

31 May 1985

PRIME MINISTER

FOOTBALL PRESS DIGEST

The Brussels tragedy dominates all the news still. Your press conference and the announcements it contained are widely reported across front pages.

- All accounts say Liverpool fans were to blame.
- You ask Millichip and Croker to return for urgent talks, and you want them to pull England out of European matches, before UEFA kicks us out.
- Before leaving Mexico, Millichip hints that he might well do this.
- UEFA will not meet till July 2, but Secretary Hans Bangerter threatens drastic action.
- Football worldwide would welcome voluntary withdrawal by Britain.
- You send messages to Italian and Belgian Governments.
- Government gives £250,000 to disaster appeal.
- Kinnock supports the donation.
- You will today meet reporters present at the stadium.
- You want to meet John Smith.
- You have brought forward meeting on hooliganism.
- Government will introduce emergency bill banning alcohol.
- If Opposition agrees, Bill could also control ticket distribution, require segregation of supporters and enable Transport Police to keep trouble makers off channel ferries.
- Belgium bans British clubs and lays blame squarely at Britain's door.
- Peter Bottomley visits hospitals and reports to you. He confesses he was ashamed to be British.
- British clubs say a European ban would cost them millions.
- John Smith and some Liverpool fans say National Front started the trouble.
- Italy in mourning. Returning fans blame Britain for violence and Belgium for poor arrangements.
- TV film of ground shows a Juventus fan firing a gun at police. Cartridge shells found later at the ground.
- Popplewell inquiry will be extended to take in lessons learned from Brussels.

- Both you and Neil Macfarlane want compulsory membership cards.
- BBC defends decision to screen the match.
- Scottish, Welsh and Northern Ireland clubs hope to escape any ban.
- Neil Macfarlane's warnings of dangers were ignored.
- The Mail's Jeff Powell (you meet him this morning) has a two page "timetable" of Wednesday's night's events.
- Guardian's Charles Burgess (he's also in this morning) reports that Liverpool officials have questioned police tactics as Belgium starts an inquiry.
- Express: You deliver an impassioned plea to football fans to "shop" the thugs. Emergency Bill will ban alcohol; force fans to carry identity cards; order close-circuit TV; encourage foreign courts to impose stiff sentences on British louts.
- Star: You say your blood was boiling and demand Britain pulls out.
- Sun: Six "Nazi" soccer thugs who support Chelsea boast of causing the Brussels tragedy. Rest of the world united to condemn British fans.
- Mirror: You want Britain out and will speed up legislation to crack down on drink and give transport police more powers.

SOME HEADLINES

- Mail: "England the Outcast"; "Our disgrace - by Maggie".
- Star: "Chant of Murder" from Liverpool fans.
- Mirror: "Outcasts - Europe takes revenge".
- Guardian: "Thatcher set to demand FA ban".

COMMENT

- Telegraph says you came closer to admitting defeat than ever before when, at your press conference, you appealed for help from the public. Ministers should now request a two year ban on European matches.
- Mail: We must ban all alcohol; insist on membership cards; use TV monitoring to catch thugs, and, once caught, dish out stiff sentences.
- Express: FA must pull out of Europe. Draconian measures must be given a head of steam; drink ban, membership cards and travel ban must be in place by next season.
- Star: Britain must serve 5 years exile.

- Mirror: Banning drink is not enough. Jail sentences must be harsh. Blame rests wholly with British fans.
- Guardian: Britain must pull out of Europe for three years and pour "every problem solving resource" into putting our house in order.
- Times: Britain must not export "rotten meat". Football must pay the price of Brussels. It must be made safe at all costs.

JEAN CAINES