



FSF NEWS: FOOTBALL FANS DEMAND MEETING WITH OLYMPIC STADIUM CHIEFS [IMMEDIATE RELEASE 02-02-11]

Fans of Leyton Orient, Tottenham Hotspur, and West Ham have demanded a meeting with the Olympic Park Legacy Company (OPLC) before it makes its recommendation on the future use of the Olympic Stadium in east London. The OPLC was established by the Government and the Mayor of London to deal with the Olympic sites and venues after the London 2012 Games.

As well as backing supporters' demands to meet with the OPLC, the Football Supporters' Federation (FSF) is also opposed to the idea of Spurs or West Ham moving into the stadium in Stratford. The FSF is working with supporters at all three clubs and has been in touch with Crystal Palace supporters who could also be affected.

The Spurs bid proposes to knock down the current stadium and replace it with new structure purpose built for football. The Hammers bid proposes to keep the running track in place. Both bids endanger Leyton Orient's future by bringing a major club with increased capacity right onto their doorstep.

Spurs fans have already set up the WeAreN17 campaign to keep the club in its traditional home of Tottenham in North London. The overwhelming majority of Hammers fans who contacted the FSF voiced their opposition to leaving the Boleyn Ground. A group of West Ham fans called MYWHU has been set up. Orient fans are worried that either club moving in would have an adverse effect on their club.

Commenting on the Spurs bid, WeAre17 spokesperson Darren Alexander said:

"Tottenham is a fundamental part of our club. We've been there since our foundation in 1882. We started playing at our beloved White Hart Lane in 1899. Our current ground has 112 years of football and social history behind it. We won our first major trophy in 1901, the FA Cup, whilst still members of the Southern League, the last non-League club to win it.

"How can we move the club ten miles into the East End, a distinct part of London we have absolutely no connection with whatsoever? It would tear the heart and soul out of Spurs. Why hasn't the club board sat down with supporters and talked about their plans in detail? Football has to be about more than money. The move appears to contravene Premier League rules"

West Ham fan and a spokesperson for MYWHUFC Peter Caton said:

"This will affect not only West Ham fans but visiting supporters and our neighbours Orient. I'm against us leaving Upton Park, especially for a ground that would still have a running track. Talk to any fan who has seen a game at grounds like the Stadio Olimpico in Rome or the old Olimpiastadion in Munich and they'll tell you it's

horrible. There's a reason why the new Allianz Arena in Munich was built specifically for football without a running track. In this country talk to Brighton fans about their temporary ground the Withdean Stadium or remember the old Wembley with its greyhound and speedway tracks. Older QPR fans will remember their season at the old White City Stadium with dread.

"There are many other reasons beside the running track why the Olympic Stadium would be wrong, wrong, wrong for West Ham. We don't always sell out at Upton Park - a ground in which we've invested a fortune in recent years - as things are. It would also betray the promises made to athletics and have a bad effect on our neighbours Leyton Orient. I also wonder what the Council Tax payers of Newham think of the council and mayor offering cheap subsidised loans to a football club with an annual turnover of nearly £100 million a year at a time when services are being cut. The club is already in the borough. It can't even be claimed as inward investment."

Commenting for Leyton Orient fans, chair of the Leyton Orient Fans' Trust Doug Harper said:

"Either Spurs or West Ham moving to Stratford would have an adverse effect on us. Our interpretation is that any move would contravene Premier League and Football League rules. Having a big club move right onto our doorstep couldn't do anything but. There have been constant rumours about moving Orient from Leyton. Spurs or West Ham moving to Stratford can only bring such a horrible prospect closer."

Fans of all three clubs have been in touch with the FSF whose national council has pledged its support for a co-ordinated campaign to stop the plans.

FSF chair Malcolm Clarke said:

"Football appears to have learnt nothing from the Wimbledon move to Milton Keynes. Why the Premier League has waved through these plans we have no idea. It would appear to contradict their own rules.

"The FA has yet to express a view which is disappointing as the guardians of our game. The plans also breach promises made as part of the London 2012 Olympic Bid. There should be no further moves on these plans until both Spurs and West Ham have fully consulted their fans and held a vote of all supporters on them. Orient fans should also be allowed their say too. Likewise supporters of Crystal Palace. We want the Olympic Legacy Company to hear supporters' voices before they take any decision."

The FSF has written the Olympic Park Legacy Company, the Premier League, the FA, Government Ministers and the Mayors of Newham and London to express supporters' opposition to the West Ham and Spurs bids.

- ENDS -

NOTES:

- The Football Supporters' Federation represents more than 180,000 fans of clubs and national teams at all levels throughout England & Wales.
- Fans can join the FSF free of charge and it only takes a few minutes, simply

visit: <http://www.fsf.org.uk/join.php>

- Extracts of Premier League and Football League rules on ground moves are available upon request.

CONTACTS:

- FSF: Steven Powell 07757 211907
- WeAreN17: Darren Alexander 07970 807905
- MYWHUFC: Peter Caton 07770 851362 / Nigel Khan 07951 441243
- LOFT: Doug Harper 07947 311646