

Sports Crowd Disorder in Britain, 1870-1914: Causes and Controls¹

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Commercialized sport for the masses was mainly a product of the late nineteenth century, a time when entrepreneurs and other less profit motivated individuals responded to the stimulus of rising working class incomes by creating the enclosed racecourse and the gate-money soccer ground and by further developing the gate-money cricket ground.² Large crowds at sports events were nothing new: what was novel was that now large crowds were regularly being attracted. By the late nineteenth century ‘. . . it [was] no rare thing in the North and Midlands for twenty to thirty thousand people to pay money to witness a League match or important cup-tie’. At this time racecrowds of 10,000 to 15,000 were not unusual; double this could be expected at leading meetings; and perhaps 70,000 to 80,000 at a major Bank Holiday event. As for cricket, it could be commented in 1885 that a decade ago ‘where hundreds dawdled up of an afternoon to see a big match. . . now thousands arrive early on the ground to secure a good place.’³

Clearly, it was in the interests of the club committees and course executives to take steps to control crowd behaviour since spectator disorder could prove costly to a gate-money sports enterprise. First, there was the risk to property if the crowd got out of hand. By the early twentieth century, many of the proprietors had expended considerable sums on their grounds. The cricket and soccer grounds at Old Trafford well illustrate this point. At the turn of the century Lancashire County Cricket Club purchased their ground for nearly £25,000 and then spent several more thousands building stands and improving other facilities.⁴ Virtually across the road, Manchester United Football Club’s new stands cost almost £36,000.⁵ Such investments could not be left to the mercy of a rampaging crowd. Secondly, there was the risk to the gate-money itself. Potential spectators might be dissuaded from attending by the fear of disorder. After Glasgow Rangers’ first game at Ibrox, the Scottish *Athletic Journal* commented on ‘the very large number of better classes that turned out to see the game. It behoves the Rangers to do everything in their power to

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retain the patronage of these people, who mostly belong to the district, and they can only do so by rigidly keeping the rowdier portion of the crowd in order'.⁶ Ultimately, of course, there was the threat that the sports' authorities would close the ground or suspend the license of the racecourse.

Section I of this paper shows that the sports promoters had reason to worry in that crowd riot and spectator violence were not uncommon, particularly at soccer matches and horse-racing. Section II suggests possible causes of the disorder; and the final sections assess the success of the promoters' efforts to control crowd behaviour .

I

April 17, 1909 was the day on which a soccer crowd lost its head. Glasgow Celtic, bidding for a third successive League and Cup double, were replaying the Scottish Cup Final at Hampden Park, against their traditional rivals, Glasgow Rangers. At full time in the replay the scores were level, and, due to a false press report, many fans expected extra time to be played. When it became apparent that this was not the case, the field was invaded by an estimated six thousand disgruntled spectators. A few policemen attempted to stem the flow but they were beaten savagely. Police reinforcements were able to prevent the mob from reaching the dressing rooms, but that was all they could accomplish. Rioters tore out the goalposts, ripped up the nets, and smashed down fencing. Bonfires were made out of the broken barricading and the uprooted goalposts were used as battering rams against the turnstile entrances which were also set on fire. The arrival of the fire brigade signalled further trouble and the firemen were attacked and their hoses slashed. Not till early evening, two and a half hours after the match ended, were the rioters forced out of the ground and the fires brought under control. Much of the stadium was damaged: five gates and payboxes with twenty two turnstiles had been destroyed, a substantial proportion of fencing had been smashed and burned, and a large part of the playing area had been scarred by fire and broken glass; in all some £1000 worth of damage. Casualties were heavy: fifty eight policemen and sixty others received hospital treatment; only by a miracle was no-one killed.⁷

Although this was the worst soccer crowd disturbance in the period studied, it was no isolated occurrence. The minute books of the Football Association, the Football League Management Committee, and the Scottish Football Association clearly confirm for the 1880s and 1890s the view of one football historian, based on a study of contemporary comments, that "riots, unruly behaviour, violence, assault and vandalism appear to have been a well-established, but not necessarily dominant pattern of crowd behaviour at football matches at least from the 1870s".⁸ Indeed, the Scottish Football Association's *Annual*

Report for 1898/99 described spectator rowdiness, along with rough play, as “the hydra-headed monster of football”.⁹

In horse-racing, too, the crowds often got out of hand. Certainly before the 1880s physical disorder was a common occurrence at British race-meetings. At several metropolitan meetings disturbances became so bad that in 1879 these events were suppressed by Parliamentary legislation.¹⁰ Provincial meetings also had their troubles, particularly when backers felt that they had not had a fair run for their money or when bookmakers welshed on winning bets. So common was this latter feature that the treatment of welshers became ritualised or institutionalised at some courses. At Catterick they would be tarred and feathered; at Northallerton they were horsewhipped; and at Stockton, Durham, and Wetherby they were thrown in the river.¹¹ At most meetings before the development of the enclosed course, the race committee would employ a few pugilists to protect the horses and other racing property, and a gateman or two to keep undesirables out of the stands. Additionally, at events such as Ascot which were part of the British social calendar, police would be in attendance to control the rough element should they threaten to disturb their social superiors.¹² Generally that was the limit to the control measures. No wonder J. H. Peart, right hand man of the famous trainer John Scott, commented favourably on Chantilly where “the arrangements on the racecourses are far beyond what they have in England. The roughs are kept in their proper place, and there was no hustle or confusion, and no fear of being robbed of your wallet.”¹³

