



THMT NEWS

Issue 8
Feb. 2013

Welcome to the first edition of THMT News of 2013, and our eighth since the newsletter was launched in March 2011. In this issue there is an update on the long running saga of league reconstruction and details on how you can assist the Honest Men Trust continue their support for Ayr United Football Club and Academy. As always, if you have any comments or queries about anything concerning the Trust please get in touch.

League Reconstruction

Proposals for significant changes in Scottish football are gathering pace, with authorities seemingly wishing to push through changes that will commence at the start of next. Supporters Direct Scotland (SDS), the governing body for Supporters Trusts in Scotland, are ensuring that the voices of ordinary supporters *are* being heard by the decision makers. Head of Supporters Direct Scotland Paul Goodwin said:

“Supporters Direct Scotland has had several meetings with the CEO's of the football bodies at Hampden Park in the past weeks to discuss the League Reconstruction proposals that are now being considered. As part of this process we were invited to prepare a paper for the Professional Game Board which we did after full consultation with our Council (headed up by THMT Secretary Neil Bone). This paper notes the views that we feel are widely held by fans and which we believe the clubs should be taking into consideration.

“Following the submission of this paper the Council was invited to a meeting at the Scottish FA where the detailed League Reconstruction plans drafted jointly by the SPL and SFL were

presented to us. We were pleased that the Scottish FA acted as facilitators for this and we believe the dialogue and views exchanged proved to be useful for both parties”.

The Paper prepared by SDS reiterated the request that the game's decision makers take cognisance of the views of the paying customers in making their decisions, highlighting the following:

- 1) An equitable distribution of wealth within the game that allows promotion of football at all levels and agrees a ratio of Central Funds within top leagues, and across the various leagues;
- 2) A Football Structure where we move away from playing the same teams 'at least' 4 times a season;
- 3) Greater Governance and agreement to retain the principal of one member one vote in any newly constituted league structure and equal voting rights among clubs, nationally. New simple, yet robust rules regarding financial regulation, reducing impropriety, focusing on sustainability and the prevention of landmark events such as Administration and Liquidation;
- 4) Sustainability is vital if we are to grow the game and we want to ensure that all clubs have long-term sustainable futures. We would encourage the Authorities to develop mandatory plans where they are actively engaged with their members to ensure this is a condition of membership, along with the Financial Fair Play Models prescribed by UEFA, but taking into account specific Scottish criteria.

- 5) Transparency and greater democracy in our boardrooms has been a key driver for our organisation from its outset, and we believe that there should be the recognition of the importance of supporters in the business through there being formally constituted “Structured Relationships” between clubs and fans enshrined at every Senior Club in Scotland, and a mandatory condition of membership of the Football Authorities;
- 6) The formalised involvement of the key stakeholders; supporters. As a minimum, Supporters Direct Scotland should be invited to contribute towards helping implement future regulatory infrastructures, through ongoing dialogue with the SFA and League Bodies, as part of a constituted framework of structured quarterly meetings. The medium term position should be that supporters are fully democratically represented within the decision making structures of the game.

The initial four points above are a result of the findings of SDS Surveys in 2011 and 2012 – completed by many Trust members – and which SDS believes are representative of the views of the great majority of football fans. The extent of those surveys is statistically robust enough to suggest that we can readily extrapolate the findings to apply to the whole of the fan base in Scotland. SDS hope that the forthcoming results of the recent National Survey, will further establish these as parameters as League Reconstruction continues.

Paul continued: “We would encourage clubs to continue to urgently discuss and debate the finer details of the proposal with their own fans groups and to urge the Professional Game Board to take into consideration our members' views”.

2012 saw unprecedented debate about the game in Scotland with fans' voices being heard and listened to in a way that they never have before.

The opinions and views of fans of all football clubs on the short and long term issues surrounding the game in Scotland reached our football clubs and the governing bodies authorities and they listened to what was said.

Supporters in Scotland are now leading the debate and believe that there is now a very real opportunity for fans of all clubs to have a direct, positive influence on what happens with the future of Scottish Football.



THE VOICE OF SCOTTISH FOOTBALL

‘Scottish Fans’ has been developed by SDS and funded by the Scottish Government. It is the place for all fans to engage in the important debates safe in the knowledge that those views will be presented to the football authorities. SDS have representation and access to the Scottish Government, The SFA, The SPL and The SFL and any views gathered will also be fed into the UK Government through Supporters Direct south of the border.

We would urge all supporters to engage with the Scottish Fans website (www.scottishfans.org), like their Facebook page and follow them on twitter to keep up to date and, more importantly, get involved in the debate.

Quiz Night

THMT are hosting a Football Quiz on **Friday 15th March** and hope United fans will come along to test their knowledge and help boost Trust funds. The night kicks off at 7pm in the Ally MacLeod Hospitality Suite at Somerset Park. We're looking for teams of four – Trust members, Ayr fans or otherwise – to battle it out for the title of brainiest supporter.

We are long running sponsors of the Ayr United Football Academy, contributing over £1000 a season and also back a number of Ayr United's commercial opportunities, including this season sponsoring the back of the teamsheet and entering the Shirt Sponsorship Draw. Proceeds from our Football Quiz, in addition to our Goalden Goal competition, along with member subscriptions, will go directly to continuing this support.

Entry for a team of four people is £50. Please get in touch to book your place and look out for more details in the coming weeks!

Trust help Boab top £20k

It can't have escaped your attention the remarkable fundraising efforts of singing sensation Somerset Boab. Starting off selling CD's for £10, Boab's target was to sell 200 to raise £2000 to help manager Mark Roberts strengthen his playing squad, Boab has now managed to raise a remarkable £20,000, thanks to donations from Bodog, Chairman Lachlan Cameron and hundreds of generous supporters.

To help Boab reached his revised target of £20,000, THMT donated a signed Ross Robertson away shirt, which we received after members voted to sponsor Ross' shirt last season. After a tense bidding war on Boab's Facebook page the winning bid at midnight on Friday was

£90. Well done Boab and everyone who bought a CD or donated to the cause!



Goalden Goal

Thank you to everyone who has signed up for the Goalden Goal competition we launched in November. 49 of our 90 minute slots have been snapped up raising over £600 for the Trust. It's not too late to join in on the action – there are 10 matches left, each giving you the opportunity to win a minimum of £25 for just £1 a shot.

For more information or to sign up visit: <http://www.thehonestmentrust.co.uk/goaldengoal/>

Get in touch.

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