

Minutes of the Blackburn Rovers Fans' Forum Ewood Park, Monday 13th October 2014 – 7.15pm

Present – Fans' Forum

Tris Stock
Ray Williamson
John Wareing
Neil Duckworth
Jim Holden
Alan Birkbeck
Annette Birkbeck
Gordon Ormerod
Bharat Parmar
Mark Hitchen
Terry Crawford
Jennifer Lewis

Present from BRFC

Greg Coar
Lynsey Talbot
Gary Bowyer

1. Apologies for absence

Ben Sumner
Rob Parker
Ste Birtwell
Simon Barnes
Anthony Corry

2. Gary Bowyer

GB joined the meeting for an open discussion.

RW asked about the situation with Ruben Rochina, who GB had praised in the Summer but had now left the club. GB replied that he agreed with Graeme Souness' quote that if a player did not want to stay at a club then there was no point in keeping him. GB also stated that RR was a very good player who wanted to be guaranteed a place, yet RR wanted to go home to Spain.

GO asked what effect Financial Fair Play would have on his plans. GB stated that it was difficult to be sure as there was still some uncertainty about the exact effects.

TS asked what GB's view was of the position after the first 10 games of the season. GB replied that both he and the players were not satisfied because, whilst no team had completely outplayed Rovers over 90 minutes, they would have hoped to have had more points. The team had been victim to a number of individual errors. He was heartened by the fact that the team continued to make lots of chances – 64 goal attempts

in the last three games, although only three goals.

MH reminded GB that he had said when being made permanent that it would take four transfer windows to overhaul the squad. How did he now feel after three of those had passed? GB replied that he still felt that he was one window away from completing the task. In the previous windows he had bought in six players (Gestede, Marshall, Conway, Cairney, Evans and Duffy) for a total outlay of £2.75-3m and he felt that all were worth more now than their original fees. He felt that the team was in a far stronger position than 12 months ago. Sustained success was possible with a good group of players being put together and staying together.

ND asked about GB's relationship with the club's owners. GB stated that their relationship was always professional, that they understood what he was trying to achieve and that they had been prepared to provide funding for good deals for players to improve the squad when requested.

MH asked what the biggest change was that he had noticed in moving up to first team manager. GB stated that the fundamental difference was that results for the under-21 team didn't matter, but that the first team was purely a results based business. He knew that a sustained series of bad results would inevitably lead to dismissal.

JW asked if there were any young players who he thought could come through to the first team in the next couple of years. GB thought it was just possible that one or two players could make the big step from under-21 to first team football. He was a great believer in young players gaining experience of first team football by going out on loan to lower league teams rather than relying on under-21 experience.

RW asked whether the team had an issue with a lack of an obvious leader on the pitch. GB agreed that the current first team is young and a player with some experience might be useful but that had to be the right player. There were a few players who could perform a leadership role but who were currently injured.

AN asked whether the upcoming game with Manchester United in the Lancashire Senior Cup could be played at Ewood Park, rather than at Leigh Sports Village, where United also played their home under-21 games. GB replied that it was not his decision and that he thought the game had already been arranged at Leigh. GC agreed to check.

3. Matters Arising from the Minutes 11th August 2014

a) Financial Fair Play

TS asked for any update on the situation with Financial Fair Play rules. GC understood that there was a further meeting scheduled for

the following Monday, but that there was still some uncertainty as to the exact rules.

b) Fan Zone

GC reported that the club had been really pleased with the first few weeks of the new Fan Zone. There had been a number of teething problems in setting the Fan Zone up and it was still a work in progress. It was already a financial success and there appeared to be little cannibalisation of other outlets at the ground

TC stated that there was a need for some small tables and that the plastic glasses were very flimsy. TS suggested that sturdier glasses were provided for a small deposit, which could be returned or kept as a memento.

LT asked the Fans Forum what they would like to see at the Fanzone. Any ideas can be forwarded to Lynsey by e-mail at ltalbot@rovers.co.uk

c) 20th Anniversary Plans

Asked for an update on any plans to celebrate the 20th anniversary of winning the Premier League, LT stated that a couple of events were being planned but no details were yet available.

d) Away Fans Ambassador

GO asked whether Nathan was supposed to be present with fans at away games. GC stated that his primary contact would be through social media but that he was available should there be a specific incident.

e) Tannoy

JH stated that there were still problems with the tannoy system in the Blackburn End Upper and that in the last two games it had not worked at all.

f) Ewood Roadworks

RW raised issues with some elderly fans who were having difficulty crossing Bolton Road with the current roadworks. LT agreed to discuss this matter with the management committee via the stadium safety team.

4. Re-registration as a Private Limited Company

LT stated that re-registration as a Private Limited Company had been proposed purely to reduce reporting requirements and therefore save money. A General Meeting had been scheduled for 22 October 2014.

5. Review of 2014/15 Season Ticket Sales

GC stated that the club were pleased to see an increase in season ticket sales, which currently stood at about 10,900, considerably up on the previous season. Every category of season ticket had shown an increase except young adults, but that had been because 16 year olds had been re-classified as juniors. There had also been the highest rate of renewal for many years at 88%. Total gate at about 13,500 home fans was also up as was the percentage of season ticket holders attending every game.

9% of new ST holders were brand new. The biggest increase had been in the Blackburn End.

It now looked like ST sales had turned the corner after decline for a few years. Total sales of full season tickets over the last few years were: -

2009/10	19,100
2010/11	17,300
2011/12	14,700
2012/13	9,600
2013/14	10,150
2014/15	10,900

Half season tickets would be on sale from 1st November and would again be excellent value.

6. Merchandising

GC reported that shop sales had been very good. The kit sales had been particularly strong, being the best for around 6 years, well up on the previous year, which in itself had been a good one.

7. Any Other Business

- a) GC stated that the club's new Commercial Director Dave Biggar would attend the next Forum.
- b) ND asked whether new seats had been fitted in the Jack Walker Lower. GC stated that they had not but had been cleaned using a specialised heat treatment.
- c) GO asked whether the club's owners had any involvement in the

Indian Super League which was about to start it's first season, as there was a team in Pune. GC stated that he was not aware of any involvement.

- d) GO asked what the purpose of the Police Evidence Gatherer seen at recent games was. LT agreed to check.

12. Date of Next Meetings

Pre -meet	Main meeting
5/1/15	12/1/15
2/3/15	9/3/15
5/5/15	11/5/15
6/7/15	13/7/15
7/9/15	14/9/15
2/11/15	9/11/15

Pre-meets are held 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.