

## Game Day Security: From Conceptualization to Application

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In April 2004, a massive U.S. and British surveillance operation prevented the bombing of the Manchester United - Liverpool match at Old Trafford soccer stadium (Steinbach, 2006). Based on information indicating known associates had purchased tickets in widespread areas throughout the stadium, U.S. and British authorities apprehended 10-people who possessed match tickets and explosives. This occurred 5-days prior to the match which was attended by 67,000-spectators and viewed by an international television audience (Steinbach, 2006). An act of sport-related terrorism is inevitable and it's not an issue of if, but more an issue of when and where, and how this act will forever change sport and the world (Goss, Jubenville, & MacBeth, 2003). Due to this continuing threat of terrorism, there is a need for stadium and arena managers to develop, maintain and improve game day security operations. Our priority should be to develop standard operating procedures which are proactive in protecting our facilities, athletes and spectators in addition to considering what reactive protocols must be implemented. Therefore, the objectives of this discussion are 1) establish what types of terrorism influence game day management, 2) develop a research based model of game day security, from initial facility design to post-game debriefing, 3) examine existing game day security research instruments, and 4) develop a game day security checklist to assist stadium and arena managers in developing standard operating procedures.

Most researchers believe establishing an objective and internationally accepted definition of terrorism is impossible; however, defining terrorism is necessary in order to combat it (Toohey, Taylor & Lee, 2003). As a rule, terrorism has the following characteristics: 1) it is purposeful; 2) political in its motives; 3) principal tools are violence and threats; 4) indiscriminate in its targets; and 5) designed to have consequences beyond its primary target (Toohey et al., 2003). While football hooliganism has an objective and uses violence and threats to achieve its goal, it is socially motivated and designed to damage the reputation of the opposing team and harm its supporters - no one else. Therefore, the fact terrorism is politically motivated and its intent is to harm any person, this is what distinguishes it from sport hooliganism and sport-related riots. In addition, it has been said that 2-types of terrorism (i.e., organized and spontaneous terror) influence risk management in sport (Goss et al., 2003); however, in order to combat all forms of terrorism, it should be properly divided into the following 3-categories: organized-political terror, organized-social terror, and spontaneous terror. Game day security terminology will be discussed.

As a result of the terrorist attacks in the United States on 11 September 2001 and the Bali, Madrid and London bombings in addition to continuous civil and political unrest in numerous countries and the SARS outbreak in China, sport managers must continue to be proactive in protecting their facilities, athletes and spectators on game day and while traveling to and from the competition (Phillips, 2004). Assuming the worst has become routine protocol in stadium and arena security these days, game day security at the 2006 NCAA men's basketball tournament was rigid from the gates to the hardwood - and successful. There was a 90-minute delay for one game when bomb sniffing dogs detected something unusual but this was a false alarm that required the arena to be evacuated. "But the NCAA remained unapologetic stating 'We will continue to remain vigilant in our security planning throughout our tournament, and the safety and security of our student-athletes, teams and fans is paramount'" (Steinbach, 2006). However, the challenge for stadium and arena managers, who are responsible for risk management and game day security, is balancing the expense with providing a safe and secure environment (Steinbach, 2006). The "Benchmark Model" for game day security will be discussed (Cooper & Hall, 2006).

There is greater expense for stadium and arena management in large markets due to continuous upgrades to meet security threats while trying to balance the budget and this is a severe problem for management (Goss et al., 2003). In addition, the venue staff has been poorly paid in comparison to what is asked of them - to implement security for us "and while we can have wonderful plans, if these people aren't trained well or empowered with their charge - 'This is what I'm doing and this is why it's so important.' - the best-laid security plan is worth very little" (Steinbach, 2006). The alternative has been to outsource security responsibilities to private companies such as Contemporary Services Corporation (CSC) in the United States and National Entertainment Services (NES) in Australia. Because sport organizations have limited personnel, resources and budgets, this is a helpful practice but it has security issues regarding personnel and protocol. However, stadium and arena managers have other

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options in risk management and game day security in the form of 1) internal assessments involving a 38-point security checklist (Pantera, Accorsi, Winter, Gobeille, Griveas, Queen, Insalaco, & Domanoski, 2003), 2) external assessments involving extensive interviews and observations, as well as unannounced, real-time game day audits (Cooper & Hall, 2006), 3) training through the International Association of Assembly Managers (IAAM) Academy for Venue Safety & Security (Fried, 2004), and/or 4) collaboration with federal, state and local government agencies. Assessment and implementation of "best practices" in stadium and arena security will be discussed.

In conclusion, game day security is a new focus in the field of sport management and obviously extremely important to society at large. The possibility of large scale sport-related terrorism is real and clear following the foiled plot to bomb Old Trafford Stadium, a bomb being detonated near Oklahoma Memorial Stadium, the suspected Al-Qaeda planned attack on the English - Australian Ashes, and the dirty bomb threat against 7 National Football League stadiums. Therefore, all administrators, venue staff and security personnel must thoroughly understand their game day security roles and responsibilities. However, simple knowledge of individual responsibility is not sufficient and there needs to be a collective effort to raise the level of security awareness in order to protect facilities, athletes, and spectators. This effort involves communication, teamwork, and coordination through formal planning from risk management to evacuation. Our stadiums and arenas will continue to be at risk and sport managers must continue to improve game day security.