



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

6 June 1985

This is just to let you know that your letter of 6 June has arrived safely and that I will show the Prime Minister your notes.

For B

Ian Wooldridge, Esq.

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Daily Mail

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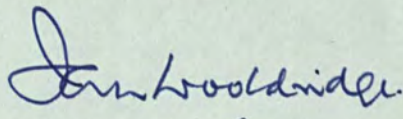
6 June 1985

Sir Robin Butler
The Private Office
10 Downing Street

Dear Sir Robin

The Prime Minister asked me last evening to get these notes to her urgently. I thought it prudent in the circumstances to send them via your office.

Yours sincerely



Ian Wooldridge

Ian Wooldridge

Prime Minister

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Would you like us
to follow up point (2) in
the attached note?

June 6, 1985

PERB

6.6.

Dear Prime Minister,

Yes please,
This is a very
useful
note
mt

I write firstly to thank you and
Mr Thatcher for a memorably enjoyable
dinner and party last evening.

I also greatly appreciated the long
time you spared me and enclose my
considered thoughts on the matters we
discussed.

Yours sincerely,

Ian Wooldridge.

mt

1. Since we spoke last evening, as you probably know, FIFA, the world governing body, has stepped in to ban English teams from competing in "friendly" pre-season matches on the Continent. I am sure you will be delighted that such a volatile situation has been defused but dismayed that the initiative had to be taken from abroad.

Your guarded assessments of several of the most powerful officials of the Football Association and Football League were absolutely accurate. I believe they still do not comprehend the infinite damage Brussels has done to our country. They paid only lip-service to repeated warnings that a catastrophe of that magnitude could happen and wilfully obstructed many remedial suggestions. Their almost gleeful reassurance to their fans that they proposed to go ahead with these "friendly" games is only the latest example of their insensitivity. I believe your Sports Ministry - a term of convenience - should exert relentless pressure on both bodies to bring the reality of the situation home to them.

2. While you undoubtedly have virtually the whole of the nation behind you in your determination to control the situation, any sanctions preventing the English national team playing in the World Cup Finals in Mexico in 1986

would not be popular - unless, of course, there is further violence by followers of the national team between now and the Finals.

However, after consulting the Mexican Embassy today, I believe the advice you have been given about being able to determine the type of English fan who goes there by the granting or refusal of visas is incorrect.

As I understand it the only entry document required in addition to a passport is a Tourist Card - so easily obtainable that they are distributed by airlines on application.

If this is so I assume Mexico would be as anxious as you are to introduce some method of stringent screening during an emergency period next summer.

3. Your scheme for the introduction of football club membership cards is an excellent one. However you should be aware that until equipment to screen these cards electronically is installed - and that could well be some time, even never, at some clubs because of the expense - a large loophole exists.

It is caused by corrupt gatemmen at stadia accepting cash from would-be spectators without tickets. The cash is pocketed and the spectator

climbs the turnstile without his entry being registered. This occurred at the Cup Final at Wembley last month and two Liverpool fans told me that they witnessed it happening in Brussels last week. The danger of rival hooligans mixing in the same area, let alone stadium over-crowding, is obvious.

The DPP is currently considering the Wembley case, but plain-clothes police surveillance would probably stop further outbreaks.

4. Football's economics, due to mismanagement, are in a disastrous state. They will become even worse, in view of the expensive but vital reforms and ground improvements, if the war between TV and Soccer continues.

I have no vested interest in TV's football coverage and can therefore write frankly that without television these reforms and improvements will never be implemented at many clubs.

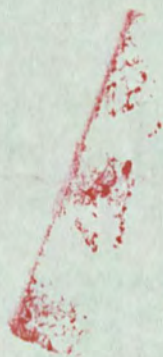
No television exposure will mean the quick defection of the many sponsors who invest large sums in football to get their brand names on television screens at sub-advertising rates.

I believe that the weakest clubs should go to the wall anyway and agree that grounds constantly in trouble should be shut.

However, if the game is not to be decimated, the impasse between TV and Soccer needs to be broken urgently. John Smith, the chairman of Liverpool FC and also new chairman of the Sports Council, is aware that the BBC and ITV will not raise their offers rejected on February 14. Soccer, however, has been dragooned into unrealistic demands, mostly by Robert Maxwell with whom, I think, someone from your Sports Ministry should speak more frankly than he is accustomed to being spoken to.

5. In this and in other matters I believe your Sports Ministry should be much more positive and authoritative. I write this regretfully, since personal friends are involved, but to emerge after Brussels with a document predicting it was going to happen and thus admitting a lack of authority was not very intelligent. Nor is it the usual style of your government. It is almost understandable that football administration should proceed in its own arrogant way when it sees powerful bodies like the Sports Council and the Central Council of Physical Recreation brought to their knees by personal ambition and sub-political intrigue.

6. In the game's financial plight it would certainly be reassuring to know that some of the duty received from football pools could be set aside for ground improvements, with safeguards to see that it is not flippantly squandered on transfer-fees.



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FROM: [illegible]
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