

Crowd safety precedes profit

COULD I through the columns of your newspaper express concern at the comments that have emanated from Wycombe Wanderers regarding the poor attendance at the Swansea City game and the concern of the club at the apparent loss of revenue, circa £8,000, due to the game being made all-ticket.

I read in the Bucks Free Press that sales and marketing manager, Mark Austin, has described the situation as farcical and that future designated all-ticket games (ie, Oxford, Birmingham and Cardiff) may revert to pay-on-the-day, presumably so the club does not incur similar losses in the future.

Can we be clear about one thing? The Swansea game was on the advice of the police correctly made all-ticket in view of the marauding hordes of drunken Welshmen who visited Adams Park last season and the intimidating atmosphere they created.

The subsequent attendance at Saturday's game was down not because the game was all-ticket, but because many casual supporters chose not to enjoy the Swansea experience again.

In view of the anticipated demand for tickets for the Oxford/Birmingham games and the possibility of crowd trouble when Cardiff City visit, it is nonsense to suggest that these matches are not made all-ticket and totally wrong to compromise crowd safety in order to satisfy profit.

As a season-ticket holder, I am well aware that the club has spent many thousands this year on policing Adams Park, but in view of the quoted remarks by Mr Austin, I think supporters are entitled to be reassured by the club that the safety of supporters attending games remains a priority.

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