Cricket does not appear to have experienced the kind of crowd violence frequently observed at soccer matches or race-meetings. There were instances of field invasion as at the Middlesex versus Lancashire game of 1907 when the crowd, exasperated by a failure to let them know when play was to begin, even though their money had been taken at the gate, invaded the playing area and allegedly tore up the pitch.¹⁴ Nevertheless, disorder at cricket matches was generally verbal rather than physical, such as the community whistling of the Dead March by the Surrey crowd when Australia’s opening pair was making slow progress at the Oval in 1899, the jeering of so-called batsmen who seemed to prefer to use their pads, and the booing of bowlers who persisted in bowling negatively down the legside.¹⁵

II

Certainly there was a problem of crowd behaviour to be faced by the promoters of the gate-money sports. However, what they could do to solve it was not clear: even today the actual causes of sports crowd disorder are not fully understood or agreed upon.¹⁶ Nevertheless, most modern studies do suggest that deprootred structural strains and social tensions have an important role to play. Clearly, such a hypothesis has relevance to any explanation of the in-

volvement of the working class in crowd disorder. Deprived of power and esteem at work, the working class sports fan can find a surrogate identity as a member of a larger group, as a partisan team supporter, basking in the reflected glory of a winning team or regarding defeat as an intolerable deprivation to an already deprived group. Alternatively, he may seek to control his fate by using his skill to select winning horses. Sport also allows the working man openly to challenge authority by barracking the referee, umpire, or racing official. Although he himself can rarely triumph over social and economic institutions, his team can defeat its opponents. Thus the personal psychological frustrations and tensions of the working man can be partially released by such group identification. The intense role of sport in such persons' lives, however, means that their reactions to sports events become highly emotional: thus the euphoria of winning or the despair of defeat can easily spill over into disorder, or anything which threatens their enjoyment of their sport can provoke a riot.

Conflict between rival fans also stems from the emotional attachment of supporters to their team. As was pointed out in the early 1890s, 'football in the North is something more than a game . . . it awakes local patriotism to its highest pitch'.¹⁷ The supporters' identification with their teams can be based on several factors, among them geographical attachment, or a common bond of religion, ethnic, or national background. Such identification is often strengthened by the local team providing a source of popular culture in the community. The supporters of that team become an identifiable sub-culture with their team songs and distinctive garb.¹⁸ The team becomes their reference group, conferring a sense of pride and esteem. Where supporters have developed a strong sense of collective identity, then 'us' versus 'them' conflict situations can erupt into disorder with matches becoming symbolic struggles for supremacy between Protestant and Catholic, between one area of the city and another, between England and Scotland. Team, group, and personal status is at stake.

Applying this thesis of structural strains to the period being studied is not easy as we are not certain of the identity of those involved in disorder. Hard empirical data is practically non-existent: at the Hampden riot, for example, there was only one arrest. Contemporary media comment attributed most of the disorder to the working class, but there is the possibility of selective reportage. Moreover, we do know that some of the worst excesses in cricket undoubtedly did not stem from the working class. In the 1860s, an acrimonious clash at Lords between the supporters of Eton and Harrow forced the abandonment of play; and in 1896, at one of the society events of the year, the annual University fixture, the deliberate bowling of no-balls by Cambridge so as to avoid enforcing the follow-on led, in the words of a member of the Oxford side, to "a very hostile demonstration" with many members of the M.C.C., the rul-

ing body of cricket, ‘losing all control over themselves.’ Other reports suggest that the Cambridge team was actually manhandled.¹⁹

At present, the historian cannot even be certain of the social composition of the sports crowd, let alone the sports rioters. Nevertheless, contemporary observations, lists of accident victims, and photographs have led to the suggestion that soccer was followed by the upper levels of manual workers, skilled tradesmen and foremen, and the lower levels of white collar workers, clerks and minor administrators, whereas horse-racing appealed to those on the lowest and the highest rungs of the socio-economic ladder.²⁰ The county cricket crowd was ranked above that of soccer by W. McGregor, even though, as a founder of the Football League, he was anxious to give soccer a respectable image.²¹ Certainly, the timing of the games with Saturday the third day and a result possible before the working man could reach the ground, would lend support to this view. So, too, would the complaint of C.E.B. Russell that few boys at the Lads Clubs, an institution aimed at working class youths, had watched first class cricket but most had seen professional football, possibly because, whereas most soccer stadia were situated in working class areas, only two county cricket grounds, the Oval and Bramall Lane, were similarly located.²²

If social tension and structural strains in society are conducive to sports crowd disorder, then, *ceteris paribus*, it might be expected that crowd behaviour would not have improved in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Indeed, it may have worsened as this period witnessed a growing awareness by many groups in society of their relative economic, social or political deprivation, and a growing militancy in their efforts to change the position. Among other occurrences, the suffragettes took to direct action to support their demands for women’s rights, trade unionists went on strike more frequently and more violently, and socialism established itself in working class politics.²³

