burden taken off of them. That's the side of the safety officer's job that not many people know about, because it's not seen.

Interviewer: What is the gender mix for your stewards?

Steve Fanthorpe: The gender mix I think is close to 60/40. In fact I get more ladies asking to become stewards these days than I do guys, but I have to keep a balance because at the end of the day there are some big fellas out there. My prime concern is the safety of my staff. As I say to them I would never put them, knowingly, into a position that I wouldn't want to be in myself. So I do pull them out if there's a particular issue. I do try and protect them, but having ladies is good in one respect purely because of their femininity. Big strapping lads are not going to wade in. That's been proven over time. A lady smiles, asks them to calm down, generally speaking they'll do it, whereas a bloke doing it he'll say, "Come on then if you think you're big enough."

On the other side of the coin they're not Russian shot putters. Quite a few of them are petite. So when there is an issue then you really do need guys in there. So I tend to try and get a mix, two in that area, three in that area. I do have them in the away end because a) they can talk to female supporters. They can also search the female supporters which guys can't. They can also go into the ladies toilets, which no-one but I can go in there, should that be the case. So there is the reason to do it.

There are no fixed rules I believe in the football regulations to say what the mix is, but it works but now if I want stewards then I have to say to the ladies, "Well not at the moment." Because they're getting to the point where I've got more ladies than I've got the cover for with guys.

Interviewer: Is there an ethnic mix among your stewards?

Steve Fanthorpe: At the moment no. We have had in the past. We've had a couple of West Indians. We've had a couple of Asian people, but in general terms it's for no other reason than no-one has come forward to do the job. As far as I'm concerned as long as they can do the job then that's the be all and end all of it, but I think again if you look at the amount of people, and I might be saying an injustice to them, the amount of fans that come to the club, what the ethnic mix of that is certainly there is a very small amount of Asian and West Indian people come in I believe, but then that's the town mix as well. You obviously draw from your town.

Now you got to let's say the Arsenal and the majority of people are from ethnic minorities, that have got the jobs there, purely because of where they are, North London. There's your catchment area but I don't think... There are a few that have got slightly darker suntans. So I'm assuming in their past there's a root from a different part of the world, but certainly I haven't got any at the moment.

Interviewer: Sure. Okay. Could you take me through the other duties of a safety officer? Could you perhaps take me through a Saturday, what do you do?

Steve Fanthorpe: Saturday morning I get here, come into the club, put on the CCTV. Then I'll do a walk round the outside of the ground, just to make sure there are no bits of stuff falling off the walls or anything like that. Give that a good look round. Come back into the ground, do exactly the same all the way round the ground. Making sure that people like the grounds men haven't left a fork out somewhere things like that. I then go into the offices. I've got a full set of keys but keys to the toilets. Open up the toilets. Make sure the water is on. My deputy will turn up at some point and help me. We put cones out in the car parks and we get ready. Then I do all the paperwork. That normally takes us up until about quarter to one.

Then we have a cup of tea. Then I go off at 1 o'clock and I do a full briefing of all the stewards in the stewards' room. When I've done that they are then deployed into different areas. I then go and see the referee and do a briefing with the referee. Either it's on the pitch, if they happen to be there, or down in their room. By the time that's done I go to see the first aid, St John's, and I do a briefing with them and then back up into the control room, by which time we've opened the ground and it's been radioed through to me by my deputy.

We split at that point. He will then go and unlock all the exit gates. At around about twenty to two he will open all the turnstiles. I put a tannoy message out to the staff that we are now open and all the stewards should be on duty. That gets us round to about 2 o'clock. Then there's a little bit of a [hyasis 0:38:48] unless we've got issues such as- by that time most of the stewards are outside the ground doing bag searches and things like that, and any other things that have cropped up with home or away support if we've had an incident. We had one a few years ago with people getting flares in. So there was an

extra impetus on checking. It was brought in, in a flag. So now what we do is we make them unfurl the flag outside the ground, but things like that. You're learning again all the time.

Then there's another little bit of a hiatus between there and kick off. It starts to get busy about quarter to three. I'm checking the monitors. In the control room we have turnstile monitors telling me how many people are in the ground, and which part of the ground because it's all segmented off. Then the whistle blows and we're there. Then it's a case of I see very little of the match to be fair. I think I saw one goal last year, and I just happened to be looking out the window at the time, but we're checking different things. Sometimes we're sitting there and we're talking about all sorts. We're just monitoring there are no issues, and because there's information coming back on the radios from all the supervisors.

