



CANDIDATE STATEMENT



Vote for David Maples

“I would like to welcome both sets of fans to today’s final. It is supporters who are the true lifeblood of the game, following their teams all over the country, often travelling thousands of miles over the course of a season”

Debbie Jevans, EFL interim chair EFL Trophy final programme 31 March 2019

The football authorities have a strange way of showing their gratitude. Pompey’s FA Cup first, second and third round matches were respectively 1230 on a Saturday, 2 on a Sunday and 530 on a Saturday. Our fifth round weekend match was even moved to 1230 on a Saturday without us being in the competition.

Increasingly the virus of moving matches for television, which has long dominated the Premier League, has spread to the championship and now even threatens League 1 clubs.

It was very disappointing to miss out on promotion, but we should be aware what we would have been letting ourselves in for. Up until the first weekend in December, Leeds United had 11 games moved for television.

The prostitution of football to television is killing the game. This reached absurd heights with our play-off semi-final against Sunderland being played at 7:30 on Saturday night, resulting in fewer than half the number of travelling fans than for the league match two weeks previously.

The very least that the football authorities could do is use some of the TV revenue to help travelling fans through:

- Capping away ticket prices at £20

- Giving adequate notice of revised kickoff times
- Setting fixture times so that away fans can get home the same day
- Subsidising travel for away fans

If I am elected to the trust board, I would want to use the position to publicise the campaigns the Football Supporters Federation is running on these issues.

After two years of Tornante ownership it is also disappointing that wheelchair supporters are still not given any protection from inclement weather. This is hardly the Disney experience. I believe the club should take urgent measures to remedy the situation. If a new gantry can be provided for television cameras in the least wheelchair supporters should be given is cover and a decent view.

Last season was gruelling for travelling fans, but a significant commercial improvement for the club with extra revenue from cup success, additional matches, newly re-negotiated commercial and sponsorship arrangements, increased income from i-follow and higher retail sales. Against this background it is disappointing that the playing budget for next season is not being significantly increased.

Part of the agreement when Tornante took over the club was the establishment of a Heritage and Advisory board. There seems to be very little information about it apart from its initial meeting. The Trust board should ensure that it reports back to the membership on these meetings.

Play Up Pompey

David Maples