

by justcantbeatthat.com

JUST CAN'T «BAN» THAT

Providing a safe environment for all spectators is an admirable goal which we fully support. JCBT think a pyro show at a well chosen moment is lovely seasonal celebration of light and community spirit. These two statements are perfectly compatible. Pyro can be safe if used correctly.

JCBT would like to argue that a change of regulation to make the pyros legal, in certain circumstances, is the way forward. Until this has happened, whilst it is illegal, we do not condone their use. However, threats of draconian collective punishments are just totally unacceptable when there are already severe penalties in place for anyone caught using one.

The arbitrary ban on flags and the fantastic Fanarbeit organization is simply bizarre and counterproductive. We greatly admire the work that Fanarbeit has been carrying out and so punishing the organisation which has been instrumental in reducing violence around the club defies logic. Unless of course the goal is provocation - hoping that the fringe sup-

porters will cause real trouble so even more bans can be justified.

However, what is going on in Luzern is not a for/against pyro debate, this is just a convenient excuse to attempt to marginalise the fans that have supported the team regardless of players, results or stadium facilities.

A successful team in a brand new stadium is a pretty attractive product to „sell“ from a marketing point of view. Perceived trouble-makers, often denounced in a populist media-frenzy need to be made examples of to make sure that the „product“ can be effectively marketed. What is often forgotten is that the very fans the club now thinks it can do without have been essential to getting it where it is.

The very nature of a fan/club relationship of unequivocal love makes the feeling of betrayal much harder to handle. The sudden realisation that the reciprocity is just not there anymore is very hard to accept. Years, if not generations, of dedicated support home and away through thick and thin seems to be brushed aside as an historical curiosity. We paid some of Switzerland's highest ticket prices in Gersag to stand in a puddle of mud. It is almost inconceivable that the club would have declared war on its most loyal fans at that time. We were useful then. Times change.

What can we do now? The dialogue with the club has ground to a halt and we are at a dangerous crossroads. We don't want this to escalate further because a period of prolonged conflict will only hurt the club on and off the field and this is not what anybody wants.

Fuelled by years of media coverage that football fans equal mindless destruction,

and pyros are an imminent risk to national security there is a danger that the general public could perceive the conflict as one between spoilt hooligans and law and order. The club is playing on this fear and building a wall within the FCL community.

Active supporters are a great asset for any

club and many casual visitors praise the atmosphere in our ground. Flags, chants and choreos play an important role in attracting people to the game. The Luzern fan scene is intelligent, funny and resourceful. We wore hard-hats at the Zurich building site, invented the Human Vuvuzela, established the Zone 5 party of 800 in an Utrecht backstreet and recently released a brilliant double-cd.

It is crucial that the positive force exerted by active supporters is not lost and that we manage to communicate the fans' point of view to the rest of the stadium. Local media does not seem to be a viable resource, and



16 Janu. JCBT player of the year!

indeed may even part of the problem. Social media, where the club's management has proven itself to be inept, in its overzealous censorship, could be an alternative option, as could an unofficial match day flier distributed around the ground.

JCBT sadly has no easy answer. Only a growing fear that if we fail to get the rest of the stands behind the protest, the future of the club will be in big trouble.

*„We are different, like day and night
Already often times we nearly clashed
When you see a square, I see a circle
and already there's a row.
Like fire and water, we are far apart
What you hate, I love
There's only one thing,
that connects us
THE LOVE TO LUZERN!“*

Count Gabba & Tobtob – FÜR und Wasser
Album:
Open Minded Riot Crew – Sogenannti Fuessballsongs
(www.fuessballsongs.ch)

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