

Sports and safety inside and outside the stadium

A General Introduction

Stefanie Tack

BRUSSELS, 29 MAY 1985



Heysel Tragedy

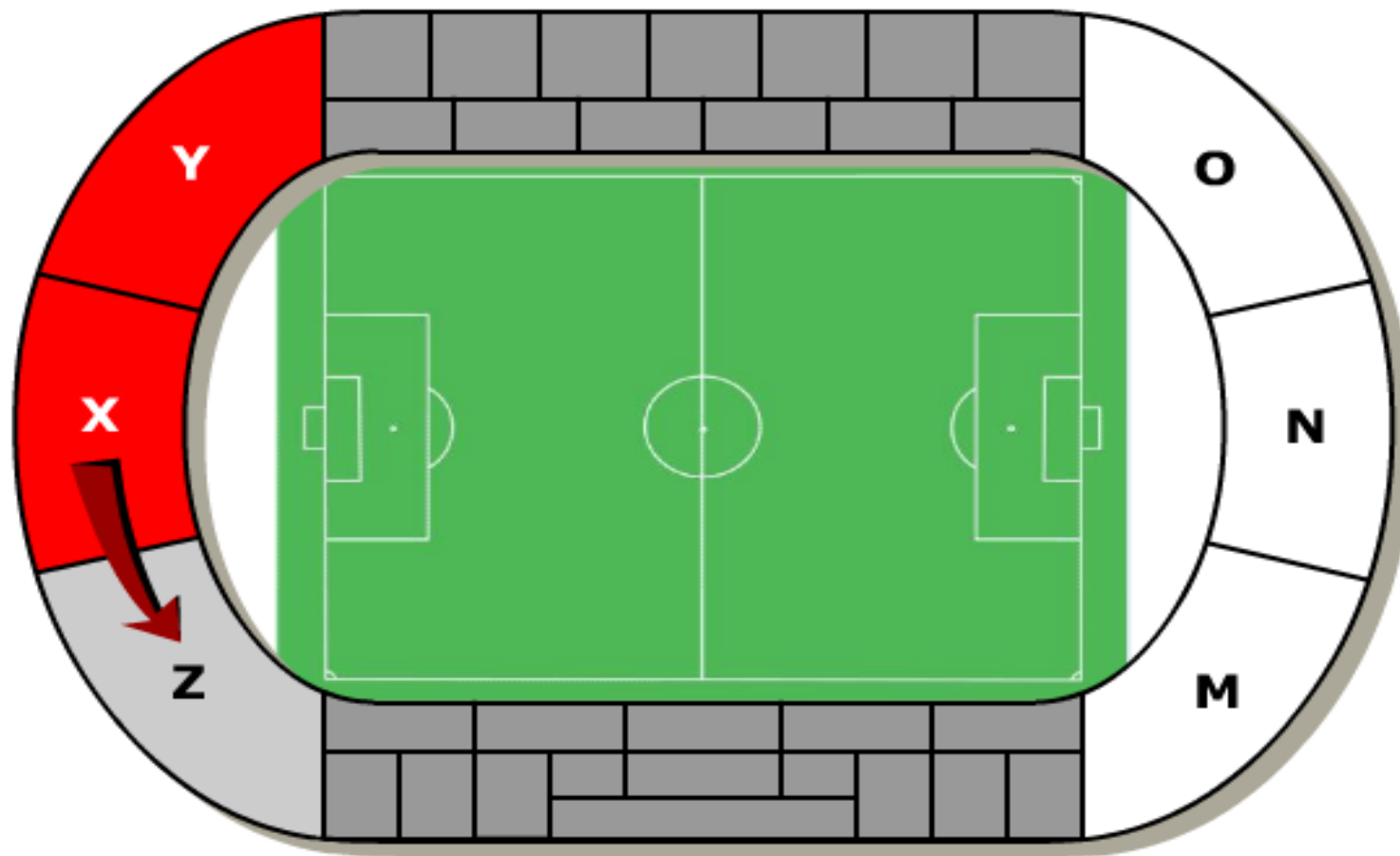
The Facts

- Belgium's national stadium
 - UEFA Cup final between Liverpool and Juventus
 - Confrontation between the supporters before the match
 - Fights + wall collapsed
- RESULT: 39 people died and more than 600 injured
- Despite the tragedy, match was played → Juventus = Winner

Heysel Tragedy


The Facts





 Liverpool FC

 Juventus

 Neutre + Juventus

 Neutre

Heysel Tragedy

- Events leading up to the tragedy?
- Who is responsible?
- Impact and Consequences?

Events leading up to the tragedy?

- Poor condition of the stadium:
 - 55 years old
 - Not sufficiently maintained
 - Large parts were crumbling
 - ➔ Stadium not suitable to host a European final
- Lack of organisation and preparation:
 - ‘Neutral’ tickets were sold to Juventus supporters
 - No control at the entrance of the stadium
 - ➔ No ‘neutral’ zones in the stadium → confrontation between Liverpool and Juventus supporters

Events leading up to the tragedy?

- Lack of safety and security measures:
 - Not enough policemen and stewards
 - Police force on different levels (Federal >< Local): no communication and coordination
 - Police radios were not working (no batteries)
 - Failure to enforce an alcohol ban
 - ➔ Failure of the police to intervene quickly enough or take adequate actions

Who is responsible?

- **UEFA:** only the Liverpool supporters are responsible
- **Court's decision:** division of liability
 - Liverpool supporters (14)
 - Police → in charge for the safety and security
 - UEFA → organizer of the game
 - Belgian Football Federation → stadium + organizer of the game

Impact and Consequences?

One of the biggest tragedies in international football history

- New national and European rules and measures on safety and security in (football) stadia
 - Examples: fight against hooliganism & introduction of fan cards
- **English clubs were banned from European competition**
 - Request of British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher (?)
 - UEFA agreed
 - First for an undefined period; later for 5 years (Liverpool for 6 years)
 - England national team was not affected (same supporters?)

Impact and Consequences?

- **English clubs were banned from European competition**

BUT:

– Liverpool: “not the clubs’ fault”

- Liverpool is not responsible for bad condition of the stadium
Liverpool requested other stadium → UEFA refused
- Liverpool had done all within its power to control its supporters
- Liverpool sold no tickets for the “neutral” block
- Liverpool is not responsible for inadequate supervision in and outside the stadium

– Other English clubs: “not even involved in UEFA cup final”

Discussion Points

- How are football events organised nowadays? Is such kind of tragedy still possible?

→ see presentation of Arthur

- Can (football) clubs be sanctioned for actions/behaviour of their supporters?

→ see presentation of Stephan