

Ted's notes

My name is Ted Morris, and I am the Liverpool Disabled Supporters Association chair. I am a wheelchair user who relies on the assistance of my wife to get around.

Thank you for inviting me to Paris today and for allowing me the opportunity to share with you the testimonies of our disabled supporters. It's vital that you hear these stories as you accurately piece together the events that unfolded at the Stade De France.

My wife and I have been visiting Paris for the last 27 years and adore the city. The Parisian people have always been friendly and welcoming, as they were on this occasion. My opinion changed on the 28th of May, and I no longer want to visit Paris if this is how those in authority treat visitors. I am here today to represent our disabled supporters after reading so many untruths from those very same people in authority about the events of that day.

My wife and I arrived at the overground station La Plaine at approximately 3 pm. We were surprised to notice that there were no police officers outside the train station. Being a regular traveller with Liverpool football club, one of the most noticeable things you see when playing in Europe is the amount of Police that are present at these types of fixtures, this was unusual.

We then made the 400 metre walk up to the stadium; it was still 6 hours to kick-off, so we decided to go to the nearby McDonald's and wait until 6 pm when we had arranged to meet our daughters.

Over the next few hours, numerous Real Madrid and LFC fans will be the victims of the pickpockets in MacDonal'd's.

My wife and I made our way to the stadium at 6 pm.

Reaching the outer perimeter soft ticket check area was a chaotic scene with young, inexperienced stewards attempting to check tickets. Many Liverpool fans were patiently queueing up to have their tickets checked. However, local men just barged past the stewards and ran up to the stadium, and this was extremely concerning to us. Another concerning feature was the groups of locals that were starting to congregate at the check point.

My wife and I made our way up to the stadium, where we met a police spotter from Merseyside police. He has accompanied us many times on our European travels. He is an experienced and competent police officer; he was worried about how events were unfolding. We briefly discussed what we were seeing and hearing and agreed that many locals had already breached the perimeter checks. There were reports of tickets being snatched out of the hands of fans, and many fans had been pickpocketed.

We then made our way to the accessible entrance at Gate C.

On arrival, 3 of our fellow wheelchair users had already been queueing for over one hour to get in. Navigating the city when being a wheelchair user was difficult enough, so having additional barriers such as this was unacceptable.

A commotion was occurring to the right of the accessible entrance. A disabled supporter had accessed the turnstile, but his personal assistant's ticket would not scan despite numerous attempts. There didn't seem to be a process for dealing with this. The elderly disabled supporter got knocked

to the floor, and the steward fell onto a disabled wheelchair user, causing her some discomfort. It was already uproar, and it was only just after 6.30 pm.

Our disabled supporters were becoming increasingly distressed, so I contacted our Supporter Liaison Officer for Liverpool Football Club for assistance. She swiftly arrived at the turnstile and immediately made sure wheelchair users were able to enter the stadium. My wife and I then enter the stadium and take up our positions on the wheelchair platform. Sadly, by this time, all the PAs seating had people sitting in their seats, meaning the PAs had to stand for upwards of four hours.

On using the accessible toilets, a young steward informed us that there was no lighting in the toilet. He advised me to use the torch on my mobile phone; as you can see, with me being a wheelchair user, that would be quite a challenge for me, another failure, sadly one of many that occurred on this dreadful day and a snapshot of how disabled supporters were being treated. At no stage did the Stade De France feel inclusive.

What happened next was extremely distressing. I started receiving messages that our disabled supporters were being teargassed and crushed outside the turnstiles. They started contacting me saying that they were terrified and panicking, it was very distressing receiving these messages with me being unable to assist them. They said the situation outside the stadium was becoming critical, and they feared for their lives.

I believed that many of our disabled supporters were now in danger of being crushed. This included disabled children, blind supporters, and wheelchair users. At this point, they said tear gas had been deployed, and they were all suffering from its effects. They told me that Liverpool supporters, although under extreme provocation, were assisting them as best they could and removing them to a place of safety. In my opinion it was only due to the restraint and actions shown by LFC supporters that a major disaster and probably a fatality was averted. Nobody in authority helped our disabled supporters.

