



Dundee FC Supporters' Society Limited Moving Forward Together

Dundee FC Season Ticket & PATG Price Study and the Broader Picture

Prepared by Art McGuinness and Norrie Price in April 2018:

Firstly, the club deserve credit for maintaining **season ticket** prices at last season's levels. A year or so on, those are now mostly good value for money, especially if supporters take advantage of the various Early Bird discount incentives.

Adult ST prices compare reasonably well (c £20/game) with most of Dundee's Premier League peers as well as Premier prices projected by neighbours Dundee United. Both the U18 and U12 categories – at £130 and £10, respectively – represent superb value and this is heartening to see. My only reservation lies with the O65s and student category, which at £265 is perhaps £40 more than several other clubs* and would arguably be more attractive pitched closer to the £200 mark after discounts. (* '17/18 prices)

Clearly, the club are endeavouring to encourage the uptake of season tickets but, equally, gate prices need to be reasonably priced to lure those who, either cannot commit to the price of a season book or would fail to benefit from a ST due to being unable to attend a number of games. Turning to **Pay-at-the-Gate** pricing, the issue is unfortunately dominated by the new headline-grabbing 'Premium' match category - £30 for an adult - introduced alongside the existing A & B Categories. There's been no indication what this covers, but it's assumed it could be for matches against the Old Firm and possibly, Dundee United.

Whatever way you look at it, this new category is unjustified. It seems sure to attract widespread negative publicity, and rather than earn additional revenue may well do the opposite. It is liable to cause unrest amongst Dundee supporters and they as well as prospective visiting fans may also just stay away. At the very least, it would be helpful for a club spokesman to explain what they are attempting to do.

I would prefer Dundee FC to be seen as a club with a **fair pricing policy**, ideally with standard pricing for all games, with a higher charge perhaps for visits by the Old Firm and Dundee United. Dundee's Category A & B prices remain at £26 and £24 yet Partick Thistle and Kilmarnock, who like Dundee have enjoyed scant success in recent years, each offer modestly priced* adult gate prices of £22 and £20. (* '17/18 prices). As with their season ticket approach, the board should be looking to encourage more people along on a casual basis so an adjustment there allied to a reduced gate price of £15 for O65s and Students - rather than £22/19/16 currently mooted - might help develop the fan base.

Ideally, I feel that Dundee supporters ought to be able to watch their team for no more than £20 and a season ticket commitment would certainly enable that. Personally, I would rarely be prepared to pay more than £20 for PATG entry, perhaps £22-24 for the occasional away game, but not on a regular basis. This latter viewpoint may be significant when discussing why attendances for home games against Hibs, Hearts and Aberdeen have



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markedly declined – perhaps due to Cat A pricing for adults at £26 - and it would be worth discussing with their fans groups and our own. I would say, then, that at £20 and above - loyalty apart - there needs to be a real attraction in prospect – a competitive game, with good entertainment and a good atmosphere. If you've no loyalty to DFC, and in the absence of these criteria an individual would seriously question the worth of that outlay when there is arguably better value from a visit to Ice Hockey, the cinema, the theatre or having a good meal and drinks.

Why not take soundings from representatives of fans groups DSA and DFCSS over pricing or other issues? **This would be seen as good PR**, while at the announcement of prices for a new season it would seem prudent to send existing/lapsed season ticket holders their own renewal/re-application form. Should they not wish to renew, their feedback would at the very least be informative. One would also expect the club to be actively targeting local schools, universities and colleges but, again, new custom will only be attracted by decent PATG prices.

Supporters understand that the club should not live beyond its means, that it requires income and that it will have to sell players along the way to help balance the books. However, just prior to the 2016/16 season, the Dundee FC board lost a lot of credibility by releasing their most creative player, Gary Harkins then selling Kane Hemmings and Greg Stewart, who had scored 36 goals between them the previous year. **The purchase of a season ticket, then, can clearly be an act of faith** as none were satisfactorily replaced, and in the recent January window a similar situation occurred with the loss of Jack Hendry.

In considering the issue of pricing we ought to ask just **what is Dundee FC's overall strategy** and how do they hope to achieve it? One would assume that they would wish to improve attendances and with that the income for the club. "How," would be the question? The provision of better facilities through the proposed new stadium is certainly a positive, yet in the here and now, engagement with supporters & shareholders, and increased flexibility of thought would be welcomed.

This is particularly important as Dundee continue to compete for local support with Dundee United, who until their relegation two years ago enjoyed considerably more recent success and developed a larger fan-base. Dundee FC and their board, therefore, need to leave no stone unturned in their efforts to rebuild the team and support, while continuing to re-establish them at the top level.

What is Dundee FC's Elasticity of Demand? The point being whether lowering admission prices – perhaps selectively – would help boost attendances and build long-term support. A stated plan to trial this would certainly be appreciated by fans and would also achieve positive publicity for the club - a 10% increase for a particular fixture might be deemed a success. The effect of high pricing with that £30 PATG may soon be discovered, but how many would come along with free admission, perhaps with a blanket or bucket collection to record their appreciation?



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Nearly 8,000 turned out for the cut-price final-day match v Partick Thistle in the “Defiant Season” while a similar number attended a, televised Scottish Cup quarter-final v Hamilton in 2005. Last November, Armed Forces personnel gained free entry against Kilmarnock, adding perhaps 500 of a 5,800 gate - fairly impressive considering Dundee had lost their five previous games. In January, a price reduction to £10 & £5 for the Scottish Cup tie v ICT brought a declared gate of only 3,507 (STs invalid) but the weather was particularly cold and a better measure might be to offer a **“Spring-Time Special” double deal with reduced prices for the final two home games against Hamilton and Partick Thistle** – matches that could be vital to Dundee’s Scottish Premier future.

Televised matches have meant perhaps 20% of home games being played on Friday nights, or Saturday/Sunday at 1230 rather than the traditional 3pm kick-off. That can make it inconvenient or just impossible for a season-ticket holder to attend. And with these games shown live on TV, the temptation to watch elsewhere arises, leaving less value to be had from a season ticket and maybe a decision not to renew.

Thus, for those for whom a Season Ticket is impractical and PATG punitive, can a “Super-Six” Flexi ticket or similar be introduced, perhaps covering two Cat A and four Cat B games? Local derbies apart, attendances at televised games have been disappointing, many fans just will not pay Cat A prices (£26) for a game they can watch free in a pub with a few and it would seem well worth **trailing a televised Sat 1230 game against Hearts, Hibs or Aberdeen with reduced prices** while liaising with those clubs along with an appeal to home fans to respond, to see if there is an improvement.

We believe the club needs to consider whether it provides value for money and how others perceive them. A good way of doing this would be to conduct an **Annual Supporter Satisfaction Survey**, covering 10 key points. These can be completed by say 5% of our regular support - around 200 persons – with distribution to club sponsors, shareholders, season ticket holders, fans groups, pay at the gate fans, and of courses lapsed supporters.

To summarise

IMO, Season ticket prices are attractive though O65s & Students could be dropped slightly.

Re PATG, need to forget any ideas about Premier Category at £30 and reconsider Adult Cat A, Over 65 & Student prices – particularly when televised live.

We want to be The Club that cares – better PR required.