Then it gets through to just before the end of the game. I'll instruct the supervisors to go pitch side, purely to allow people out. It's quite tight round the ground. So they're moved out of the way. The ground closes down. The supervisors do a sweep of their areas. They then tell me that they're ready for stand down. I stand them down. I go and collect the wages. We go back to the stewards' room. We then do a debrief. I will explain to them what I think anything has happened. Most of the time it's a praise that they did a good job. We've had issues which I've had to ask them to deal with. The next game it's been dealt with. You can say, "Right. Great."

A good example was people on the East terrace standing in the gangways. We had a lot of issues with them. I've put more resources in there. Those people are very proactive. We had the Football Licensing Authority here last game, the Charlton game, were looking at that. I had a brief with the FLA before I went down. She said, "Yes. We're happy with that." So that

information gets put back. I then dish out the wages because it's taxed but they get it cash. So the club do all the PAYE but they get it in pound notes rather than BACS it in. The supervisors stay back and we have a briefing with the supervisors, because there will be issues there about particular people that we've noticed. We say, "Right, you're running that section. You sort it out because it's your responsibility. That's why you've got that extra couple of quid. You do it because if you don't the next issue is I get involved and I don't really need to."

In between all that I've been to see the match officials again, because we just check to make sure they've got nothing that I need to know about, that they're going to tell the FA, because the worst thing that happens is on a Tuesday I get a letter from Chris Whalley from the FA to say, "This was reported to me by the referee." And he puts a copy of the referee's report in. If I don't know what's in there it's difficult to deal with it.

For instance we had an occasion at a Newcastle game where Joey Barton was hit with a plastic water bottle. I went in to see the match officials he said, "I will be reporting that." I said, "That's okay. Fine." So I knew the Tuesday I'd get the letter. I said to him, "Yes. We understand that. Your fourth official did tell us. We did put more staff in there." He said, "Yes." And it was finished with, but because that system works then I knew what my report back to the FA, as to what I'm going to do in the future. It's what did I do to start with? What did I do when it happened? What am I going to do in the future? Hopefully with what I've submitted then the FA will say, "Okay."

They'll always put a rider, "On this instance we will not take any further action, but please be aware that we will be monitoring your football club." Which is basically a little slap on the wrist but, "We're not going to fine you 10 grand or

whatever it is.” So that’s it. They all go home. We then lock up. We set up in the control room for about 20 minutes while I do all the paperwork, because there are submissions on numbers of people in. Then in my own time on a Sunday I will write a report to the Football Safety Officers’ Association, which goes on our website, and any safety officer can look on that site and see the match report.

Part of that match report is how did your away supporters behave? I can put up for instance Sheffield United. I can type in Sheffield United away games. I’ll get all the games that they played away. A) It tells me how many turned up which is always handy and B) what the pre-info was, pre-intelligence, and what actually happened. It gives you a good idea, good intel as to what to expect.

Interviewer: A useful resource.

Steve Fanthorpe: Yes. I do that at home. I could do it here because it’s on the web.

Interviewer: You’re presumably diligent about filling in that report.

Steve Fanthorpe: Yes. Not all safety officers are but most of us do it. There is quite a lot of paper trail on all sorts. Wages is one thing, the deployment sheets I have to keep forever and a day. The safety certificate requires me to keep records of all the stewards, and their training and all the things they do. When we have a Safety Advisory Group meeting, the head of the SAG could ask me, “Can I see your stewards’ training report?”

which because of the Data Protection Act are locked up. I can get them and then they look through them and they'll see when they did their NVQ 2, the four preliminary games that they worked before we were letting them out on their own. In practice they're very close to another steward, but it's a paper trail for that.

We have another one that goes as a checklist and my pre-match checklist. Did this open? Was that done? That's done on a match day basis starting off with opening the gates over in Fairlands Valley, and it ends with closing the gates in Fairlands Valley, then all the bits that happen during the game. I also do a match log. So that's just really the major things that might happen.

A good example is somebody has tripped on the steps and we've called St John's. So I log it with the time and then the result at the end of it. Anyone can go back to that. There's a paper issue and I've also got it on PC. They can go, "Oh do you remember that game?" "Yes." "Did you make any reports about...?" I can look through it and say, "Yes." It could be a supporter that says he wasn't in the ground, when he was kicked out and then had a fight down the town. I said, "Oh yes. At quarter to four we threw an away supporter out for foul abusive language or vandalism." So there's an awful lot of paperwork to do.

Interviewer: Can you tell me something about the relationship with the police? Do you have police here on match days?