There was nothing that individual sports promoters, club committees, or boards of directors could do to remedy social structural strains, even if they appreciated the situation. What they concentrated on were the symptoms rather than the disease, endeavouring to reduce or remove the apparent triggers to disorder. However, a recent social psychological study, which categorised sports crowd disorder according to the apparent major motivation of those involved, has shown that disorder can be sparked off by a variety of circumstances and thus several different control mechanisms may be required.²⁴ The work differentiates five categories of riot and disorder, known as the FORCE typology, a handy mnemonic for frustration, outlawry, remonstrance (protest), confrontation and expressive disorders, all of which can be identified in Victorian and Edwardian sports crowds.

The Hampden disorder of 1909 is a classic case of the *frustration* riot, an outburst which follows the blocking of the spectator's legitimate expectations regarding access to the game and the way it will be played and adjudicated. In this case many fans had expected extra time to be played, but officialdom decreed otherwise. Perceived injustice can also be a source of frustration, as when a bookmaker refuses to pay out winning punters, or when fans believe that an incompetent or biased official has cost their team or horse victory or that a jockey, player, or team has not tried its best.

Outlawry disorder occurs when groups of violence-prone spectators use sports events to act out their anti-social activities by attacking officials, fighting with rival fans, and destroying property. Such crowd violence is seen as the work of a delinquent or criminal element. It is difficult to pin-point historical examples particularly as this type of rioter no doubt would join in most other disturbances. A possible indication of their existence comes from a critic of those professional sports organised for betting purposes, who claimed that such sports attracted 'a varying but always large blackguard element,' 'a mob of loafers' and 'a base rabble,' and that 'disorder and attacks on the police are not things of rare occurrence among the rougher spectators.' Another critic of horse-racing crowds blamed the railways for 'facilitating the movement of bands of indolent roughs.' A further lead is the comment on soccer crowds that 'it all depends upon the measure of civilisation in your locality whether there is or is not a good deal of fighting after the match.'²⁵ Unfortunately, all these comments suffer from being labels applied by outside observers who can only indirectly perceive the motivations of the groups involved.

The third category of disorder is that of *remonstrance*. This occurs when a section of the crowd uses the sports event as an arena for the expression of political grievances. In the early twentieth century sports events were used as a means of political protest by the suffragettes. Sport was a bastion of male chauvinism and exclusiveness: thus, when the suffragettes turned to militant protest, sport was an obvious target. Throughout 1913 racecourses, bowling greens, soccer and cricket pitches, and golf courses had their turf tom up and their buildings set on fire. And it was at a sports event, the 1913 Derby, that the suffragettes found their martyr when Emily Davison threw herself under the King's horse and was killed, though this may have been a quest for publicity rather than feminist action directed at the attitudes of the racing authorities.²⁶

Confrontation disorder can break out when spectators from rival religious, geographic, ethnic, or national groups come into conflict. Given the appropriate circumstances, smouldering resentment can easily spark into open hostility. Local derby games where regional supremacy is at stake are a prime setting for confrontation disturbances.

Finally, in an *expressive* riot the intense emotional arousal which accompanies victory or defeat, particularly if it is exciting or unexpected, triggers uninhibited behaviour. When Blackburn Olympic, essentially a working class team, beat the Old Etonians in the 1883 Cup Final to take the trophy to the North for the first time, their supporters reputedly went mad with excitement, particularly as the result had been snatched during extra time.²⁷

What is apparent from the above categorization is that no single control measure could cope with all the triggers to disorder and that action which might be suitable for one situation could be inappropriate in another. To some extent, the sports promoters learned this lesson by trial and error and rules for crowd control took time to evolve, but by the end of the nineteenth century five major methods had been devised: improvements in the conduct of the sport, improvements in the organization of the sports event, segregation within the crowd, control of ancillary activities, and the use of control agents.

First, there were efforts to improve the conduct of the sport. In most cases, decisions in this regard were taken by the national controlling bodies and not always with the major aim of improving crowd behaviour. Nevertheless, with less overt malpractice to anger the crowd, the spectators' propensity to riot would clearly be reduced. In racing, the Jockey Club took steps to clean up the sport by introducing revocable licenses for trainers, jockeys, officials, and even for racecourses.²⁸ In soccer, the referee was given powers to send players off the field for serious misconduct and suspensions were introduced for such offenses. Little clean-up was required in cricket: indeed 'it's not cricket' as a cry against unfairness was soon to become part of the English language.²⁹

In racing, the measures taken probably had an effect because, although there were instances of foul riding in a tight finish, most misconduct was premeditated and thus susceptible to a deterrent. In soccer, however, there was far more scope for heat-of-the-moment violence.³⁰ Moreover, the power given to referees could aggravate disorder because of the number of decisions which they had to make during the game, any one of which could spark off a riot; and, even though refereeing standards improved with the introduction of exams and supervisors, the partisan supporter would still cast doubts on the neutrality and efficiency of the match officials. Cricket umpires rarely seem to have been accused of bias, possibly because allegiance to a *county* cricket team was less strong than that to a *local* soccer club.³¹ What could be dealt with in soccer, as in racing, was premeditated corruption and the ensuing policies of suspending players who even gambled on matches, let alone fixed them, led to an acknowledgement by a severe critic of the game that it seemed 'irreproachably straight.'³² Cricket remained above suspicion: according to Wisden's *Almanac* of 1895, 'no whisper of matches being sold for money is ever heard . . . no charge of cheating is brought against players.'³³