The saddest thing about this is our disabled supporters arrived in Paris to see a festival of football; but at this precise moment, they were in the middle of a carnival of horrors, and it will leave them with long-term mental scars.

Here are just a few of their experiences.

H is a boy 14 years of age; he suffers from a rare congenital disorder called Williams syndrome. H was so excited to be at the stadium with his dad. Whilst patiently queuing to enter the stadium, H and his dad suffered the effects of the teargas. H had a burning sensation in his throat and felt like he was going to be sick. He was frightened and assumed this was something to do with what was happening in Russia, which terrified the young boy.

D is a blind man, and he writes that he was scared for his life. They were outside gate Y waiting to enter the stadium when the Police suddenly shut the Gate. The stewards pushed him out of the way, and the man beside him fell to the floor, clutching his chest and gasping for air. A young boy next to him was screaming for his dad, who was trapped outside the turnstile, they were separated, the boy's hysterical cries went unanswered. They were eventually reunited but the trauma will live long in his memory. After the game, on the way to the station, gangs were chasing them, bottles were raining down, and they were running for their lives. Then the sound of loud explosions, they were teargassed again. This frightened the life out of D, who has already mentioned is completely blind. His carer was screaming for help and assistance, but sadly none was forthcoming. D was becoming

increasingly scared as he could not see what was happening around him. Fortunately, the Liverpool supporters came to their aid and got them to a place of safety.

R is a female disabled supporter attending the final with her elderly father. She was violently attacked by a gang who tried to steal her belongings. She was grotesquely assaulted in this incident. The details are too disturbing to share in this forum, but the full report will include all the details. Authorities ignored her desperate pleas for help, and it was left to the Liverpool fans to come to her assistance.

M is a female wheelchair user. She was also trapped in the crush outside Gate Y. Michelle dislocated her shoulder in the mayhem that ensued, leaving her in excruciating pain and bringing on a panic attack. Her desperate pleas for help were ignored. Once again, it was supporters of Liverpool FC to come to her rescue.

C is a female wheelchair user. After the game, she had to be lifted aloft by Liverpool supporters and crowd-surfed over the turnstiles because the stewards would not open the Gate. Once outside the ground, she was teargassed when making her way to the train station.

R is a blind man. In the chaos outside the turnstiles, he was separated from his carer, which was a terrifying experience for him as he was left with no one to guide him. His personal assistant's ticket had scanned at the turnstile, so he entered the stadium, unfortunately, R's ticket wouldn't scan, so he was not allowed to enter and left separated from his carer. They eventually let him in. R is fully blind and is left traumatised by the incident.

B is an ambulant male supporter who suffers from severe anxiety and heart problems. He was in the crush outside the gates and attempted to assist 2 of our supporters in wheelchairs. While trying to help his fellow and helpless disabled supporters, he was attacked and all 3 were pepper-sprayed and left shocked and traumatised.

F is a eight year old boy. He attended the game with his 13-year-old brother and his dad, they were so excited to be in Paris. He is autistic and suffers from Dyspraxia and oral Dyspraxia. He was being crushed outside the Gate and separated from his father and brother. It was a terrifying experience for the young disabled boy, they were eventually reunited. After the game, they were attacked by locals and teargassed. F was terrified that they would die, and he thought the loud explosions were bombs.

S is a 13-year-old girl and a wheelchair user who attended the game with her mum, dad, and 15-year-old brother. They got their tickets through UEFA. After the game, the family was held back in the underpass by the Police because the Liverpool fans in front of them on Avenue Stade De France, my wife and I were in this group, were being attacked by gangs of locals, the tear gas was being deployed on us was what S thought they bombs, she was terrified. One of the members of her group had already been pepper-sprayed. S was left shocked, scared, and now feels extremely vulnerable. What was supposed to be a fantastic family trip to Paris turned into a horror show for them.

N has multiple sclerosis whilst queueing to get into the ground and for no apparent reason, he was teargassed. In 30 minutes, he had tear gas deployed on him on three occasions. This episode caused Neil to have a relapse and left him severely unwell.

