

OFFICIAL



Op. Parkmill SAG Considerations

23rd October 2025

As with all policing events, WMP utilise the National Decision-Making Model to ensure consistency and transparency of decision making.

Below is the information presented to the initial SAG meetings held on the 07th and 16th October 2025:

Information & Intelligence

Aston Villa (AV) play Maccabi Tel Aviv (MTA) on Thursday 06th November at Villa Park, Aston, Birmingham with a kick off time of 20.00hrs. This fixture is part of the Europa League. It has been assessed as a high-risk fixture, scoring 77 on the UKFPU matrix.

AV expect a crowd of approximately 32-35,000 attendees. MTA have an allocation of 2400 but anticipate selling about 1,400. The fixture is being televised on TNT Sport.

Based on the below Information and Intelligence, it is anticipated that there will be significant and sustained violence from travelling Maccabi risk supporters; significant protest against the actual fixture taking place; significant protest against Maccabi fans which is highly likely to result in violence; probable disruption to the fixture from activist groups; significant disruption to the city centre and significant community tensions across a broad range of communities.

This fixture is considered highly emotive due to ongoing activities between Israel and Palestine and the international politics surrounding these events. Numerous local, national and international groups are opposed to the fixture and seek to protest by various methods in an attempt to disrupt the fixture.

It is clear that there is great concern amongst a range of local community groups including Jewish communities, Muslim communities, Christian communities, Afro-Caribbean communities, local residents, football supporter groups and local business forums. The consistent themes suggest that people are concerned that they will become victims of crimes as individuals and that their premises, businesses and key community locations may become targets.

The two teams playing are Aston Villa and Maccabi Tel Aviv.

OFFICIAL

Aston Villa

Overall, AV supporters are generally well behaved and will attend the fixture without causing any issues. They usually engage well with visiting supporters and will have positive interactions with the police. As with all clubs, some supporters will over-indulge on alcohol, especially considering the lateness of this kick off. There is an established Jewish AV fan base, known as 'Aston Villa Jewish Villains'.

So far this season there have been very few arrests at home or away fixtures. The club has travelled across Europe both in the Europa and Champions League and have not experienced any significant issues.

Aston Villa have two main risk groups, Villa Youth and Villa Hardcore. Between them they can muster groups of 70 for high profile games, although there have been no large turn outs of risk at any home or away fixtures for many years and there have been no measurable incidents of violence.

There is the potential for anti-Israeli chanting and the potential for fans to be in possession of Palestine flags. There is also the potential for anti-Semitic hate crime.

Maccabi Tel Aviv (MTA)

MTA is the largest club in Israel and is known for its passionate rich history and commitment to excellence.

A significant minority of supporters belong to an 'ultra' group called the Maccabi Fanatics. This group are known to have strong political leanings, and some members are closely associated with far-right views. They have a history of racist behaviour including monkey gestures/noises towards black players. The group have a well-documented and concerning history of disorder and violence both home and away.

Supporters will use pyrotechnics and gather in large numbers. They have previously conducted fan walks.

Information from the club suggests that there is a reluctance of some fans to come to Birmingham as they view it as anti-Israel with a heavy Muslim population. They have stated that risk element will not seek disorder.

Physical tickets have been requested by the club so they can check passport information of each person. They are expected to fly into London based airports.

OFFICIAL



European matches involving Maccabi Tel Aviv during the 2024–25 season were largely peaceful, though one match against Olympiacos in Athens saw a minor incident where a man carrying a Palestinian flag was injured in an altercation with Maccabi fans.

The most recent match Maccabi Tel Aviv played in the UK was against West Ham United in the UEFA Europa Conference League group stage on 9th November 2023, held at the London Stadium. West Ham won the match 1–0. This fixture was part of the 2023–24 European campaign, and it marked Maccabi Tel Aviv's last competitive appearance on UK soil to date.

The most significant recent match was played in Amsterdam in November 2024 against Ajax. 2,800 Israeli fans travelled to the fixture. Over 200 of which were linked to the Israeli Defence Forces. Significant numbers of Maccabi fans were actively involved in demonstrations and confrontations.

The day before the fixture saw approximately 500-600 Maccabi fans apparently intentionally targeting Muslim communities and committing a variety of targeted, hate motivated crimes including serious assaults on Muslim taxi drivers, throwing innocent members of the public into the river, tearing down Palestine flags and singing hate fuelled songs. Police attempts to disperse this group resulted in serious violence. Dutch police will describe the MTA risk fans as experienced fighters who were highly organised and co-ordinated. They were intent on serious violence and were not afraid of fighting with police. Several officers were injured during the sustained confrontation.