Improved organization of the sports events did much to reduce the chances of frustration riots. A simple but effective improvement was to have races and matches start on time. Traditionally, race meetings had commenced in the morning, and the times of the afternoon races depended upon the quality of the luncheon partaken by the race committee. Even then, the method of starting races with a shout of 'no' or 'go' was apt to lead to false starts. The enclosed courses ran to a much stricter timetable, thanks to the employment of professional starters and, from the late 1890s, the use of the starting gate.³⁴ In soccer in the 1870s and 1880s, matches frequently had to be abandoned because darkness fell; but, with the coming of professionalism and the development of leagues, a balance was struck between starting late enough to allow fans to get from their work and early enough to allow the games to finish.³⁵ With cricket, the spectator's complaint was not so much starting time, but the delays which occurred between innings or between the fall of wickets. Generally, this did not lead to more than verbal abuse, but in the longer run failure to combat the problem led to a public dissatisfied with the resulting plethora of drawn games and preferring to spend their entrance money elsewhere.³⁶

Segregation of the crowd, another method of crowd control, was first of all a matter of managing the physical environment by fencing off parts of the courses and grounds; and then it was a question of controlling entry to the various enclosures, stands, and terraces. This was achieved in several ways. One was differential pricing. By the late 1880s the more important soccer clubs had settled on a 6d admission to the ground and an extra 6d for the stand. With the investment in improved facilities from the 1890s stand prices were increased, though generally the 6d ground admission charge was retained. For example, when Manchester United opened its Old Trafford stadium in 1910, it was still only 6d to enter the ground but 1s, 1s 6d, and 2s for various sections of the covered stand and 5s for a reserved seat in the center stand.³⁷ In cricket, too, extra was paid to enter the various stands.³⁸ The same practice held also in racing. At York, for example, in the 1890s it cost 10s (5s for ladies) to enter the grandstand, 5s for the paddock, and 2s 6d for the second class enclosures.³⁹ Another method of segregation adopted in both racing and cricket was the reservation of particular areas for club members, entry to which was controlled by strict social vetting and high subscription costs. In soccer, club membership seems to have been more open socially, but, apart from committee members and their friends, viewing privileges were restricted to first claim on season tickets.

Both differential pricing and the formation of clubs were primarily economic policies, designed to increase returns by supplying different markets at different prices, but they did have the indirect effect of making it easier to contain any disorder to the areas in which it broke out, thus making the disturbance less offensive to those elsewhere and also possibly making it easier to put

down the trouble.⁴⁰ Unfortunately it is also possible that in certain circumstances segregation may have encouraged disorder. Crowd density, a significant influence on spectator behaviour, may have been intensified in certain areas. Moreover, if segregation led to the grouping together of similarly-motivated, one-class spectators, then, as communication is easier when persons have pre-existing group ties, the dynamics of crowd disorder could spread faster.⁴¹ The best policy regarding segregation was the absolute exclusion of undesirable spectators. Traditionally, at race meetings segregation had been a matter of keeping the 'riff-raff' out of the stands and other exclusive areas. With the development of the enclosed meeting, however, the lower elements of the racing world were not even allowed on the course. In soccer, too, the authorities insisted that clubs exclude known troublemakers. Policies of exclusion at all gate-money sports became easier with the adoption of the turnstile in the late nineteenth century.

Most sports promoters also took action to control the ancillary activities associated with their sport, in particular drinking and gambling. Less gambling, or at least more stringently controlled gambling, could lead to fewer precipitating factors, and less alcohol might prevent some sections of the crowd from becoming uninhibited and possibly guard against false perception of events.

No doubt gambling losses and alcohol had contributed to many a crowd fracas at pre-enclosed race meetings, but before spectators began to pay at the gate, rentals from the gaming and drinking booths were vital to the prize-funds.⁴² With the emergence of the gate-money course, the number of beer tents was reduced and gambling was restricted to betting on the races and the cardsharps, thimblemen, and even/odd table operators were no longer welcomed. In fact the racecourse executives chose to enforce laws which they had previously disregarded. Legislation of 1853 had made it illegal to monopolize a place for betting purposes and this was interpreted as outlawing gaming booths; and the Vagrancy Act Amendment Act of 1873, which made it illegal to use betting machines, was taken as ruling out roulette and even/odd tables.⁴³ However, racing faced a special problem in controlling its ancillary activities in that traditionally races had been associated with local holidays and people had come to race meetings in expectation of a carnival. The race promoters were faced with having to persuade the race crowd to accept a dampening of the traditional holiday atmosphere. Their solution was to change the nature of the racing along with that of the race meeting. Long-distance, staying events were increasingly replaced by sprints, handicaps, and two-year-old races, all of which had a degree of unpredictability sufficient to make for exciting racing and betting.⁴⁴

