

# WarringtonFire

## Inside look into fire safety

Steven Cooper is a Director of warringtonfire consulting. He is a Chartered Engineer and a member of the Institution of Fire Engineers. Here he tells FC BUSINESS about the use of fire safety engineering (FSE) in sports grounds.

**FCB** Can you explain exactly what fire safety engineering entails?

**SC** FSE is the application of engineering techniques and methodologies to the problems associated with ensuring an adequate level of fire safety in buildings.

**FCB** Now then, can the fire safety engineer help in the design of sports stadia etc?

**SC** Usually, we should work with the design or management team to ensure that the fire risk is determined from an objective evaluation of the hazards existing in the building, or associated with the development. We can then ensure that resources are directed to those areas where they will have the greatest effect on reducing the risk to the building in the event that a fire does occur.

**FCB** What do you see as the biggest safety risks facing sports stadia?

**SC** The extreme events that we have witnessed over the last two or three years have made people more aware of the risks arising from terrorist activities, and have reminded us that no country is immune for such outrages. Notwithstanding this, the single largest prevailing threat to sports crowds remains that arising from fire. A fire in a crowded sports venue still has the capability of causing a major loss of life.

**FCB** What then can be done to address this issue?

**SC** Every country has legislation that provides for a certain level of fire safety in sports stadia and similar environments. And this legislation should, if applied sensibly, ensure that the buildings occupants are protected. However, in many cases, this legislation is very prescriptive in nature and cannot respond effectively to changes in building design, construction methods or materials or to changes in the way in which the building can be used. In these instances, the fire safety engineer can work with the management team and the regulators to ensure that these prescriptive rules do not hinder the efficient use of the facilities and are not applied in a manner that could result in the building being unsafe.

**FCB** Presumably, you charge fees for your services; so what economic benefits can you bring?

**SC** On many occasions, FSE provides the only way in which the fire risk and the fire safety measures necessary to address that risk, can be accurately determined. Our work often results in cost savings to the stadium, although this is never a prime motivation.

**FCB** Can you give some indication of the type of work that you have done on sports grounds?

**SC** We have carried out the full range of services; everything from the development of full fire safety studies through to the development of fire safety management procedures through to quantifying the likelihood of fire spread from concession stands to confirming the acceptability of using areas of stadia for different uses on non match days. We have carried out these activities in some of the leading venues in the UK and across Europe.

**FCB** Are there any drawbacks with FSE or an occasion when it cannot be used?

**SC** No. FSE is flexible enough to be used in all circumstances. Unfortunately there are some consultants who possess technical skills but lack the practical awareness necessary to allow them to use FSE effectively or safely.

**FCB** Are there professional standards to which to subscribe?

**SC** Absolutely. The Institution of Fire Engineers is the professional body for FSE but over and above this, our senior engineers are all either Chartered Engineers in the UK Engineering Council or are working towards this registration.

**FCB** In conclusion, what single piece of (free) advice can you offer?

**SC** Accept nothing at face value! Pre-conceived ideas of what measures are necessary to provide an adequate level of fire safety can all be re-evaluated using FSE. What may have been unacceptable under a prescriptive regime may prove to be completely appropriate when viewed objectively using the techniques available to the fire safety engineer.

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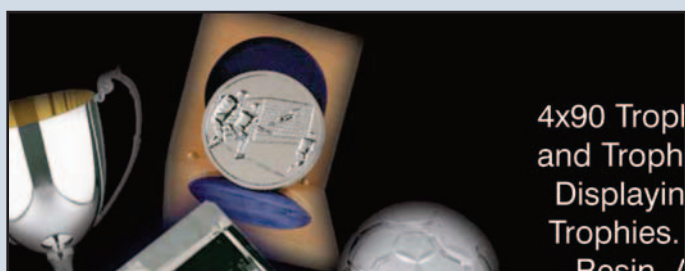
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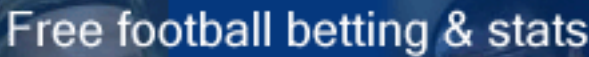
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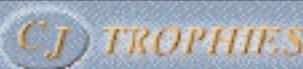
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# JAY JAY

## SO GOOD THEY NAMED HIM TWICE

Interview by Chris Webb

Bolton Wanderers midfielder and Nigerian International Jay Jay Okocha has been a huge hit since being brought to the club by Sam Allardyce back in the summer of 2002. Okocha has set the Premiership alight with his flair and inspirational skills, becoming a huge hit with the fans in the process and helping Bolton become a permanent fixture in the top-flight of English football.

