The Olympic Nazi: Repulsive Lithuanian fan directs offensive gesture at black stewards during basketball match

Two police officers witnessed it but apparently failed to act

By Paul Bentley and Rebecca Camber


Offensive: The portly Lithuanian raises his arm in salute

His arm raised in an apparent Nazi salute, a Lithuanian basketball fan goads two black Olympic stewards.

The sight was also witnessed by two policemen at a game on Sunday night, but astonishingly they appeared to do nothing about it.

The moment was caught on camera by an English couple who noticed the ‘sickening’ gesture on the other side of the Basketball Arena in the Olympic Park.

While the police insist they are investigating, anti-racism charities have reacted angrily because they believe officers should have acted quicker and removed the fan from the venue.

The man was part of a rowdy group of Lithuanian fans who stood on their feet chanting loudly throughout the first part of their country’s opening basketball game against Argentina on Sunday night.
Spectators said they appeared to have been drinking and had moved over to a section of the stand right alongside the opposing team’s fans.

Stewards and policemen approached the group to ask them to sit down so those behind could see the game.

But as two black male stewards came towards them, one of the Lithuanian fans responded with what appears to have been a racist salute.

Despite the presence of two policemen yards below, the man was allowed to continue to make the gesture until the stewards walked away and down out of the nearest gangway, followed shortly after by the policemen.

One witness at the game, in which Argentina beat Lithuania 102-79, said: ‘I was waiting to see if they [the officers] would do anything. But they didn’t seem to move from their one spot. Eventually they went down the stairs and seemed to emerge from a level below - but the Lithuanian fan was allowed to stay inside.

‘When I saw what the fan was doing I turned to my girlfriend and asked if she also thought it was a salute. If it was a Nazi salute made to two black officials that is sickening. This guy needs to be singled out. The police should have done something. They need to make it abundantly clear they will not stand for this kind of thing.’

He added that the stewards appeared to be ‘calm and professional’ despite being face with what appeared to be the most grotesque abuse.

This summer there were widespread fears within England that black fans travelling to the Euro 2012 football championships in nearby Poland and Ukraine would face a violent frenzy of racist abuse.

Those threats were largely kept at bay, making it all the more embarrassing that officers in London appeared to do nothing when such an incident happened on home soil.

Ged Grebby, chief executive of anti-racism campaigners Show Racism the Red Card, said officers should have thrown the fan out immediately for using such an ‘extreme racist sign’.
‘It is a criminal offence. We can’t just let things like this go. It is the kind of behaviour that they should act upon immediately. We encourage the police to take action now,’ he said.

Weyman Bennett from Unite Against Fascism added: ‘The Olympics ideal is all about unity. People should take racism very seriously.

‘It is very disappointing that the man was not at the very least ejected. It’s disgraceful.’ A spokesman for the Metropolitan Police said it was aware of the image and was trying to trace those involved.

* * * * *

A Swiss footballer was yesterday thrown out of the games in disgrace after he posted a racist message about South Korean people on Twitter.

After Switzerland lost 2-1 to South Korea in their second group game on Sunday, Michel Morganella, 23, wrote: ‘I want to beat up all South Koreans! Bunch of mentally handicapped retards!’

The Swiss Olympic team chief Gian Gilli announced yesterday that Morganella would be stripped of his Olympic accreditation as a result.

Greece dropped triple jumper Voula Papachristou last week after she posted a comment mocking African immigrants.
Racist: Switzerland's Michel Morganella, left, posted an offensive message online after his side lost to South Korea.
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Much, much easier to arrest a 17-year old for 'writing' on Twitter.........
- Dave, Oban, 31/7/2012 09:48
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In reply to Christina, New Plymouth, it probably mattered to the people it was being directed at. Why should they be singled out because of the colour of their skin???
- Sara, Cardiff (via Auckland, NZ), 31/7/2012 09:47
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He's waving...- pete, sheffield, 31/7/2012 5:14====== Funny how he was 'waving' when 3 ethnic guys walked past.
- Sammie, London, UK, 31/7/2012 09:46
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maybe they did nothing as they were more worried about other issues, at a big sport s event the police are run off their feet not to mention possible terrorists to look out for, maybe some sign that some could imagine might be racist just wasnt top of their list, it sure wouldnt have been top of mine
- Terry John, sunderland, venice of the north , 31/7/2012 09:44
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During the 1950s' Communist hunt in America, anyone who has a Communist sympathy was fired or reprimanded. Now, who ever seems like a National Socialist is singled out like a leper. What ever happened to the First Amendment which guarantee freedom of speech - whether in 1950s or 2010s ? - pablo, Los Angeles, California, 31/7/2012 5:44################################################### Two things, Pablo: 1. Just in case you hadn't noticed, the Olympics are being held in LONDON, and the First Amendment relates to American legislation - although, I agree, most Americans do think their laws should relate to all of the world's population. 2. Many people misinterpret "freedom of speech" to mean they can say just what they like, when they like, and to whom they like - well they can't !! People can't incite others to violence, they can't libel others, they can't say or do things which cause harm to others, and they can't so, or do, things that are deemed racist.
- Peter, Suffolk, 31/7/2012 09:43
Click to rate _ _ Rating 258
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Absolutely correct, Wojtek. The West isn't aware that many Lithuanians fully supported nazis and still think to this day that it wasn't that bad being occupied by them. Lithuanians don't even celebrate the end of WWII. - me, uk, 31/7/2012 9:23 I have to say, so what? As the DM and its readers never tire of pointing out, our fathers and grandfathers fought in the war to preserve freedom of speech, and it's disgraceful that it's being eroded. Unfortunately, that has to include the freedom of Lithuanians to prefer life under the Nazis.

- Vanessa M, Twickenham, England, 31/7/2012 09:43

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The ignorant idiot making the salute should have been very unceremoniously thrown out of the stadium. It should be made clear that Britain doesn't tolerate redneck behaviour.

- Sarah, The Beautiful North, 31/7/2012 09:43

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Rating 273

Arresting him and dragging him out of the venue would have allowed him to be centre of attention. Perhaps ignoring him was the best thing to do, after all social media will certainly ensure anyone who knows or works with him has seen his daft behaviour.

- Jeddle, Northwich, uk, 31/7/2012 09:42

Click to rate  
Rating 31

Repulsive fat slug

- donna, norwich uk, 31/7/2012 09:41

Click to rate  
Rating 358

My only personal experience of Lithunians is my neighbours and their extended family and friends, I assumed that it was just bad luck to be stuck with the rudest, most inconsiderate, arrogant, selfish Lithuanians to walk this earth, and that they weren't "typical" of thier country, seems I was wrong. I am sure that there are decent people who respect others from Lithuania unfortunately for them it's the idiots that are the ones that are seen to represent their country. I have friends from many of the former eastern bloc countries, and they are all good people who are hard working and decent but all I have ever seen from Lithuania is this arrogance. So I am afraid my view of Lithuania are formed by that Well done to the stewards for not reacting to the idiot in the green shirt and one day I hope to meet a Lithuanian who is a decent person as I am sure they are out there

- Only one little cog, Not really sure anymore, 31/7/2012 09:39

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Rating 183

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