

Minutes of the Blackburn Rovers Fans' Forum Ewood Park, Monday 10th February 2014 – 7.15pm

Present – Fans' Forum

Neil Duckworth
John Wareing
Ben Sumner
Jim Holden
Alan Birkbeck
Annette Birkbeck
Rob Parker

Present from BRFC

Derek Shaw
Greg Coar
Lynsey Talbot

Apologies for absence

Terry Crawford
Simon Barnes
Gordon Ormerod
Jennifer Lewis
Ray Williamson
Tris Stock
Mark Hitchen
Andy Neill

1. Matters arising from the Minutes 16th December 2013

a) Smoking Areas

The club continued to consider the possibility of creating smoking areas for fans at games. It was intended to revisit the problem with the Safety Advisory Group but there were significant issues with creating a secure area with suitable emergency access

2. Half Season Tickets

GC reported that although half season tickets had continued to sell throughout January the final total of 387 was a little disappointing. Although the total was comparable to most previous years the club had hoped for more sales given the keen pricing and the Premier League offer.

The total was broken down to 173 adults, 153 juniors, 23 Young Adults, 23 Seniors and 15 free under 8s. There were 179 in the Blackburn End, 92 in the Riverside, 71 in the Darwen End and 45 in the Jack Walkers stand. 56 purchasers had held season tickets for the previous season, 61 for season 2011/12, 39 for the three seasons before that, 116 were occasional ticket purchasers and 115 were completely new to the database.

3. Burnley Home League Game

GC stated that the match had been designated as an A+ game but Rovers had also used the game and the home game with Bournemouth three days later as a local promotion by offering a package with the Bournemouth game being available for an extra £6 if bought in conjunction with a Burnley ticket.

BS stated that a number of fans with season tickets in the Darwen End had been disappointed that they were not being allowed to relocate to the Riverside stand for the Burnley game, but that the club was selling match tickets there.

GC responded that it was unfortunate that the vast majority of responsible fans were being slightly inconvenienced but it was important for the club and police to ensure that there was no repeat of the trouble and injuries in the Riverside and Darwen End Stands at the game last season. A number of season ticket holders in the Riverside had complained to the club about their day being ruined because of the disturbances.

Season ticket transfers to other home areas had been suspended for this fixture. Season ticket holders from the Darwen End could transfer to both the Jack Walker Stand and the Blackburn End and BS had arranged with the club for a block of tickets to be made available in the Jack Walker Lower so that fans who wanted a singing section could sit together. Ticket sales for the Riverside were being very closely monitored and those who had bought a ticket for last year's game who had no regular record of ticket purchase would be denied.

In response to a question from JW, GC confirmed that in addition to the netted areas at the Darwen End of the Riverside there would be stewards who would ensure that fans do not collect in front of the stand as they had done last year.

4. Input into Future Kit Designs

ND asked what opportunity there was for fan input into future kit design. GC stated that the lead-in times for shirt orders were now very long and in fact the club had just signed off the designs for the 2015-16 season. This would also be the last season for the current Nike contract. Nike had been given feedback from fans' previous comments, particularly about a general desire for more halved away kits.

ND also expressed concern that the club shop had already sold out of children's home kits. GC replied that sales of the home kits in general had considerably exceeded expectations and acknowledged that stocks were low. It was a tough task to get the size of order spot on each year,

especially after several years of poor sales. The club had to place orders for the following season by the previous Christmas and the order for 2014/15 would be bigger as a result of this season's sales.

One of the results of the lack of children's home kits was that the escorts for the game with Manchester City had worn away kits. GC stated that it was planned to have more escorts at future home games.

5. Senior Appointments

DS reported that the club had announced the appointment of a new Finance Director. Mike Cheston would be joining the club in March and has spent 15 years with Everton and has recently been working with the Football League Trust.

DS stated that he was not expecting that any further senior appointments would be made in the near future.

6. Beer Supplies

ND asked whether it was possible to expand the range of beers available inside the ground. GC replied that it was planned to trial Heineken in the Blackburn End lower concourse in the next couple of months. He noted that as a premium beer it would be somewhat more expensive.

GC also advised the meeting that it was planned to introduce the Fan Zone behind the Blackburn End in late March, probably at the Leicester home game. This would be a semi-permanent structure and would be available at all future home games.

7. Any Other Business

- a) JH expressed concern about young children running around in the crowded bar at Blues after games.
- b) BS welcomed the introduction of a free match ticket for season ticket holders in the month of their birthday. He asked what provision would be made for those with birthdays during the close season. GC responded that similar offers would be available to them as well. He stated that the promotion had been a success, as fans had bought extra tickets and merchandise as a result.

8. Date of Next Meetings

Pre -meet
Monday 7/4/14
Monday 2/6/14
Monday 4/8/14

Main meeting
Monday 14/4/14
Monday 9/6/14
Monday 11/8/14

Monday 6/10/14
Monday 1/12/14

Monday 13/10/14
Monday 8/12/14

Pre-meets are held at Ewood one week before the main meetings. The pre-meet is open to all interested fans to attend, providing they request to do so in advance by contacting John Wareing by email or phone as below.

Members should contact John Wareing at roversfansforum@hotmail.com or 07984 085474 give their apologies if they cannot attend a meeting.

Fans can also contact John regarding the Forum using the contact details above.