

## **TVP Shadowing Role: 17 November 2012**

### **Reading v Everton**

#### **Background.**

The starting point was the aftermath of the Southampton away game last season and the police operation in place on arrival at Reading train station. I manage to arrange a meeting with Superintendent Greenfield (Reading local area Commander) and the Inspector in charge of the operation in Reading. The bottom line at the time is that both officers admitted there were issues over the handling of the situation including a lack of communication with Reading fans on arrival back into Reading and while leaving the station. As a result –I was offered the opportunity to see the police in operation throughout the day on a match day.

#### **Matchday Shadowing (Reading v Everton – 17.11.2012)**

The day split into three sections- the 1<sup>st</sup> section comprised of two briefings.

1<sup>st</sup> briefing: Chaired by Superintendent Greenfield (Silver Commander) with contributions from the eight officers which formed the command team for the fixture which was a Category ‘A’ fixture. The other categories are C/S –which is club stewards only which is the majority of games this season and Category ‘B’ which is retained for the games which are deemed to require a higher police profile including police horses in full view as evidenced at the recent Manchester United game – when the buses were loading up at the end of the game.

Information in relation to the Everton game related to the number of coaches and minibuses which they had been made aware of directly and police intelligence- including freelance travel and the whereabouts of minibuses as they travelled to the stadium. This included updates as to the presence or otherwise of alcohol on all coaches/minibuses.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Briefing

Superintendent Greenfield and PC Henderson (Police Football Liaison Officer) chaired the briefing to 60 officers from forces across the Thames Valley Police area. The game was not expected to be a difficult fixture from a policing perspective and a low profile was required with encouragement for officers to be co-operative with fans (this may seem obvious but it is something that I was glad to hear.) The entrance to the stadium was the same for Reading fans but a new system was in place for away fans to streamline entrance into the ground.

The next part of the day started with arrival at the ground about 1pm and then went round the ground with PC Henderson checking in on the report area where anyone arrested during the game would be booked in before being taken to Loddon area police station. This was a bit of a surprise to me as I assumed that the cells were still in place at the stadium. We then went to the tunnel area to wait for Julie, the stadium's deputy security officer (SDSO) to accompany her to the referee's room. The

SDSO briefed the referee, his assistants and the referee's assessor (one Peter Shreeves) as to where the lines of authority and responsibility lay and the procedures involved in the light of security issues and police involvement in certain circumstances.

The final part was the game which is spent is what is officially known as the Safety Suite- in the West Stand to the left of the Press Area –or the right if you are in East Stand. Fortunately the game took place with good results on and off the pitch. On the pitch was a good win as you know and off the pitch despite a disturbance on the away end concourse – the stewards had a fairly stress free time as far as I could tell. The police had detained one person due to his being drunk and two people were “invited to leave’ as a result of the disturbance mentioned above.

While I was in the suite- Clive Doyle( Stadium Chief Security Manager, was happy to report that by and large the ‘unwanted element’ had been dealt with and made life a lot better all round on a match day.

Also Stuart (Supt Greenfield) went a bit further in regard the Southampton issue (there is a lot of down time when fans behave) and said that there was a lot of things that could have been done better on that occasion.

As we go there on the 8<sup>th</sup> Dec we will see if that is the case but as the situation is a bit different – it is potentially as volatile as last April so let's hope for the same on the pitch but calm and order of the pitch.