

# **Fighting Racism and Challenging Institutional Discrimination in Football**

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and FairPlay. Different Colours. One Game. (Austria)**

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## Brief History

- 1999: FARE network established in Vienna by anti-racist activists, and fan groups with support of the European Commission
- 2001: FARE becomes a member of UEFA Social Responsibility programme (pro-active advice, joint campaigns)
- 2006: FARE-FIFA partnership for anti-discrimination
- Currently more than 300 organisations in 40 European countries are linked to FARE



## FARE Action Week



- Support of grass-root initiatives to address local problems & uniting on a European level
- 10<sup>th</sup> FARE Action Week 15- 27 October 2009: More than 1000 events in 40 European countries



## Visible Diversity vs. Racism

- Ethos of the “level playing field” to assure equality of competition
- Increasing visible diversity at clubs and national in post-Bosman era
- Local migrant communities and foreign players always contribute to development of football
- In last 15 years 74% of FIFA World Players were minorities and in UEFA Champions League 20% are ethnic minorities
- Football arenas are also places of discrimination and racism



## **Problems addressed by FARE**

Overt forms of discrimination inside stadiums and close to stadiums:

- Chants against black and ethnic minority players
- Display of or right-extremist messages and symbols
- Open forms of homophobia and sexism



## Overt forms of racism & discrimination



Croatian fans at UEFA EURO 2008

Sexist banner  
UI CUP Slovan  
Bratislava



Homophobic taunts by Union Berlin fans against rivals Dynamo Dresden

## **Indirect forms of discrimination**

- Subtle types of racism usually termed institutionalised or structural racism
- Systematic under-representation of migrants and minorities and their exclusion from positions of authority or status
- Ethnic minorities are under-represented in football administration, management and coaching
- Absence of minority fans in stadiums



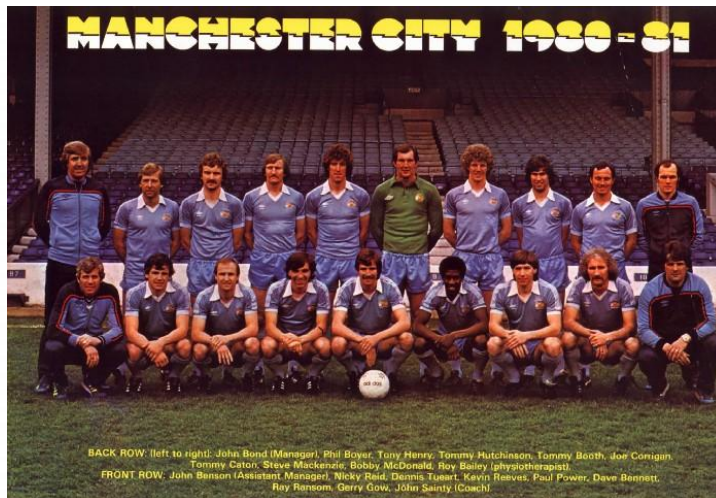
## **Characteristics of institutionalised discrimination**

- Indirect and hidden not direct and from person to person
- Usually no true identifiable perpetrator - collective act and daily practices
- Subtle expressions of racism, sexism or homophobia not regarded as a problem
- Indirect discrimination: treatment appears to be neutral, but has unequal effect on certain groups.
- Formal discrimination: quota on the number of migrants in amateur football



## Institutionalised racism: The example of England

- Discrepancy between the high number of black players and the lack of black or ethnic minority fans
- Only 1% of the active fans are of ethnic minority background
- Almost no black coaches in professional football



## John Barnes:

*“I see the problem in the same way I saw what faced black players in England in the 1970s.. Back then players were told they could be a centre forward or a winger because they weren’t clever or responsible enough to be a keeper or a midfielder... Black managers are going through the same situation at the moment”.*



## Stereotypes underpin discrimination

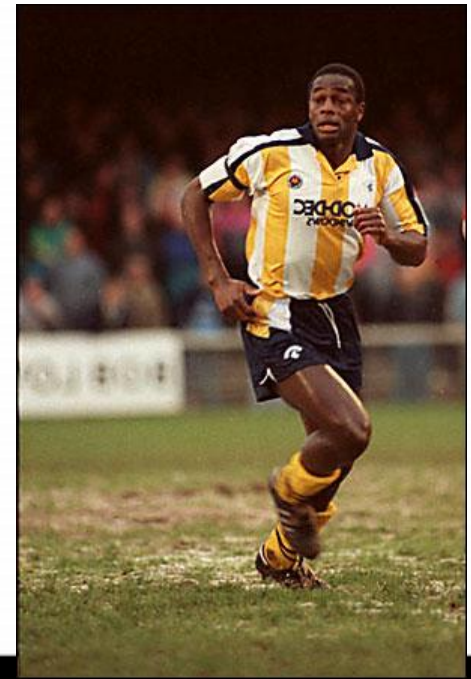
- Old fashioned stereotypes about black and other ethnic minority people still exist
- Predominant “white” and masculine football culture prevails
- Institutions of football still operate within ethnocentric & gender biased normative framework



## **Homophobia and sexism**

- Homophobia in football is accompanied by invisibility and silence.
- No single player in the European professional football is openly gay
- Homophobia & sexism for many fans as integral part of football culture
- Football structures discourage coming-out
- Notions of masculinity are the norm in football (toughness, comradeship, solidarity based on gender and working class virtues)

*Justin Fashanu 1961-1998*



## Women's football

- Women's football only became an Olympic discipline in 1996
- Sexist stereotypes were used to prevent women from playing
- In 1955 the German FA banned women's football: "*essentially alien to the nature of women*"
- Today women's football has become the biggest female sport in some countries



## **EGLSF and FARE five-point plan (2005)**

- Acknowledge that sexism and homophobia exist in football
- Abuse associated with sexism and homophobia affects everybody in football, not just homosexuals and women
- Existence of homosexual role models would help free football of its taboos
- Need to present the diversity of the game by reporting on women's football, gay and lesbian involvement as the norm
- Report and sanction abuse



## Equal Opportunities

- Clubs and associations need to open up employment opportunities to ethnic minorities, women and the disabled
- UEFA's ten-point plan (2003): *"Adopt an equal opportunities' policy in relation to employment and service provision"*
- Equal opportunity policies in administration, stewarding, identification of young players and employment of coaching staff



## Achievements of anti-racist movement in football

- Awareness of “silent majority” of fans and the media
- Pro-active stance of governing bodies: anti-racist policies and action of UEFA, FIFA, national associations & clubs
- Mobilising and linking of diverse fan groupings with migrant and ethnic organisations
- Put homophobia and on sexism the agenda of European football



## The way forward

- Discrimination can occur through ignorance and well intentioned but patronising words or actions
- To try understand the exclusionary practices
- Open up to society at large: seek advice and integrate minority and other targeted groups
- Partnerships with and visibility of discriminated groups are essential



**Thank you !**

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