



SWANSEA CITY SUPPORTERS' TRUST

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Programme Notes - Sheffield Wednesday, Saturday September 23rd 2023 – Paul Meller writes:

Welcome back to the Swansea.com Stadium for our first home game following the international break, which saw a welcome and much needed win for Wales over Latvia in the Euro Qualifiers. The optimism from that result soon evaporated at the Cardiff City stadium last Saturday night. The less said about that game the better. At QPR we were tantalisingly close to our first win, but our old habit of conceding injury time goals was our undoing once again. We desperately need to get that first win under our belts today and whatever our feelings may be about the team or tactics, we need to get behind them and give our full support.

There is no escaping the fact that it has been a difficult start to the season, but some perspective is needed – we have half a squad of new players to bed in, plus a new management team and tactics which require a fitter squad. The changes that have happened to the club have all been with the long term, bigger picture in mind and patience will be key in the short term. We have seen how a little patience has benefitted Swansea managers in the past.

This weekend sees the return of the fan zone, a great addition to the matchday experience for supporters. The Trust are in constant dialogue with the club about matchday improvements for supporters and welcome any suggestions you may have by getting in touch with us at supporters@swanstrust.co.uk. The fan zone this week is celebrating women's football and there is a chance to meet and put questions to the Swansea City Women's team, who the Trust were delighted to see become a fully integrated part of the club over the summer. The Women's team will be in action at Llandarcy Park at 2pm tomorrow afternoon, for those who would like to attend.

Speaking of the matchday experience, I recently had the pleasure of accompanying MrFlag® (Charles Ashburner) and the Swans Flag Crew to the Bournemouth match and soaked up the very different experience of watching the Swans play from pitch side as part of their official flag-waving duties. You can't miss them - they are the ones waving 4-metre-long Swansea City flags in each corner of the ground before matches and whenever we score. They are not employees of the club; they are unpaid volunteers – an enthusiastic and committed group of around 20 fans demonstrably doing their bit to get supporters behind the team. When selected to crew, besides the unique feeling of being almost on the pitch with the players, you get to watch matches for free and there are further rewards and benefits the more you volunteer. If you are interested in getting involved contact info@mrflag.com or WhatsApp 07747613344. There are also other volunteer opportunities around the ground on match days through the Swans 'Here to Help' initiative, contact info@swanstrust.co.uk for more details.

Today's opponents, Sheffield Wednesday, are back in the Championship after a two-year absence. Michael Duff will remember them well having been on the wrong side of the League 1 playoff final last May. Wednesday would have avoided relegation were it not for a 6-point deduction for breaching the EFL's Financial Fair Play regulations, which dictate what losses clubs are permitted to incur over a rolling three-year period. These regulations are essentially a break-even requirement, where clubs are ordered to not spend more than the income that they generate to prevent them from falling into deep financial trouble. At present, Championship clubs are punished if they exceed losses of more than £39million over a three-year period. Reading's 6 point deduction for breaching the regulations last season and consequent relegation saved Cardiff from the drop. Most clubs in the Championship that do not benefit from parachute payments are walking a financial tightrope and there will be more on this in future programme notes. The financial stability of the football club and ensuring that we do not fall foul of the EFL regulations is a regular feature of our discussions with the club's senior management team, especially club CFO Gareth Davies.

Hope you've done all your pre-match good luck rituals and more positive energy gets us a home win at last today.

Enjoy the game.

Paul