
HAMPDEN COLLECTION

Scottish Affairs Committee
House of Commons
London,
SW1A 0AA

15th February 2022

RE: #OorLadsOorTelly Campaign for Scotland National Men's Team Football Matches on Free-To-Air Television

Dear Committee Members,

Further to my email dated 24th January, I'd like to thank Mr Mead for his response.

The Hampden Collection is a voluntary team whose mission is to preserve and protect the 3 Hampden Parks and all who played on them. We've run several campaigns to highlight Scotland's pioneering role in the foundation of world football and are proud advocates of our national sport in both the men's and women's game.

We believe everyone should have the opportunity to watch our national team, play our national game, 'live' on national television. Furthermore we respect that the Scottish Women's National Team is broadcast on BBC Alba, however, we think ALL national team games should be broadcast on the main Free-To-Air channels.

Our campaign launched on 21st October 2020, aptly named *#OorLadsOorTelly*, highlighting that the upcoming Euro 2021 qualifying play-offs for the Mens' National Team *were not going to be shown* on Free-To-Air television. Following a successful campaign by The Hampden Collection, Tartan Army Members and Members of Parliament, Sky TV showed the play-off matches on Free-To-Air Channels.

This event an astounding success with the peak audience of 2.6m¹ watching the vital penalty shoot-out that put the Scotland's Men's team through to their first finals in 24 years. Almost half the nation watched this glorious achievement and showed the passion, excitement and outpouring of support that our national team generates. This excitement was a direct consequence of the football match being shown Free-To-Air.

Our campaign continues and we are raising the question again to the continuing lack of coverage of Scotland international football matches on Free-To-Air channels. In fact,

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England's qualifiers for both the World Cup and European Championships are shown on STV whereas our own national team matches are not shown.

We would like to ask if, in the interest of fairness and equality, there could be some effort made from parliamentary level to redress the balance and encourage the TV broadcasters to find a way to show our national football team on our TV screens.

We live in the "UK", an apparently equal union, yet the rights to Scotland's national games are always somehow deemed "unaffordable". Surely an audience of 2.6m is a huge advertising opportunity for the commercial FTA channels, and/or good use and justification of TV Licence payer's money.

With this in mind, on 25th January 2022, The Hampden Collection launched an online petition to give the nation a voice. Our petition has 1,232 signatories at the time of writing and is gaining traction by the day. More importantly there are 50 excellent comments further bolstering our campaign. Here is a sample:

"The Scotland Team is a national treasure, you shouldn't put a price on viewing them in action." - Stephen Scott

"Come on show a bit of fairness, this is a ridiculous and insulting situation." - Allison Reid

"Only fair we all get a chance to watch them if we want to. Not everyone can get to the games or afford the TV channels needed." - Charlotte Burns

"Football is part of our culture and heritage. If England can get all their games on TV why can't Scotland." - Paul Maxwell

"The young need to be able to see their heroes and role model if they are to aspire to play for Scotland. We can't all go to the game. We can't all afford to go to the game. Early talent will go uninspired. We may lose the next Willie Miller, Alex McLeish, Davie Cooper or Danny McGrain, Paul McStay - great servants to the our Scottish national team. And that's just my generation's heroes." - Jerry Randals

"It's essential to inspire the next generation of Scotland fans that they can see their heroes on free-to-air TV." - Gordon Sheach

For the petition signatories and comments, please go to the following link: <https://www.change.org/OorLadsOorTelly>

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There are some very important qualifiers coming up and the TV rights are up for tender. We believe it's time to open this discussion far and wide and we would be delighted if you would ask these very important questions. Why are Scotland games deemed unaffordable? Why aren't both the Men's and the Women's National Team matches shown on mainstream Free-To-Air Channels? What will it take to make this a reality?

This link² provides the details of the current commercial rights issued for the World Cup Qualifiers, and shows how both England and Wales have shared rights between Sky TV and ITV, whereas both Scotland and Northern Ireland, do not. This appears systemically unfair within a supposed equal Union and poses a significant question as to how these 'crown jewel' sporting events are managed.

We would be more than happy to make further comment as required, and please do not hesitate to contact us should you wish to discuss further. We look forward to your response.

Kind regards

Barry Kirk & Graeme Brown

HAMPDEN COLLECTION TEAM

Notes:

- 1) <https://www.sportspromedia.com/news/scotland-euro-2020-playoff-sky-sports-free-broadcast-viewership/>
- 2) <https://www.uefa.com/uefaeuro-2020/news/0253-0d821bf23a05-7fb2958100f5-1000--where-to-watch-the-qualifiers/>