On match day, significant numbers of Muslim community members mobilised to Amsterdam. Around 1000 Maccabi fans were escorted by police through the city. Inflammatory actions were noted including tearing down Palestinian flags and chanting anti-Arab slogans. Several Maccabi fans were assaulted by masked groups believed to be pro-Palestinian protesters. There were running street battles between the two groups throughout the day. Significant incidents of vandalism and street violence, including several attacks on taxis drivers and local communities by Maccabi fans were experienced.

The police response saw 5,000 officers deployed over a number of days and mass arrests were made from both sides.

OFFICIAL

During the match there was incitement to attack Jewish fans circulated on social media leading to bans on protests around the stadium. Emergency flights were arranged by the Israeli government to extract the Maccabi fans from the country.

The Dutch Police have confirmed that these incidents did take place, with MTA fans inciting serious violence on the day before the fixture. They describe them as being highly organised, skilled fighters with a serious desire and will to fight with police and opposing groups. Special flights were arranged by the Israeli government to return Maccabi fans back to Israel.

Matches have been played by the Israeli national team in Norway and Italy in recent weeks, both attracted large pro-Palestine protests which led to disorder.

Specific Event Intelligence

Intelligence strands have been received by WMP and are detailed below in chronological order of being received, including:

- High confidence information encouraging protests against the issues experienced in Amsterdam.
- High confidence information expressing the serious concerns of Aston residents regarding the fixture and possible risk of violence.
- High confidence information suggesting persons may seek to cause serious harm to people attending the fixture.
- High confidence information to suggest that petitions are being developed against the fixture.
- High confidence CT related information
- Medium confidence information suggesting persons intend to disrupt the fixture.
- Medium confidence information suggesting significant numbers of people from across the country are planning to attend Birmingham to protest the match, some threatening violence.
- Medium confidence information suggesting that MTA fans were using social media to celebrate violence in Amsterdam, suggesting it will be repeated in Birmingham.

Planning Assumptions

Based on the information and intelligence gathered, numerous planning assumptions have been made, namely:

- The majority of fans at the match are intending to enjoy the sport and support their team.
- Both sets of fans will consume alcohol to excess, this will affect their behaviour.
- There may be **pre-planned** disorder and ASB at the match
- There may be **pre-planned** ASB across the city
- There will be **spontaneous** disorder before, during and after the match
- There will be **spontaneous** ASB before, during and after the match
- There will be protest activity across the city and outside the stadia

OFFICIAL

- Attempts to disrupt the fixture will be made using a wide range of tactics.
- Risk fans from MTA will attend the match, they will be loud and very visible. They may seek disorder with opposing risk groups if confronted.
- The MTA fans will not comply with police direction and will be highly organised.
- Local communities and business communities will be concerned about the attendance of MTA

Threat Assessment

Having assessed the situation against the disorder model it is considered that this event is causing TENSION. This is based on:

- Potential for serious and sustained violence from risk elements of Maccabi fans.
- Numerous local communities are extremely concerned and in fear of this event
- Local communities concerns and probable risk of serious violence
- The potential for significant protest, involving various groups, against the event
- Organised groups may attend to disrupt the fixture (using a variety of tactics)
- There will be significant disruption to city centre and wider Birmingham
- All groups are known to direct anger towards police

Based on the developing intelligence picture and global events, it is acknowledged that there are significant Political, Ethical, Social, Economic, Geographical, Organisational and Legal implications which will need to be carefully managed and briefed throughout.

Based on the holistic picture it is felt that the current risk levels are:

- Risk of spontaneous disorder – HIGH
- Risk of anti-social behaviour – HIGH
- Risk of protest – HIGH
- Risk to away risk supporters – HIGH
- Risk of pre-planned disorder – MEDIUM
- Risk to local Muslim communities – MEDIUM
- Risk to pro-Palestine protesters – MEDIUM
- Risk of crime – MEDIUM
- Risk of Trust, Confidence & Legitimacy of WMP – MEDIUM
- Risk to officers deployed on operation – MEDIUM
- Risk of disruption – MEDIUM

Based on the above, the overall risk assessment is HIGH.

OFFICIAL

Tactical Options

Based on the current threat assessment a range of options have been considered, including allowing all fans to attend the fixture; having no fans at the fixture; having no Aston Villa fans; having no MTA fans or reducing the allocation of tickets for away fans.

Allow all fans – There is a realistic probability of serious disorder, disruption and offences being committed, this type of behaviour would be totally unacceptable to the communities of Birmingham and would cause significant issues for police and partner agencies. It is felt that this option still presents significant risk.