These are just a few accounts of the many testimonies we have received from our disabled supporters. Some more graphic details have been left out but will be included in the full report. I

believe Liverpool Football Club have received over 9000 testimonials, many of them from some extremely vulnerable disabled supporters.

These are just a few of the testimonies from our disabled supporters, there are many more. These first-hand accounts of the shocking treatment dished out to disabled, men, women and children should shame those in authority. They treated disabled supporters like animals. Our supporters were simply at the Stade de France to watch their team play in the Champions League final, the treatment they received will be to the eternal shame of all those in authority who were there to protect us, they were responsible for our safety but they failed. It was a complete dereliction of duty.

The match become irrelevant to my wife and I. However, we decided to stay in the stadium until the 86th minute of the game, mainly for safety reasons. On exiting the stadium, we headed towards the gates only to be told by a steward that we couldn't get out. The Gate was closed because locals were still attempting to get into the stadium; after a heated discussion, we were allowed to exit.

By this time, many Liverpool fans were exiting the stadium in large numbers and heading in the same direction as ourselves towards the underpass and the 400-metre walk to La Plaine overground station. When we reached the underpass, we see police officers standing to one side, watching us as we pass by. To our absolute surprise and astonishment, there is no police presence past this point. We fully expected the route to the station to be lined by Police.

We exit the underpass, and within minutes, to our right-hand side, scores of locals are charging at us. It was terrifying. The gang are throwing bottles at us. They are armed with knives and indiscriminately running into the crowd of Liverpool supporters who are now running at speed towards the station, literally running for our lives. This gang is trying to rob and assault us as we run towards the station where we hope the Police will be there to protect us.

Being a wheelchair user, this was a truly terrifying experience for my wife and I, a complete feeling of helplessness, it was the most terrifying of experiences.

We reach the station, only for the Police to deploy tear gas on, for god's sake why did they do this to us?

We then use the accessible lift, and we arrive on the platform.

We then see a young girl with her dad, no older than six or seven. She is wearing a red Liverpool kit. She and her dad are distraught and traumatised; as a father, it was one of the most distressing things I have ever seen.

My wife and I then hear more loud explosions, which we thought were bombs. It was terrifying.

Whilst all of this was going on we had lost contact with our 2 daughters, and we had no idea if they were safe or not. I will never forgive the authorities who are completely responsible for everything that occurred at the Stade De France on May 28th 2022.

I have written to Lord Coe at the IOC and Sir William Beaumont at WRU, expressing my concerns about their upcoming events at the Stade De France.

Unless the relevant authorities accept responsibility for their failings and learn from them, I believe the Rugby World Cup and the Olympic games should be relocated.

I hope this matter is given the priority it deserves, lessons are learnt, and new policies and practices are employed at the Stade De France. Failure to do this will put lives at risk.

Without changes being made the Stade De France is not safe for disabled people to visit.

In closing, I have a message for Mr Darmian. You sir have disgraced the French government and humiliated the good people of Paris. Your endless lies and false narratives have only added to our pain and mental trauma. I ask that you retract your scurrilous, baseless, and wild accusations. If you have the decency to do that you must then do the honourable thing and resign.

Over 33 years ago, people in authority spoke false narratives and spread lies about events at a football match that resulted in the loss of 97 lives.

Mr Darmian brought memories of that horrendous time flooding back. For that alone, he should be truly ashamed of himself and the office he holds.

I want to thank all of you in the Senate today for allowing me the opportunity to share the shocking experiences of our disabled supporters whose voices have a right to be heard.

Supporters of Liverpool FC have had to deal with lies and slurs for over 33 years. Establishing the facts and the truth about what happened at the Stade De France is more vital to us than anyone could ever imagine, so the diligent work of this commission in getting to the truth, matters to us in a way that you will never understand.

I would also like to thank the French media and the many French journalists who have travelled to Liverpool in search of the truth.

The truth matters about these events, and we will not rest until the truth is told!

You'll Never Walk Alone.