

Leeds ban on racist fans

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Martin Wainwright

FANS of Leeds United, who have earned one of the worst reputations for racism in the Football League, face a ban from all city council amenities if they are convicted of violent or racist offences at the club's ground.

The council announced the proposal yesterday at the publication of a report on the activities of National Front and other rightwing groups at Leeds United matches, which have become notorious for the taunting of black players.

For its next home fixture, the club is printing 20,000 leaflets, signed by all the players, which

appeal for an end to obscene and racist chants. West Yorkshire police and the council are moving on National Front recruiters and newspaper sellers who operate outside Elland Road stadium, which the council rents to the club.

Mr Malcolm Bedford, a Leeds United director and deputy chairman of the city's leisure services committee, said that council lawyers were studying the framing of an overall ban in the city on hooligans.

"Our aim is that anyone convicted at Elland Road will be barred, not only from the ground but also from any council facility.

"The council and the club are well aware of this problem,

which is discussed at every Leeds United board meeting," he said.

Leeds council already bars hooligans from individual sports centres or other facilities, but has yet to try a general ban. Mr Bedford described the idea as effectively "banning these people from the city."

The report, *Terror On Our Terraces*, has been produced by Leeds Trades **Union Council** and Anti-Fascist **Action** in response to the club's request for detailed evidence of National Front activity at Elland Road. It links paper sales and recruitment by the NF and other rightwing groups to taunts and the throwing of bananas inside the stadium.