Racing had a symbiotic relationship with gambling and could not afford to do without it. Gambling had no such importance for either soccer or cricket, but

as the law stood in the late nineteenth century,⁴⁵ gambling was believed to be legal at any sports events at which gate-money had been charged, providing that the betting was on the event being staged. It thus seemed that the ground proprietors could do little to prevent gambling. Indeed, it was felt that the police could not eject bookmakers from the ground even if the promoters requested them to do so. Fortunately for the promoters, new interpretations of the law towards the turn of the century made it difficult for the bookmaker to set up business inside the grounds. The 1853 legislation regarding the monopolization of a place for betting purposes was deemed as preventing the bookmaker from standing on a box, under an umbrella, or using any colours or placards to draw attention to himself.⁴⁶ Cricket did not have much of a problem to contend with, but certainly in soccer enforcement of such an interpretation was seen as necessary because of crowd misconduct associated with betting. In the 1890s referees were being assaulted by losing gamblers, but then firm action by the clubs and football authorities, assisted by the police, appears to have reduced drastically the volume of betting taking place at the grounds.⁴⁷ In the immediate pre-war years, however, coupon betting developed and there was little the football promoters could do about it. Thus, it is possible that spectators had bet on the matches which they were watching and this could have had an adverse effect on their behaviour.

It is difficult to determine how much drinking went on at cricket and soccer matches. Certainly in the early twentieth century, it was claimed that 'really there is comparatively little drinking done at football matches,' but, as the claimant was the founder of the Football League and anxious to promote a respectable image for soccer, his views have to be treated with caution.⁴⁸ An impression gained from a reading of Lancashire County Cricket Club's minutes concerning catering arrangements suggests that bar facilities were provided primarily for the spectators in the more expensive parts of the ground. It certainly seems that drinking was an accepted part of sports spectatorship and thus, even though limited and controlled, a possible contributing factor to crowd disturbance.

A final method employed in all the sports was the use of control agents in the form of gatemen, stewards, and the police. Additionally, most soccer grounds allowed free admission to soldiers and sailors in uniform in the expectation that they would lend the police a hand if trouble broke out as in the 1890 FA Cup Final.⁴⁹ Gatemen at the enclosed race meetings improved in caliber once they became subject to Jockey Club licence, and the best of them would be employed at many meetings and, by travelling the racing circuits, would be able to familiarize themselves with defaulting bookmakers and itinerant troublemakers.⁵⁰ Gatemen at cricket, and especially at football, possibly found identification of potential bothercausers easier because of the more regular nature of their events. Law and order outside the grounds and courses was part

of the normal duty of the police, but payment had to be made for their use inside. Initially, the number to be employed was left to the discretion of the ground committees and course executives, but certainly in the early twentieth century the relevant chief constable made the decision for soccer matches.⁵¹ If insufficient police were used, there could be problems, as in the 1892 Scottish Cup Final when 150 foot police and four on horseback were unable to prevent an invasion of the field; however, the lesson was learned and thirty mounted police plus 200 on foot were able to cope at the replay.⁵² The basic function of the control agents was to enforce compliance with the regulations and to deter miscreants, but they were also there to act to contain any trouble if it did break out. Although it is possible that the crowd could be provoked by the tactics or the demeanour of the control agents, only one reported incident has come to light, at Lancaster races in 1840, and this was political in nature.⁵³

IV

The sports promoters and sports authorities could do little to rectify the societal, structural strains which may have underlain the outbursts of crowd disorder. Instead, they concentrated upon a combination of reformatory and repressive methods designed either to remove the triggers to disorder or to restrict and contain any disturbances which did break out. These policies achieved some degree of success. Hutchinson's study of soccer crowds shows that by the early twentieth century, media mention of field invasions was less frequent.⁵⁴ There is other statistical evidence to support the implication of Hutchinson's view. In the period 1895-97, twenty-one clubs had their grounds closed by the Football Association and a further twenty-three clubs were cautioned because of the misbehaviour of fans, but in the years 1910-12 only four grounds were closed and only five cautions issued.⁵⁵ Quantified data on racing crowd behaviour are not available, but remarks of two knowledgeable racing writers enable a contrast to be drawn between some enclosed courses in the early twentieth century where "ruffianism [is] practically unknown" and the position "outside the enclosures [where] the unfortunate state of our racecourses is too notorious to need comment."⁵⁶

In cricket, however, there were numerous allegations that crowd behaviour worsened.⁵⁷ There were almost as many reasons advanced to explain the change. Among them was the claim that "leagues and cups have been instituted for cricket as for football" and that the press were encouraging "the football element among the spectators at our cricket grounds."⁵⁸ Yet perhaps the main reason was that the wishes of the spectators were not being adequately considered. For one thing, no official steps were taken over the increase in slow and negative play, and over the time-wasting which were rendering the game less entertaining.⁵⁹ It was also a question of poor facilities and amenities.⁶⁰ Cricket was bringing trouble on itself by taking the crowd's entrance fees and then not giving value for the money.⁶¹