**SIGNED** on a free transfer from Paris Saint Germain following the World Cup in Japan, Okocha's crowd-pleasing tricks have made him a legend at the Reebok. He had previously moved to Paris St Germain after emerging as one of the few bright lights for Nigeria at the 1998 World Cup finals in France. Okocha secured his place in Bolton's record books after turning in a string of superb performances to help save the club from relegation at the end of the 2002 / 03 season, as he finished joint top scorer with seven goals.

**Q: Which players do you admire in the modern game?**

A: I admire any player with skill. The French international Zidane is one of the best players I've ever seen. Ronaldinho is another great player, his skills and technique are very good. In Africa, we have many talented players coming through including Samuel E'to and Michael Essien.

**Q: Do you think that African football has improved much within the last ten years?**

A: It is continuing to improve on a year-by-year basis. There is some great footballing talent in Africa and it won't be long before African nations are pushing to win a world cup. I see myself as an ambassador for the game in Africa and it is my responsibility to make sure that Africa continues its rapid growth.

**Q: Was it always your ambition to become a professional footballer?**

A: Yes, ever since I was a young boy growing up in Nigeria, I wanted to be a professional footballer. I was lucky to get a break at any early age and I arrived in European football by accident. I flew to Germany at the age of 17 to visit a friend who played football in Neunkirchen. I was playing in Nigeria for my local team Enugu Rangers at the time and I was doing okay. During my stay in Germany I went along to train with the local club and was immediately persuaded to stay. From Neunkirchen, I went to Saarbrücken and then quickly on to Eintracht Frankfurt in December 1991. This all happened before my 18th birthday, and that was my break into European football.

**Q: Do you have a favourite moment from your career so far?**

A: From an international point of view, it was fantastic to win a Gold Medal at the Atlanta Olympics in 1996. Nigeria upset the world of football when we took gold by beating Argentina 3-2 in the final. We were the first

African nation to win a global football tournament. Taking Bolton Wanderers into the UEFA Cup for the first time was a satisfying achievement from a personal point of view. To finish sixth last season was brilliant and to be the captain in that great season was an honour.

**Q: What do you think is the secret of Bolton's success?**

A: I don't think there is a secret. We all work very hard, have developed a great team spirit and are all playing for the same goal. It makes a big difference when all the players respect each other and work together. Overall there's a very good atmosphere at the club and I think that's reflected in how well we've done in the last few seasons, qualifying for Europe was the target and we've achieved that.

**Q: What advice would you have for young players from what you've learnt in the game?**

A: Listen to your coaches and practice, practice, practice.

**Q: How much care do you take with your diet?**

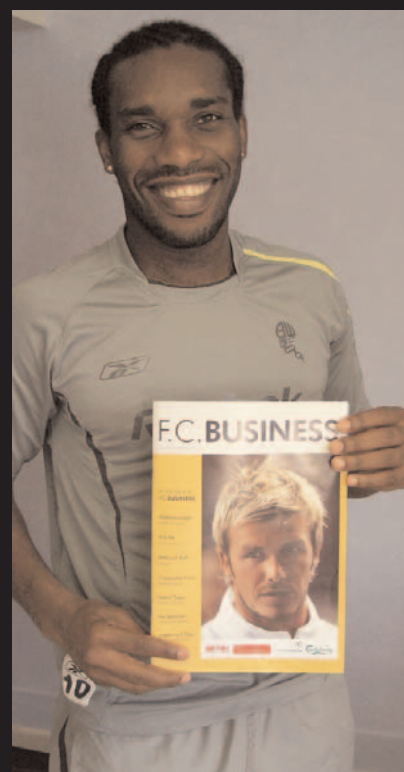
A: I definitely think that footballers need the right nutrition. You have to respect your body and eat the right things. We have a very good medical team to advise us on what to eat and I try to take all the information on board as I think it's really important. All the players use nutritional supplements provided by our sponsor MET-Rx, which are great for complementing our fitness programmes. I think the fact that we work with a nutrition company like MET-Rx shows that we take nutrition seriously and this has helped the squad get and stay in great shape.

**Q: Is the pace of the English game very different from International football?**

A: The Premiership is by far the most physically demanding league in the world. The pace of the game in England is not matched anywhere in the world. I found it very difficult in my opening season and it took me nearly five months to get to grips with the demands of English football. If you're not prepared for it, it will smack you in the face no matter how good you are.