Steve Fanthorpe: We do. We have police spotters here most games. There is a system of what we call category games. Not to be confused with the categories of game which the football club use. I think



some games they charge extra because it's a category game. That confuses everybody because it's nothing to do with police categories. For instance on Tuesday I'm down at the police station, where we're having a pre-game meeting about Saturday. Now I know that's what's known as a Category B game.

So we will have police commander in the control room or it'll be the silver commander. The gold commander is at headquarters. We'll have what they call two serials. So we'll have two sergeants and twelve police officers and, also specials will be about. They are there mainly to get people to the ground and get them away from the ground. So they're dealing with the logistics outside the footprint of the football club. They do come in the ground but the majority it's for outside. Those games the Chairman has to pay for.

So there is a situation where the club don't want police here every week, because it's a drain on their resources. I think to be fair the police don't want to be here every week either, because gone are the old days when they used to just pitch up and didn't charge, and if they did charge it would be a minute amount of money. A few years ago there was a test case between Wigan Athletic and Greater Manchester Police, on what they called full cost recovery. I think Greater Manchester Police slapped a £2.5m bill on the table at Wigan and said, "That's the policing costs for last year." Took them to court, Wigan won the case, but now it's far more intense in the negotiations of what the police want and what we want.

Obviously the police have control over 90% of the decision making and whether they want to do that. We have a 10%. We're very lucky, again talking to other safety officers, we have a good relationship with the spotters that we have here, that come every week. We have a good relationship with the

Chief Inspector down at headquarters. We work well. So it's good. There are others in the country that they're at loggerheads from the start. A lot of it is down to money as well.

Interviewer: What does a police spotter do?

Steve Fanthorpe: A police spotter; his actual title is police intelligence officer. His job is to get to know the fans, understand... He knows all about our travelling support and about our supporters. So he'll be at Berry today. He will be there. They know him. He knows them. It's a case of he gathers information all week. That's one of his prime roles at the police station, is to gather football intelligence. So he walks around. If we've got a little issue in the East terrace I can give him a call say, "Do us a favour just have a wander along the East terrace, and nod at a few of the usuals." He'll go. They know we're watching them. That's his main job.

Of course if it becomes an arrestable offence then obviously we kick into a completely different mindset. Racist comments is the most obvious to give an example of. It is a criminal offence. I won't tolerate it in the football ground. If they are seen to say the words that are considered to be racist, then I will have them arrested. Then they're on a banning order from this club but that's a criminal offence as well.

Interviewer: Is there any appeal against that because presumably it's the word of the supporter, against the word of the steward who's heard the abuse?

Steve Fanthorpe: It is but then that's always the case with any criminal. There are two sides to it. We have not strict protocols but we do have a system of ways. I can't get somebody arrested if you said, "I saw him or heard him say a rude word." If my steward said that, because my steward is prepared to go to court and swear on the bible that he heard it, then that's good enough because he's heard it.

In general terms we tend to, in a way, give the benefit of the doubt the first time. If we think we've heard it or whatever we will get the stewards to go up and say, "Right. Somebody said something up here. I don't want to hear it again. We're watching you." They'll tell me. We'll put the cameras on them. That tends to- but if they do it again then they will let me know and then I will get hold of Dean. He will go in and have them arrested and sent out. Foul abusive language, very similar. It's not a criminal offence, but it is against the ground regulations that everybody has signed up to when they walked through the doors, because they're on the outside doors.

We've got an issue at the moment where we're looking to identify a particular person. If we find them then he will walk. He will, depending on his demeanour; it depends how he takes the information whether or not we'll ban him. Certainly if they run onto the green stuff they're on a ban. That's a no, no. Not for the fact that it costs me reams and reams of paperwork, to write to the FA as why I didn't do it.

We did have an occasion where a couple of times people ran onto the pitch. These are not people that have jumped over the barrier in excitement, and jumped straight back again. These are people that actually run on and make a prat of themselves. We will then put them on a year's ban. They will be interviewed. We will invite them to come to the football club to explain why they did it in front of a police officer. It's normally

Bob and I. We do offer them the opportunity to bring someone with them, but we found if we say that... We tell them they have a year's ban and because it's trespass, which is a civil offence, then if they were to come back to the football club, having not been invited back, they are liable to be taken to court. That tends to sharpen the mind. It gets around. It's like the old adage of make an example of one the rest will toe the line. That's one of the things.

Touch wood not since the debacle at the Newcastle game, when about 400 of them jumped on the pitch but one obviously hit our player; it's been very good. To be fair to them they're not a bad group, the supporters. A few of them are a little bit silly. Since I've been here the silly ones have grown older. They're still silly but not as quick as being silly. There's always another little group that are coming up, but in general terms there's no violence. You look on the website most times it's Stevenage supporters a joy to come to the football ground. I always do that. If I have no problems with them I always put on there always welcome back at the Lamex Stadium. So they are not too bad. We've just got a few gobby ones.

