

PRIME MINISTER

LUTON V MILLWALL

The letter from the Minister for Sport explains some of the background. The FA decision certainly looks inconceivable, in the light of the events at Luton alone, let alone Millwall's record and the subsequent horrors at Bradford and Brussels.

The FA have of course insisted that their rules are strong enough. This argument now looks a joke. You will want to address ^{some} words to the FA on this at your forthcoming meeting.

Mark Addison

(MARK ADDISON)

19 July 1985

CC 413



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Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
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My ref:

Your ref:

19 July 1985

Dear Prime Minister

LUTON V MILLWALL: RULING OF THE FA APPEALS COMMITTEE

I have no doubt you will have shared my utter frustration over the decision taken yesterday by the FA Appeals Committee chaired by Bert Millichip to quash the guilty judgement on Millwall and to reduce the penalties imposed on Luton following the serious crowd disorder at their match on 13 March. This development clearly has a bearing on our next meeting with the Football Authorities. We are preparing a paper following the meetings of my Working Group which will inter alia assess the implications of the Appeals Committee's decision for our future policy and posture. In the meantime you may be interested in the following background although I should tell you that I have made my feelings very plain in a telephone conversation with Bert Millichip this morning.

Millwall's record is of course well known. The Club's ground has been closed by the FA as a disciplinary measure in 1934, 1947, 1950 and 1978. Millwall have appeared before the FA Commission of Inquiry five times since 1977/78.

Luton's record is also poor. They have appeared before the Commission of Inquiry four times since 1975/76. On each of these occasions they had to answer for incidents at their own ground. This certainly seems to point to a weakness in organisation or ground structure - and we cannot expect this ruling to encourage them to make the necessary changes.

We are asking the FA for an explanation of this decision. They surround such decisions with an aura of confidentiality but I think you will agree with me that in this case we must insist upon some disclosure of their reasons and the implication for policy.

I am copying this to Patrick Jenkin and Giles Shaw.

Yours sincerely

Paul Heron

PP NEIL MACFARLANE

Approved by the Minister and signed in his absence



COMMERCIAL