**Q: Who are the hardest team to play against in the Premier League?**

A: At present it has to be Chelsea. They have a squad of world-class players. When we played them earlier this season we were in control of the game until the 60th minute. Then in a mad ten minutes we conceded four goals and they just blew us away. They can do that to any team at the moment. I can't see them relinquishing the title this season.



**Q: Do you agree with claims that the Premier League has become less entertaining for supporters?**

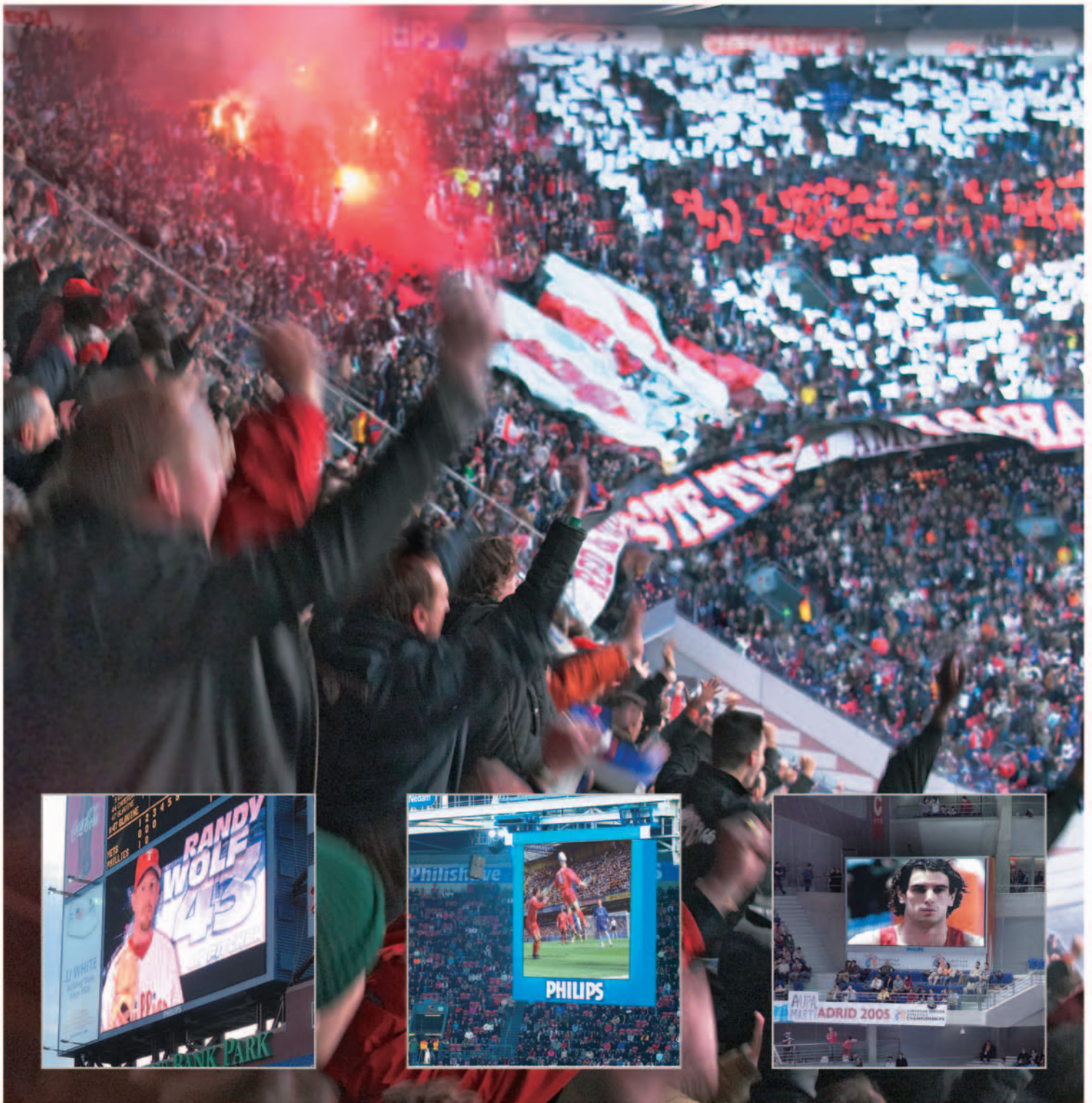
A: I totally disagree. The Premiership is still fantastic and the best league in the world. Supporters still turn up in thousands and have the opportunity to watch the best players in the world. You can't beat that!

**Q: Do you have any plans for when your playing career is over?**

A: I haven't decided what I'll do when I retire. One thing is for sure, I will spend more quality time with my family.

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