Yet what the complaints isolated was verbal not physical aggression, and such barracking was commonplace and generally accepted as part of the game in both soccer and racing.⁶² The attitudes of the cricket authorities are epitomized in the remarks of P.F. Warner, amateur England captain and staunch pillar of the M.C.C., that the spectator

“should not, for instance, ‘boo’ or jeer at the players. The only time he has a right to act thus is when a player has been obviously guilty of an unsportsmanlike or ungentlemanly action, or is clearly not trying. Then I think he might justifiably express his disapproval in an obvious manner, though the better and more dignified course would be to leave the ground. Too often spectators, ignorant of the finer points of the game, cheer ironically, and even make rude remarks. These people should be dealt with firmly, and told that they will not be allowed to stay in the ground if they persist in their attitude, their sixpence being returned to them. It is contrary to the dignity of any cricket ground to allow the cricketers to be subjected to undeserved censure.”

“The truth of it,” Warner maintained, “is that the attitude of the public towards cricket has changed.”⁶³ What he failed to add was that it was equally true that the attitude of the authorities had not changed. They refused to accept that the spectator was not content to pay his money and remain a passive observer. In reality, cricket had more to fear from spectators voting with their feet and not attending: and this is what they were beginning to do in the decade before the first world war.⁶⁴

Why the cricket crowds never became as violent as those at race meetings and soccer matches is a matter for conjecture. Certainly, the absence or low level of gambling on cricket reduced one stimulus to disorder. Possibly another answer lies in the larger middle class element among cricket spectators for whom structural strains relating to social or economic tensions might be less than for working class football fans or turf gamblers. Or it might simply be a matter of the relatively drawn-out nature of cricket matches generally resulting in less tension among the crowd, particularly among one which usually was seated, thereby lessening body contact between spectators and also clearly demarcating personal territory, both factors which reduce the scope for offense to be taken.

V

Once sports promoters began to take steps to counteract crowd disorder, then the behaviour of gate-money sports crowds improved, in so far as riots, field invasions, and general spectator violence diminished. Actions taken to improve the conduct and organization of the sports events did much to remove the triggers to frustration, confrontation, and expressive disorders; the segregation of various sections of the crowd and the absolute exclusion of other spectators reduced the danger of confrontation and outlawry disorders; and the stricter controls on gambling and drinking and the deterrent effect of control agents lessened the possibility of all kinds of disturbance, save perhaps for

remonstrance disorders. If trouble did break out, then the segregation of the crowd, the restricted availability of alcohol, and the presence of the police generally acted to weaken the contagion dynamics of disorder and to contain the disturbance.

Crowd disorder, however, could not be totally eliminated. Not all the triggers to disturbance could be removed. Little could be done, for example, about heat-of-the-moment violence on the field of play. Nor were the perceptions of the partisan spectator likely to be influenced by legislation or entreaties from the clubs, particularly when drinking and gambling remained an accompaniment of many sports events. It is also possible that some of the measures intended to solve the disorder may actually have aggravated the problem. Improved organization and less misconduct helped swell attendance figures, and crowd size and density can have a significant influence on spectator disorder. Segregation of the crowd, too, could have increased crowd density. Moreover, the social structural strains that are an important antecedent to disorder were still apparent. In fact, as mentioned above, the working man was increasingly becoming aware of his relative economic and social deprivation. Indeed, in the light of the working class's growing militancy in political and economic life, it might have been anticipated that sports crowd disorder would have worsened. That it did not is a measure of the efficiency of the control policies of the sports organisers.

Notes

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6. *Scottish Athletic Journal*, 23 august, 1887.
7. *Glasgow Herald*, 19 April, 1909; *Minutes of Scottish Football Association*, 19 April, 7 June, 1909.
8. J. Hutchinson, 'Some Aspects of Football Crowds Before 1914,' in Society for the Study of Labour History Conference Papers on *The Working Class and Leisure* (mimeo, University of Sussex, 1974), paper 13, p. 11.
9. English examples of soccer crowd disorder can be found in the author's 'Ungentlemanly Conduct: The Control of Soccer Crowd Behaviour in England, 1888-1914,' in T. C. Smout, ed., *The Search For Wealth and Stability* (London: Macmillan, 1979) pp. 139-154.
10. 'Modern Horse Racing,' *Edinburgh Review*, 151 (1880), 412; 'Turf Ethics in 1868,' *Broadway* (1868), 379-380; *Hansard*, 3rd series, 237, 29 January, 1878; 240, 13 June 1878; 243, 14 February, 1879; E. Spencer, *The Great Game* (London: 1900), pp. 223-226.

