

SELECTION OF SEMI-FINAL GROUNDS

21/04/89

The selection of Grounds for semi-final ties are normally decided upon by taking into consideration the geographical location of the competing Clubs. To ensure that the best appointed Grounds are selected to stage semi-final ties, certain Clubs are approached by the FA in February, to ascertain their availability and also check upon their capacities. Clubs are asked to provide details on spectator segregation, present capacity, numbers of seats and standing places, and indicating if safety fencing is provided around the pitch.

Once the draw is known, Members of the Challenge Cup Committee, together with the Chairman of the Match & Grounds Committee, considers the choice of venue for each tie, by taking into consideration the above details. As soon as the selections are made by the Committee, the staging and competing Clubs are contacted by telephone prior to releasing the grounds chosen, to the media.

When staging Clubs are selected and notified, they take over the running of the game, i.e., ticket printing and allocating, meeting the Police and transport authorities, catering, stewards, press box etc., only referring any problems or disputes to the FA, which very rarely occurs. The staging Clubs are entitled to a payment of 10% of the gross receipts, less VAT.

Competing Clubs in semi-final ties receive 50% each of the tickets for sale. The staging Club technically should not be allocated any tickets, but retains a very small number for Directors and Club Officials. The FA usually takes an allocation of tickets for each tie as follows:-

All Directors Box Tickets (number depends
on size of box)
350 Complimentaries
850 Purchase

These tickets are allocated to Council Members, County Associations, Members of Staff, other Football League Clubs, and organisations connected with the FA.

A Member of the FA Staff attends each match, and in recent Seasons this has generally been Glen Kirton, [redacted] or Adrian Titcombe. His duties are to return spare tickets, and to generally supervise the protocol arrangements at the match, and to resolve any queries that may arise, in direct relation to the playing side. He would also be on hand to pass on tickets for any replay, and to note any queries in this connection.

As a matter of courtesy the Club Secretary often informs this Member of Staff if any problems have arisen in connection with ticketing or policing arrangements. This might also include any request by the police to delay the kick-off, and the Member of Staff may be the person to pass this information on to the Referee. However, if he was occupied on some other business, such urgent decisions would be transmitted by the police or an Official of the staging Club. (Club Secretary)

MONDAY 20 MARCH

- 7.45 Draw made
- 10.00 Call from Liverpool, Peter Robinson, regarding the possible venue at Hillsborough, and their request to be allocated the Penistone Lane end of the Ground, and not the Leppings Lane as was allocated for the previous Season's semi-final.
- 10.05 Spoke to Graham Mackrell at Sheffield Wednesday to seek police views on the likely allocation of tickets, if Hillsborough was selected for the Liverpool tie.
- 10.45 Call from Graham Mackrell to advise that if Hillsborough chosen for Liverpool tie, then the Police would allocate the Leppings Lane to Liverpool, as per last Season's arrangements, due to avoiding a clash of supporters approaching the Ground.
- 11.00 Challenge Cup Committee Meeting commences.
- 12.30 Meeting ends.
- 13.00 Sheffield Wednesday asked to stage the Liverpool versus Nottingham Forest tie, and to go ahead with the usual arrangements, and to contact the Police re segregation of supporters, and ticket details.
- 13.15 Liverpool informed that Hillsborough has been selected for their semi-final tie.

TUESDAY 21 MARCH

- AM Call from Peter Robinson, to inform FA that Liverpool would make public their disapproval of the choice of venue of Hillsborough, as they would be receiving less tickets than Nottingham Forest, due to segregation as a result of the Police allocating the Leppings Lane end to Liverpool. At no time was it mentioned by Peter Robinson that he was requesting the FA to reconsider the choice of venue. The call was more in the region of a general discussion to put the FA in the picture that we may be receiving telephone calls or letters from Liverpool supporters unable to get tickets.

S R CLARK
COMPETITIONS SECRETARY

FA CUP SEMI-FINAL VENUES - LAST TWENTY YEARS

I989 - Hillsborough, Villa Park
I988 - Hillsborough, White Hart Lane
I987 - Hillsborough, Villa Park
I986 - Villa Park, White Hart Lane
I985 - Villa Park, Goodison Park (Maine Road)
I984 - Villa Park, Highbury
I983 - Villa Park, Highbury
I982 - Villa Park, Highbury
I981 - Villa Park, Hillsborough (Highbury)
I980 - Villa Park (Elland Road), Hillsborough (Villa Park,
Villa Park, Highfield Road)
I979 - Villa Park, Maine Road (Goodison Park)
I978 - Highbury, Stamford Bridge
I977 - Hillsborough, Maine Road (Maine Road)
I976 - Stamford Bridge, Hillsborough
I975 - Villa Park (Stamford Bridge), Hillsborough (Maine Road)
I974 - Old Trafford (Villa Park), Hillsborough
I973 - Hillsborough, Maine Road
I972 - Hillsborough, Villa Park (Goodison Park)
I971 - Hillsborough (Villa Park), Old Trafford
I970 - White Hart Lane, Hillsborough (Villa Park, Burnden Park)
I969 - Villa Park, Hillsborough

Summary of previous twenty years:

Original Choice as semi-final venue = Hillsborough I3 times,
Villa Park I2, Highbury 4, Maine Road 3, White Hart Lane 3, Old Trafford 2,
Stamford Bridge 2, Goodison Park I