Interviewer: What happened with that incident when you had 400 people invading the pitch? Was that Stevenage supporters?

Steve Fanthorpe: It was Stevenage supporters. It was the end of the game. We'd beaten a premiership club in the FA Cup, after 10 long years of smarting at the fact that we got done the first time by a goal that was disallowed, when it was clearly not a hand ball. It was his head. These things in little clubs last. They go into folklore. We'd won the game, and won it convincingly as well, which got

the incumbent manager the sack I think in the end. He left not that long after that.

There was a crowd invasion. It's very difficult. It was a full house. There is no way apart from the bad old days when you used to put barriers up, and we all know what happened at Hillsborough because of the barriers, you can stop people going on the pitch. The deterrent is there with the row of stewards, but for you to get a row of stewards all the way round this ground would probably be 400 stewards, linked up arm in arm and even then somebody would get through.

So you try and manage it. I did manage it. I'd done a contingency plan of where the stewards needed to be, if that was to happen what would we then do? That was to put a row of stewards across the pitch to keep the Newcastle fans away from the Stevenage fans. Newcastle fans were so dumbstruck by the whole thing they just walked out, but you've always got the silly element of the home supporters, that think it would be great to run past the away goalposts waving their flag, which is inflammatory to say the least. That's when things can go silly.

So my submission to the FA was that that's what we'd planned for. We couldn't guarantee no-one going on the pitch but that is what we did. My two main priorities were stewards around the referee, linesmen, and players, and stewards to cut across the pitch which we did. The fact that this idiot then managed to come round and smack our player, which was a domestic it turned out to be, was unforeseen. No we didn't do 340 of them for trespass. It's one of those things isn't it?

Interviewer: Your stewards responded in exactly the right way.

Steve Fanthorpe: Yes. They did exactly what they were supposed to do. We've had other occasions; we had a problem here with a fatality. It's something you do courses with the stewards, and you hope that they will respond. They did. It was very traumatic for them. I again did counselling of two of them that were very close when this happened. Obviously they weren't used to seeing a dead body to be quite fair, although everybody said he was alive at the time but he wasn't, but they did their job. We had people immediately come up and pull the blinds down in the boxes, because people were looking out because it was out here. The other stewards put a cordon round to stop people getting close, allowing the paramedics in. Funnily enough all this was being done when I was being assessed for my NVQ 4. Everybody did exactly what they were meant to do.

The aftermath was that we had a few that were really quite shocked about it, including one of St John's who was having a problem trying to get an airway clear, because one of the worst scenarios in any football area is a heart attack in the seats. You just can't lay them down. You just can't get to them. That's what happened, but I believe that the guy had already died on the way down. He'd jumped up when they scored a goal. They said he had a massive embolism, I think that's what it's called. They said even if he'd had one in hospital he wouldn't have survived it.

As I said right at the beginning of the interview they're called jobsworths. They're called pains in the backside. "You're only doing it because you've got a yellow jacket on." It's very rare that they get the plaudits for it. To be fair to the son of the gentleman, he made a point of coming to see me and asking me to thank the stewards on his behalf, for everything that they tried to do to get his dad round.

Interviewer: What I wanted to hear about last is the work that you do at Wembley.

Steve Fanthorpe: At Wembley I do a very similar role. It's called a SSS which is Senior Supervising Stewarding. There I have about 2 base supervisors and 40 stewards. I work in what's known as the Bobby Moore area which is the posh part of Club Wembley. It's the posh seats either side of the tunnel. If you ever look at Wembley you've got dark red seats and light red seats. The dark red seats are the posh ones, because they're padded and the light red seats are the, shall we say, less expensive seats. That one people to buy seats, it's a 10 year tenure, is about £100,000.

So there is a great deal of customer care element there. Far more than- but that then brings other issues, because you might be a millionaire but you still have to abide by the rules of the ground. They do get free drinks because that's part of their package. When you get alcohol and football it never mixes. By the time it gets to me they're one point away of being asked to leave the ground.

The amount of people who come up to me and say to me straight in my face, "Do you know who I am?" I have a stock answer which makes all the stewards laugh, "Excuse me sir, if I knew who you were I'd have addressed you by your surname." Everybody round them looks at the bloke and says, "That's put you in your place." It does deflate quite a few of them. Just bring them back to reality. So I do that there. That's for concerts as well as for- well any event that's at the Wembley Stadium.

END AUDIO

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