| Police Scotland logo | Freedom of Information ResponseOur reference: FOI 23-1481Responded to: 30 June 2023 |
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Your recent request for information is replicated below, together with our response.

**Under Section one of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 I would like to request the following information on the following decision made in Dingwall on the 4th June 2023.**

**Police Scotland, during the Ross County v Partick Thistle Premiership playoff match decided to tell the match officials to take the penalty kick facing the Ross County fans (Jail End) rather than the usual coin toss. This decision created an advantage to Ross County during the game, so as this decision was paramount the reasoning behind such a decision should be released.**

**I would like to request the following information on this decision:**

## · The specific reasoning behind this decision, with details of incidents which guided this decision to be made.

In response I can advise the following:

1900 hours, Sunday 4th June 2023, reflecting on previous intelligence. Patrick Thistle Football Club (PTFC) played Ayr United on 26th May 2023 in Ayr, in the 2nd Round Play-Off 2nd Leg. 5,811 were in attended with 2,366 PTFC fans. Result: 0-5. There was pre-match intelligence however all fans made their way to the stadium with no issues reported. A PTFC fan was arrested prior to the start of the fixture for possession of a Pyrotechnic. A Pyrotechnic was thrown from the PTFC away supporters in to the home fans prior to the start of the fixture. A Pyrotechnic was set off in the PTFC away end resulting in a 12 year old child being injured as a result of this. Further pyrotechnics were set off in the away end after PTFC scored their third goal. A player kicked the device off the pitch, prior to a steward removing it. At the conclusion of the fixture there were minor verbal altercations between both sets of fans as they headed away. This course of conduct was also observed at the PTFC v Ayr United 1st Leg on 19th May 2023.

During the Ross County Football Club (RCFC) v PTFC match the fans had in the main been well behaved however Police Scotland have a real credible threat of Pyrotechnic being carried and deployed at the match along with a pitch incursion.

During the game, and in particular in to the first and second parts of the extra time, the PTFC fans became increasing anxious and were jumping on the seats within the North Stand, this was recorded on the CCTV system. The on ground security marshals raised the concerns to the event control room housed by the Event Police Lead and the ground safety officer. Police Officers were deployed along with stewards to the default positions in front the North Stand to reduce any tension and possible pitch incursions.

The home fans remained in the main clam with the exception of a small group located in the South East corner of the Jail End.

The engineering of the North stand of the ground presents a real challenge making pitch incursions a common place. With approximately 90% of the 2,200 PTFC fan in this area, the risk was increased due to intelligence of a pitch incursion. During the match several PTFC fans did entre the pitch, however were safely returned or ejected.

The conduct of the PTFC fans continued to escalate, with multiple fans climbing over the areas to the top of the North Stand or standing on the seats, shouting and chanting. This resulted in multiple broken seats being identified following the match.

The option to specify which end the penalties were to be taken from was highlighted by the ground safety officer. The option were discussed at length with the goal of providing a balanced and proportionate response in respect of the safety of the home and away fans. Police Scotland recognise the significant role it plays in ensuring the safety of the public, maintaining public order and minimising disruption to communities. The role of the police at the match is to support the safety officer in the safe delivery of the event. The responsibility for safety remains at all time their responsibility and any policing response is provided to support their stewarding operation to maintain order at the event. Police Scotland is committed to challenging and policing all instances of violence, disorder and hate crime. All related policing activity will take cognisance of police Scotland’s values of integrity, fairness and respect underpinned by its code of ethics and human rights.

A decision was taken in consultation with the Event Police Lead and representatives from the 2 security companies. The decision to request that the home end was used for the penalties was reached by the safety officer after. The home end presented the lesser degree of risk and to avoid any pitch incursions and injury to the players, fans, match official, security officers and police officers.

At 1916 hours this was communicated to the match officials by the ground safety officer, with the full support of the Event Police Lead and stewards.

## · Who made this decision and their job title within Police Scotland.

The decision is made by the club, rather than the police. A joint decision was made between the Ground Safety Officer, Event Police Lead and two security company managers.

## · When did Police Scotland decide to make this decision (of course this decision being conditional on the game progressing to penalties).

The decision was made at 1916 hours on Sunday 4th June 2023.

## · When was the decision informed to the match officials and did Police Scotland report this decision to any club officials (either Ross County and/or Partick Thistle)

The decision was made in consultation with the club safety officers, Anibus security, Secure Group security managers and with the full knowledge of the match officials.

If you require any further assistance please contact us quoting the reference above.

You can request a review of this response within the next 40 working days by email or by letter (Information Management - FOI, Police Scotland, Clyde Gateway, 2 French Street, Dalmarnock, G40 4EH). Requests must include the reason for your dissatisfaction.

If you remain dissatisfied following our review response, you can appeal to the Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner (OSIC) within 6 months - [online](http://www.itspublicknowledge.info/Appeal), by email or by letter (OSIC, Kinburn Castle, Doubledykes Road, St Andrews, KY16 9DS).

Following an OSIC appeal, you can appeal to the Court of Session on a point of law only.

This response will be added to our [Disclosure Log](http://www.scotland.police.uk/access-to-information/freedom-of-information/disclosure-log) in seven days' time.

Every effort has been taken to ensure our response is as accessible as possible. If you require this response to be provided in an alternative format, please let us know.