Have no fans at the fixture – This would demonstrate impartiality but would not necessarily be fair to Aston Villa fans who have no recent history of disorder. This may cause additional tensions within the football community and UEFA as well as may not be legally sound. It is felt that this option still presents significant risk.

Having no Aston Villa fans – This would significantly reduce the attendance but may be deemed unfair for Aston Villa fans. It would not prevent protest and disorder against other aspects of this event. It is felt that this option still presents significant risk.

Having no MTA fans – This would significantly reduce the tension between local communities and will take away a significant focus of serious disorder. This may be seen as anti-Semitic or anti-Israel with other aspects of our communities, both locally and nationally. This will need to be carefully managed to ensure the rationale for any decision is clearly understood. It is felt that this option presents the least risk.

The restriction on away fans is a tried and tested tactic in an effort to reduce risk. There are plenty of recent precedents in European football in terms of away fans being restricted from attending away matches.

Safety concerns saw Lazio fans restricted from AJAX's ground last year following a decision by the mayor and the police, while Glasgow Ranger's fans received a one away match ban at PSV Eindhoven for 'sectarian chanting.'

Eintracht Frankfurt fans have been banned from attending their match in Naples against Napoli next month due to fears of violence while a year ago Barcelona supporters were banned from attending their teams match against Red Star Belgrade due to the 'racist behaviour' of their supporters during an earlier match in Monaco.

OFFICIAL

Post SAG - Further Update

Since the initial SAG decision there has been significant media and political interest both locally, nationally and internationally. This has included direct observations from the Prime Minister who posted on social media resulting in international debate regarding the perception that the decision was antisemitic and should be reviewed and/or reversed. Opinions have been polarised and caused significant concern, particularly within Jewish communities worldwide.

On the 19th October 2025, serious disorder was experienced in Israel during a MTA 'local derby' fixture. Israeli police described the incident as 'public disorder and violent riots' and went on to say: "Dozens of smoke grenades and pyrotechnic devices were thrown" adding that; "this is not a football game, this is disorder and serious violence". Three police officers were amongst the fifteen people injured and, in a scenario familiar to officers in the UK, the Israeli police were blamed for the violence.

Following discussions with and support from the Home Office, WMP began to explore the feasibility of allowing a number of Maccabi fans into the stadium (including cost implications). These options have not been progressed further as a result of the announcement by Maccabi Tel Aviv on the 20th October not to accept their ticket allocation for the fixture.

The Chief Constable commissioned a peer review by UKFPU, NPCC and SME's which took place on Monday 20th October 2025. This fully endorsed our approach and decision making.

West Midlands Police have met with local Jewish community leaders on the 17th and 20th October, and held a national Jewish stakeholder meeting on the 21st October.

Additional information and intelligence has since been received by WMP, including:

- Tommy Robinson intends to attend the fixture in support of MTA
- Football fans linked to Chelsea football club intend to attend the fixture in support of Tommy Robinson
- EDL members may attend the fixture in support of Tommy Robinson.
- MTA fans from across the country, and maybe internationally, intend to travel to Birmingham regardless of not having tickets.
- Pro-Palestine groups intend to protest outside the stadium on the night of the fixture
- Right wing groups intend to protest outside the stadium on the night of the fixture

Considering the above, the assessment is that we are currently at TENSION but are planning for disorder.

Based on the holistic picture it is felt that the current risk levels are:

- Risk of spontaneous disorder – HIGH (No change)
- Risk of anti-social behaviour – HIGH (No change)
- Risk of protest – HIGH (No change)
- Risk to local Muslim communities – HIGH (increased due to Tommy Robinson, EDL and football risk intel)
- Risk to pro-Palestine protesters – HIGH (increased due to Tommy Robinson, EDL and football risk intel)

OFFICIAL

- Risk to officers deployed on operation – HIGH (increased due to Tommy Robinson, EDL and football risk intel)
- Risk to away risk supporters – MEDIUM (Reduced due to no MTA tickets)
- Risk of pre-planned disorder – MEDIUM (No change)
- Risk of crime – MEDIUM
- Risk of Trust, Confidence & Legitimacy of WMP – MEDIUM
- Risk of disruption – MEDIUM

Based on the above, the overall risk assessment is HIGH.

West Midlands Police are satisfied that the current proposed restrictions as agreed by the SAG on the 16th October are proportionate and provide some degree of mitigation against the known threats.

West Midlands Police continue to develop a tactical plan with a significant number of resources from across the country to deliver against our core police responsibilities.