



Heart of Midlothian FC Audio Descriptive Commentary

1. Purpose

Heart of Midlothian Football Club (“Hearts/the Club”) strives to ensure all of its supporters who wish to attend a home match at Tynecastle Park are treated equally and can enjoy the match-day experience. The Club wants everyone to enjoy the match experience regardless of any disability including partially sighted/blind supporters and this includes having an audio descriptive commentary (ACD) system in place. The original ACD system was put in place by the Rex Blind Parties for members who were Hearts supporters and whom were accommodated in a specific area. The connection with the Rex Blind Parties still exists however the service is managed by the club and is available stadium wide and not restricted to one location.

Hearts consulted its Rex Blind Parties supporters prior to the new re-development of the Main stand and took all of their opinions into consideration regarding facilities and location for this particular established group. As previously mentioned the commentary service was available at Tynecastle Park before the New Stand Re-development started, however as expected the club always strives to improve on the service it provides to all its supporters.

Heart of Midlothian FC is committed to good values, diversity and promoting the equality Act 2010. The supporters’ opinions count to Hearts.

2. System

An ACD service is provided for all home supporters who are at the match and are partially sighted/blind at Tynecastle Park. The service is available in all four stands in the Stadium. The commentary is provided from a pool of trained commentators and the Disability Access Officer (DAO) always ensures there are a minimum 2 commentators available for each home match. Visiting supporters can also have access to the service by contacting the club’s DAO.

The specially trained commentators provide additional narration that describes all significant visual information such as body language, facial expression, scenery, action, clothing, colours and anything else that is important to conveying the image, venue, match, event or surrounding ambience. During the match, the commentator describes the on-pitch action rather than talking about statistics or tactics or providing lengthy summaries of previous action.

In the context of a live football match, an ACD system ensures that the partially sighted/blind supporter has a complete understanding of the match he or she is attending and is able to more fully enjoy the match day experience alongside fellow fans.

3. Supporters access to the equipment

Partially sighted/blind supporters irrespective of where they sit are known to the DAO and are usually season ticket holders. Rex Blind Parties members obtain a receiver direct from the commentators as they are located close by. All other partially sighted/blind supporters

receive a text 48 hours before a game so they can “book” their receiver. On match days the receiver is either i) delivered and collected to/from the customer’s seat or ii) collected and returned to a central point in the stadium The DAO contact details are on the Club website.

The Club does not take a deposit for the equipment and the DAO is aware of all the partially sighted/blind supporter’s personal assistant contact details as a backup. Headsets/ear pieces can be supplied however they are retained by the supporter for hygiene reasons.

Periodically the Club will advertise that the ACD service is available however it is also important to note that ad hoc requests on occasional basis will be accommodated by arranging with the DAO.

The DAO travels to all away matches and will contact the host clubs on behalf of any of our partially sighted/blind supporters to see if a comparable ACD service can be provided. However some grounds have better facilities than others or not at all.

4. Review

The Club always reviews its policy and procedures and strives to improve the match-day experience for supporters. The DAO always encourages partially sighted/blind supporters to provide feedback on all aspects of the ACD service. The DAO is readily available and visible on a match day and is available to contact on non-match days. Keith Ferguson (DAO) can be contacted at KeithFerguson@homplc.co.uk or on 07743780913.

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