



The Changing Face Of Security Procedures At Major Sporting Events **By Rory Steyn**

Not to put too fine a point on what has since become a laboured cliché, our world is no longer the same after the fateful events of 11 September 2001; and nowhere is this truer than in the security arena generally.

Sporting events, being both “soft targets” as well as enjoying considerable media coverage, offer “ideal targets” (if there are such things) to terrorist organisations.

Consequently, the world’s first major sporting event since 9/11 and the first to be held in the United States, was the 2002 Winter Olympic Games in Salt Lake City, Utah held in February 2002; which had a security budget reported to have spiralled to a massive \$250 million.

But even before those Games were staged, the most successful Olympic Games ever, (the 2000 Summer Olympics in Sydney, Australia) had already seen the extraordinary for then, introduction of the so-called “mag-and-bag” searching of all spectators prior to them passing through the turnstiles. (“Mag” is the shortened form of “magnetometre” and that is the technical name for a metal-detector.) What this meant in effect was that spectators passed through security check points similar to those at an airport, where they walked through a magnetometre and their bags were inspected by police and security officials.

The successful introduction of this mag-and-bag system in Sydney coupled with public fears following 9/11 necessitated such measures to be employed at each major sporting event since. So the FIFA World Cup 2002 in Japan and South Korea, the ICC Cricket World Cup 2003 in South Africa, the recently held IRB Rugby World Cup 2003 in Australia and the 2003 Presidents Cup biannual golf tournament in South Africa all went the mag-and-bag route, among other security measures implemented.

The amount of inconvenience spectators are subjected to because of the increased security measures depends on how well or how poorly they are executed by police and/or security officers. Airline travel in the US has become increasingly arduous with shoes and trouser belts now having to be removed and more than one mag-and-bag search before boarding becoming the order of the day. More significantly than mere inconvenience though, is the considerable financial burden placed on major event organisers; and this is not limited to the much larger bill for physical security infrastructure such as magnetometres and the human resources to operate them. The cost of insuring major sports events is said to have quadrupled since 9/11 and to ensure them at all requires the presentation of a comprehensive security master plan to the respective sports’ world governing bodies that has to contain certain minimum requirements, government guarantees and internationally accepted best practice.

The ICC Cricket World Cup 2003 saw the South African government commit four times the cost of the private security sector in policing and special police operations around the event. Such expenditure is well justified in the light of major sporting events having far greater significance for the host country (or

city) than just the sport concerned, when the tourism spend, media exposure and honour of being selected are factored into the equation. The fact that major sports events are attended by heads of state and government already presupposes increased security levels and the combined value of modern sportsmen and women, corporate sponsors and media interest dictate that nothing less than a host nation's ultimate security effort will suffice.

So the changed-forever global security picture has necessitated the development of sport-specific major event expertise in the design of security policy and procedure. Such expertise is available from Rushmans Ltd. A UK-based enterprise with 20 years experience of 500 major sports events in 30 countries on all 5 continents. Our expertise is wide-ranging yet specific and we are ideally placed at the head of the developments outlined above, to provide cogent solutions to the challenges offered by the world's greatest sporting spectacles.

Rushmans Limited

P O Box 2391, Marlborough, Wiltshire, SN8 3WJ United Kingdom
Tel: +44 (0) 1264 852010 Fax: +44 (0) 1264 852011 Website: www.rushmans.com