11. L. H. Curzon, *A Mirror of the Turf* (London: 1892), p. 328; J. Fairfax-Blakeborough, *The Analysis of the Turf* (London: 1927), p. 271.
12. C. W. Searle, *The Origins and Development of Sunninghill and Ascot* (London: 1937), p. 82; D. Laird, *Royal Ascot* (London: Hodder & Stroughton, 1976), p. 93.
13. Letter to John Bowes, 7 June 1870. *Racing and Personal Correspondence of John Bowes*. D/St Box 162. Durham County Record Office.
14. *Scores of Lancashire C.C.C.*, 22-24 July, 1907.
15. Home Gordon, 'The Champagne of Cricket,' *Badminton Magazine*, 27 (1908), 176; Home Gordon, 'The Past Cricket Season,' *Badminton Magazine*, 25 (1907), 413; Home Gordon, 'Cricket and Crowds,' *Badminton Magazine*, 29 (1909), 199; R. W. W., 'Illustrated Interviews—W. G. Grace,' *Strand Magazine*, 10 (1895).
16. See, for example, R. Ingham et al., *Football Hooliganism* (London: Inter-Action, 1978); P. Marsh et al., *The Rules of Disorder* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978); Sports Council, *Public Disorder and Sporting Events* (London: Sports Council, 1978); M. D. Smith, 'Sport and Collective Violence' in D. W. Ball & J. W. Loy, *Sport and Social Order: Contributions to the Sociology of Sport* (Reading, Mass: Addison Wesley, 1975).
17. 'Football Notes,' *Tinsley's Magazine*, XLVI (1890/91), 65.
18. These were in existence by the 1880s. See, e.g., *Scottish Athletic Journal*. 15 February. 5 April. 2 August. 1887.
19. P. F. Warner, *Lords 1787-1945* (London: White Lion, 1974 ed.), pp. 54-55, 113; W. J. Ford, 'Thoughts on Spectators,' *Badminton Magazine*, 8 (1899), 529; B. Dobbs, *Edwardians at Play* (London: Pelham, 1973), p. 139.
20. Hutchinson, pp. 7-9; Vamplew, pp. 131-137.
21. 'Characteristics of the Crowd' in B. O. Corbett et al., *Football* (London: 1907), p. 19.
22. P. F. Warner, 'The End of the Cricket Season,' *Badminton Magazine*, 35 (1912), 397; S. Meacham, *A Life Apart* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1977), p. 167; W. G. Mandle, 'Games People Played: Cricket and Football in England and Victoria in the late Nineteenth Century,' *Historical Studies*, 15 (1973), 515.
23. See S. Meacham, 'The Sense of an Impending Clash: English Working Class Unrest Before the First World War,' *American Historical Review*, 77 (1972), 1343-64; J. Lovell, *British Trade Unions, 1874-1933* (London: Macmillan, 1977); G. Dangerfield, *The Strange Death of Liberal England* (New York: Capricorn, 1963); D. Kynaston, *King Labour: The British Working Class 1850-1914* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1976).
24. L. Mann & P. Pearce, 'Social Psychology of the Sports Spectator,' in D. Glencross, *Psychology and Sport* (Sydney: McGraw Hill, 1979). Unfortunately limitations of time and other resources have not allowed any attempt to assess the relative occurrence of the various types of disorder categorized by Mann & Pearce. For the same reasons the relative efficacy of the various control measures could not be discussed in quantitative terms.
25. 'Rioting at Lillie Bridge,' *Saturday Review*, 64 (1887), 409; 'Turf Ethics,' 379-80; C. Edwardes, 'The New Football Mania,' *The Nineteenth Century*, 32 (1892), 622.
26. Dobbs, p. 178; Vamplew, p. 128. I am informed by Sandra Holton, Ph.D. student at Stirling University, that there was a background to the deliberate choice of the King's horse in that the suffragettes had been trying to win over the King but had not succeeded.
27. G. Green, *The Official History of the FA Cup* (London: Naldrett Press, 1949), p. 34.
28. Vamplew, pp. 94-6.
29. As a comment on unfair play within cricket the phrase was established by the 1860s (Bowen, p. 112). It became accepted in its wider context by the very early 1900s. E.H. Partridge, *A Dictionary of Catch Phrases* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977), p. 125.
30. That foul play is difficult to control by punitive measures is suggested by the SFA figures for players suspended for violent conduct. Despite a firm policy of meting out punishment to offenders the number of sendings off for such misconduct increased from 0.47 per club in 1895/6-1899/1900 to 0.88 in the period 1905/6-1909/10. (Calculated from data in *Scottish Football Association Annual Reports*).
31. One writer in the early 1880s maintained that in England 'we want to see good cricket, and are not overwhelmed with mortification when we lose, or puffed up with pride when we win,' though he did allow that at the University match 'local patriotism is interested.' ('Cricket Fifty Years Ago,' *Saturday Review*, 53 (1882), 524). However, the 1880s and 1890s, and early 1900s witnessed the formation of several competitive cricket leagues in the Midlands and the North of England in which apparently winning mattered much more than in county cricket. Whether this affected the behaviour of the crowd is difficult to say, though Roy Gen-

