



Football (Offences) Act 1991

1991 CHAPTER 19

An Act to make further provision with respect to disorderly conduct by persons attending football matches; and for connected purposes. [27th June 1991]

Be it enacted by the Queen's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—

1 Designated football matches

- (1) In this Act a “designated football match” means an association football match designated, or of a description designated, for the purposes of this Act by order of the Secretary of State.

Any such order shall be made by statutory instrument which shall be subject to annulment in pursuance of a resolution of either House of Parliament.

- (2) References in this Act to things done at a designated football match include anything done at the ground—
- (a) within the period beginning two hours before the start of the match or (if earlier) two hours before the time at which it is advertised to start and ending one hour after the end of the match; or
 - (b) where the match is advertised to start at a particular time on a particular day but does not take place on that day, within the period beginning two hours before and ending one hour after the advertised starting time.

2 Throwing of missiles

It is an offence for a person at a designated football match to throw anything at or towards—

- (a) the playing area, or any area adjacent to the playing area to which spectators are not generally admitted, or
- (b) any area in which spectators or other persons are or may be present,

without lawful authority or lawful excuse (which shall be for him to prove).

3 Indecent or racist chanting

- (1) It is an offence to take part at a designated football match in chanting of an indecent or racist nature.
- (2) For this purpose—
 - (a) “chanting” means the repeated uttering of any words or sounds in concert with one or more others; and
 - (b) “of a racist nature” means consisting of or including matter which is threatening, abusive or insulting to a person by reason of his colour, race, nationality (including citizenship) or ethnic or national origins.

4 Going onto the playing area

It is an offence for a person at a designated football match to go onto the playing area, or any area adjacent to the playing area to which spectators are not generally admitted, without lawful authority or lawful excuse (which shall be for him to prove).

5 Supplementary provisions

- (1) In section 24(2) of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (arrestable offences), after paragraph (d) insert—
 - “(e) any offence under the Football (Offences) Act 1991.”.
- (2) A person guilty of an offence under this Act is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale.
- (3) In Schedule 1 to the Football Spectators Act 1989 (relevant offences for purposes of restriction orders, &c.), after paragraph (l) insert—
 - “(m) any offence under the Football (Offences) Act 1991.”.

6 Short title, commencement and extent

- (1) This Act may be cited as the Football (Offences) Act 1991.
- (2) The provisions of this Act come into force on such day as the Secretary of State may appoint by order made by statutory instrument, and different days may be appointed for different provisions.
- (3) This Act extends to England and Wales only.