

# Near Misses

## ‘It couldn’t happen here...’

*...Hillsborough should not be regarded as a freak occurrence, incapable of happening elsewhere. All those responsible for certifying, using and supervising sports grounds should take a hard look at their arrangements and keep doing so. Complacency is the enemy of safety.*

Lord Justice Taylor  
The Hillsborough Stadium Disaster Final Report, January 1990

*The events of Sunday 11 July 2021 (Euro Sunday) at Wembley Stadium were a 'near miss'. I am clear that we were close to fatalities and/or life-changing injuries for some, potentially many, in attendance.*

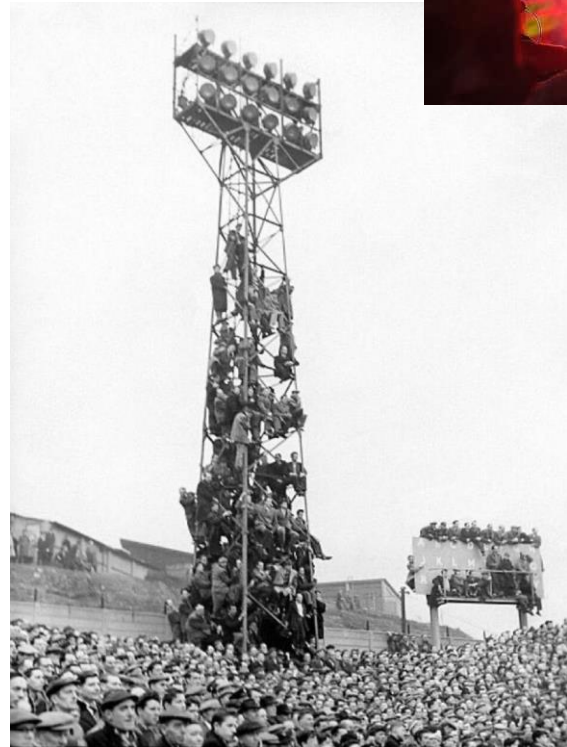
The Baroness Casey of Blackstock DBE CB

December 2021

# History of disasters & near misses

- Hillsborough disaster 1989 – near miss FA Cup Semi-Final 1981
- Astroworld Festival disaster 2021 – near miss 2019
- Hostile reconnaissance at sports grounds
- Stade de France – Paris 13 November 2015 (France v Germany)
- Stade de France - Paris 28 May 2022 (UEFA ECL Final)
- Hampden Park – Calvin Harris gig 2 July 2022

# Is this a near miss?



**Leading safety, supporting live sport**

**What is a near miss?**

## Definition



**Near miss:** an event that, while not causing harm, has the potential to cause injury or ill health.

HSE & GG/SG03



# Why are near misses important?

- Opportunity for learning
- Safety culture
- Incident prevention
- Recognised as critical for safety in aviation, medicine, emergency services – ASRS (USA), CIRAS (UK), JOL Online (UK)



# Who is responsible for investigating?

## Ground management

- No specific legal duty (unless comes under RIDDOR)
- BUT duty to protect employees & the public under HSAW
- Learning from near misses is part of good safety management

## Local authorities

- Safety Certificate

# Role of the SGSA

- Ensure LAs are carrying out their role effectively
- Supporting LAs in investigation, review & identification of lessons
- Record, analyse & monitor reports of near misses
- Identify trends & lessons to be shared
- If action is not being taken by LA, to escalate

## Investigating a near miss

- Set out a clear policy for investigations, the investigation team should not include people who were directly involved in the near miss occurrence.
- Hot debrief report(s)
- Consider a structured debrief
- Record actions taken and retain all relevant information- audit trail
- Report the occurrence to the local authority

# Identifying lessons

- Who knew what?
- Who did what?
- What went wrong and why did it go wrong?
- What could be done better or differently to prevent a re-occurrence.

## 2023/24 football season – SGSA recorded near misses

Since October 2023 :

- 6 progressive crowd collapses
- 1 fall from height
- 1 congestion on ingress
- 1 barrier failure
- 1 uncontrolled crowd movement
- 1 vehicle in pedestrian area
- 1 pitchside gate collapse

# Progressive crowd collapse

- Risk factors
- Changes in crowd behaviour – ‘limbs’
- Can be hard to spot
- Normalised?
- Injuries - anecdotal

# Smoke inhalation

- HSW Sec 3: It shall be the duty of every employer to conduct his undertaking in such a way as to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that persons not in his employment who may be affected thereby are not thereby exposed to risks to their health or safety.
- CoSHH PPE for staff?
- Asthmatics, lung damage: "The coloured smoke.. is not toxic; however, it may cause irritation and coughing. People with existing breathing problems such as asthma and COPD may be adversely affected by the smoke and it may cause breathing difficulties just as they would do from any particulate smoke".



# How do we respond to changing crowd behaviour?

- Understanding fans' risk appetite
- Communication, education and active fan engagement
- Regulation
  - All seater requirement for top two divisions in football (LJ Taylor 1989)
  - Introduction of licensed standing areas in football (4 July 2022)
- Changes in design - licensed standing infrastructure



# Questions and comments