

## **GREG DOUBLE**

Proposed by: Matthew Batten

Seconded by: Sarah Turner

Election statement:

I attended my first Reading game aged three months when, in a move that would now be considered child neglect, my dad failed to make appropriate babysitting arrangements and instead took me to Blackpool away.

The first season I truly remember is the 1993-94 season, so in my lifetime - Reading have always been a club with an upward trajectory. We moved from Elm Park to the Madejski, from being a typically third-tier club, to a consistently second-tier club with the occasional Premier League flirtation. We also grew as a part of our community. When the club thrives, it's not just the football that gets better - the whole town does. More fans, more vibes and more money as Premier Inns and Purple Turtles are more packed.

It's this belief that made me become a founding member of Sell Before We Dai. Dai Yongge wasn't just killing our club, but also our town. He cost us 18 points, he cost others their jobs. We've been relegated, our women's team practically folded, you don't need me to tell you the last seven years have been catastrophic.

So what's this got to do with joining STAR? It's because we should have seen this coming. The longer SBWD has been in existence, the more I, and others, have learned about the finances of football. We've learned that fans can stop training grounds from being taken over, we've learnt how direct fan action can ensure your club remains in the spotlight, we even learned about the politics of football regulation. Knowledge is power and STAR weren't powerful enough when Dai Yongge was in the early stages of sabotaging everything this club used to stand for. I want to be part of a group that can create a "never again" culture between the club and its fans.

I'm applying to STAR to bring that SBWD energy to an organisation that has often been accused of being too placid or focused on tiny details. I want us to be able to represent fans that wear Stone Island as well as fans that wear River Island. I've often been annoyed at STAR myself, but that annoyance has only previously been expressed via mean tweets. If the experience with SBWD has taught me anything it's that if you love something enough - in this case Reading Football Club - you should have a go at trying to make it better. I believe STAR has come on leaps and bounds recently, I'd like to help keep that going.

In my professional life, I work in PR and communications. This means the newsletter might have some more puns it is, but more importantly it means we can continue STAR's progress in becoming a voice for our fans, not a voice for the club to talk to fans. If the past seven years have been characterised by secrecy - the next ownership's reign should be characterised by transparency. I believe I can help develop some communication structures to ensure this and get the club talking to its fans again. I also believe my knowledge of media and contacts can help publicise fan concerns and STAR initiatives to a wider audience with regularity.

Lastly, of course, Up The Ding.