- ders' history of the leagues does not mention any crowd disorder. (*League Cricket in England*, London. Werner Laurie: 1952).
32. Edwardes, 623.
 33. *Wisden's Cricketers' Almanac* (London, 1895). p. lxxvii.
 34. Vamplew. pp. 117-8.
 35. *Minutes of the Football League Management Committee*. 11 November. 1896.
 36. Home Gordon, Cricket Now-And-Then, p. 291; H. G. Hutchinson, 'The Parlous Condition of Cricket.' *National Review*, 35 (1900), 790; 'Test Match Cricket of 1912.' *Blackwood's Magazine*. 192 (1912). 857.
 37. P. M. Young, *A History of British Football* (London: Sportsmans Book Club. 1969). p. 164.
 38. *Minutes of Lancashire Country Cricket Club*, 10 May, 1878, 24 April, 1899; *Accounts of Marylebone Cricket Club*, passim.
 39. *York Racing Committee Records*—Collection of Racecards.
 40. 'Lord Cadogan on the Turf,' *Saturday Review*, 59 (1885). 79.
 41. Smith, p. 313.
 42. It is significant that complaints about the behaviour of the race crowd at Darlington in the 1840s stressed 'the great rioting and drunkenness in the booths on the racecourse.' William Clayton to John Bowes. 10 December 1846. *Racing and Personal Correspondence of John Bowes*, D/St Box 162. Durham CRO.
 43. Vamplew. pp. 140-1.
 44. Vamplew. p. 141.
 45. For a discussion of the law and gambling see Vamplew, pp. 199-212 and D. M. Downes et al., *Gambling, Work and Leisure* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1976). pp. 29-43. See also, R. McKibben, 'Working-Class Gambling in Britain 1880-1939,' *Past and Present* No. 82 (1979). 147-178.
 46. Vamplew, pp. 207-8.
 47. G. O. Smith, 'Football', *Pall Mall Magazine*, 13 (1897). 370-371; E. Needham. *Association Football* (London, 1901), p. 7; *Select Committee on Betting*, 1901 V, q 376,2906.
 48. McGregor, pp. 23-4.
 49. Green, p. 30.
 50. Vamplew, p. 140.
 51. *Minutes of Scottish Football Association*, 27 February, 1912.
 52. *Scottish Football Association Annual Report*, 1891/92.
 53. R. B. Storch, "The Plague of Blue Locusts: Police Reform and Popular Resistance in Northern England, 1840-57," *International Review of Social History*, 20 (1975), 77-78.
 54. Hutchinson, p. 14.
 55. Calculated from the Minutes of the Football Association Council and Emergency Committee. However, it is possible that Scottish football fans did not conform to this pattern. Figures of clubs being cautioned by the Scottish Football Association for crowd misbehaviour increased from an average of 5 or 6 in seasons 1903/4-1908/9 to an average of 19 in the three pre-war seasons (calculated from *Scottish Football Association Annual Reports*). No aggregate earlier figures are available. This increase may be partially a statistical illusion in that it reflects a firmer line taken by the Scottish Football Association and the latter years include suspensions issued by the Scottish Junior Football Association which unfortunately cannot be isolated from the aggregate figures. In addition, it would seem that the Scottish Football Association was not penalizing clubs solely for invasion and assaults but for 'objectionable practices by spectators [such as] the blowing of whistles, the prevalence of obscene language, and the use of ratchets and bells' (*Scottish Football Association Minutes*, 26 October, 1910). The author is currently investigating other differences between Scottish and English soccer in the hope of throwing light on this phenomenon.
 56. R. Ord, 'Horseracing in the North of England,' *Badminton Magazine*, 14 (1903), 174; H. Graves, 'A Philosophy of Sport,' *Contemporary Review*, 78 (1900), 888.
 57. See, e.g., E. Ensor, 'The Football Madness,' *Contemporary Review*, 74 (1898), 757; Ford, 527; Home Gordon, 'The Past Cricket Season,' *Badminton Magazine*, 21 (1905), 437; Home Gordon, 'Cricket and Crowds,' *Badminton Magazine*, 29 (1909) 198.
 58. E. H. D. Sewell, 'Has Public Interest in First Class Cricket Declined?,' *Badminton Magazine*, 37 (1913). 193; Ensor, 75.

59. P. Trevor, 'The Future of Cricket,' *Fortnightly Review*. 80 (1906). 532-533; Home Gordon. 'The Coming Cricket Season,' *Badminton Magazine*, 30 (1910); 'Cricket Prospects.' *Saturday Review*. 12 May. 1900.
60. H. S. Altham, 'Then and Now—Cricket,' *Badminton Magazine*. 36 (1913). see also Warner 'The End of the Cricket Season,' *Badminton Magazine*, 35 (1912). 397-398.
61. See, e.g., 'Test Match Cricket of 1912,' *Blackwoods Magazine*. 192 (1912). 854.
62. Although the Scottish Football Association objected to this behaviour (see note 55), the Football Association Committee which visited the Stockport County ground in 1911, following its closure for crowd violence in 1910, found nothing to censure in the fact that 'there was shouting and strong remarks and improper language used by some of the spectators towards visiting players.' (Minutes of *Football Association Emergency Committee* 25 September—15 November, 1911).
63. Warner, 'The End of the Cricket Season,' 396-7.
64. Trevor, 532-3; Home Gordon, 'What is Wrong with Cricket?,' *Fortnightly Review*. 93 (1913). 1183-7; Home Gordon. 'Is first Class Cricket Losing its Popularity?,' *Badminton Magazine*. 21 (1905). 328-334.

