



11th May 2026

Football fans urged to show fraudsters the red card ahead of World Cup

- Football ticket scams increased 36% over the past six months, compared to the same period the previous year
- Lloyds and the government are urging fans to Stop! Think Fraud ahead of the World Cup next month
- Victims on average lost £215 but some are losing much more, with the total amount lost by victims increasing by 42%, compared to the same six months the previous year
- Almost a third (32%) of all ticket scams are football related, with fraudsters expected to exploit international demand for the biggest games of the year

Football fans are being urged to guard against scams when buying match tickets for the upcoming FIFA World Cup – which kicks off next month – as newly-released data from Lloyds reveals football ticket scams increased over a third (36%) during the current Premier League football season.

Which teams and fixtures do fraudsters target most?

The findings, based on thousands of scam cases between October 2025 and March 2026, show fraudsters focus heavily on popular teams such as Arsenal, Liverpool, Chelsea and Manchester United. Scammers also repeatedly target supporters looking for tickets to some of the most in-demand football matches in the UK, such as the FA Cup Final and Champions League Final.

With the World Cup, hosted in the USA, Canada and Mexico, set to be the most spectated football event, it's anticipated that fraudsters will target the big-name fixtures and attempt to exploit international demand.

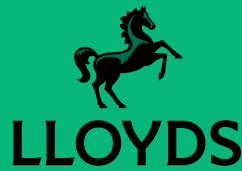
How much are victims losing?

On average victims lost £215 during the current Premier League football season, but some fans paid **hundreds or even thousands of pounds** for 'season tickets' or VIP seats that never existed. Hopeful football fans are expected to pay much more for expensive World Cup tickets, meaning the potential loss for victims could be devastating – especially for those forking out on extra costs to travel across the pond.

The government and Lloyds are teaming up once again to highlight the issue to football supporters, as part of the Stop! Think Fraud campaign. Led by the Home Office and supported by partners across law enforcement, banking, tech, retail and the charity sector, the campaign empowers individuals and small businesses with the tools and knowledge they need to protect themselves from fraud.

Liz Ziegler, Fraud Prevention Director, Lloyds said:

“Fraudsters thrive on urgency and target fans looking for hard-to-get tickets for big-name fixtures. Most of the football ticket scams we see start on social media – especially Facebook and Instagram – before the criminal moves the buyer onto WhatsApp and insists on a bank transfer to pay. It's incredibly convincing, and we don't want fans to lose their money trying to support their team. We're urging



supporters to stay alert and stick to official ticketing channels.”

Lord Hanson, Minister for Fraud, UK Home Office said:

“As excitement builds for the World Cup, fraudsters are preparing to exploit loyal fans searching for tickets. I urge all football supporters hunting for tickets to Stop! Think Fraud and show fraudsters the red card. Only buy directly from FIFA or the FIFA Resale Marketplace. Missing out on a big match is disappointing, but becoming a victim to a scam makes it even harder to bear.”

“Our new fraud strategy sets out how we will use every tool at our disposal to disrupt and dismantle criminal operations, bring fraudsters to justice and strengthen support for victims.”

How football ticket scams work

Most football ticket scams begin on **social media**. Criminals advertise a spare ticket, then shift the conversation to **WhatsApp**, where victims are pushed to make a **bank transfer**. Once the money is sent, the scammer blocks the buyer and disappears.

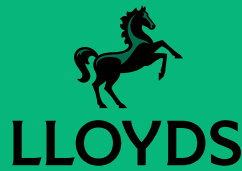
World Cup warning: scammers will use the same tactics

With the **2026 Men’s World Cup just one month away**, Lloyds and the Home Office are taking action to protect fans by highlighting how criminals will try to exploit the excitement.

Scammers know demand will be huge and will mimic the methods seen in club-level scams: fake listings on social media, pressure to act quickly and requests for bank transfers. Fraudsters move quickly, creating fake waiting lists, counterfeit QR codes or bogus “pre-release” offers to lure people in.

Practical advice: Liz Ziegler’s tips for avoiding football ticket scams

- **Take your time:** If you’re offered tickets for a match that’s in high demand, don’t let the fear of missing out make you rush your decision. Stop, think, and check if the offer is genuine.
- **Be careful with social media adverts**, especially on marketplace platforms: If you see a last-minute ticket post on Facebook, Instagram, or TikTok, pause to consider whether it’s legitimate. Do some research and consult family or friends before proceeding.
- **Don’t pay by bank transfer:** Genuine ticket retailers never ask for payment by bank transfer, but fraudsters do as it’s fast and hard to trace. Treat requests for bank transfers as a major warning sign, especially if the account details do not match the seller’s name.
- **Be wary of “too good to be true” offers:** Derbies, European fixtures, and World Cup matches are magnets for scammers promising tickets that no one else can supply. If an offer seems unrealistic, it probably is.
- **Use official club channels or authorised sellers:** For major events like the World Cup, only trust the tournament’s official ticketing platforms or club-approved sellers to ensure your purchase is safe. Don’t forget that artificial intelligence (AI) can help criminals to create professional content. Just because it has a good layout and graphics, doesn’t mean it is legitimate.
- **Be cautious of pressure tactics:** Be cautious of classic pressure phrases like “lots of interest”, “I’ll send the QR code after payment”, or “I need to sell right now”. Scammers often use urgency to push you into making hasty decisions.
- **Report Fraud:** Anyone who believes they may have been a victim of fraud is encouraged to report



it to Report Fraud at www.reportfraud.police.uk or by calling 0300 123 2040.

Case Study

Robert Paterson, 39, Barber shop owner, Edinburgh. “Like any passionate Scotland supporter, I’m over the moon we’ve qualified for the World Cup for the first time in nearly 20 years. I’ve been on the hunt for tickets, particularly for the Brazil game. I’ve spent time on various platforms like X and Facebook in the hope of securing seats but am always nervous of what’s real and what could be a scam.

“I own a popular chain of barber shops ‘Rag and Bone’, so have been swapping tips and stories with lots of clients in the barber’s chair who have also been looking for legitimate tickets.

“In the process, I’ve definitely come across a number of suspected fake or questionable listings, with many tickets appearing either massively overpriced or outright dodgy, especially on Facebook. It definitely takes a bit of the excitement out of buying tickets when you’re having to worry if it’s real or not.”



Earlier this year the Government launched a new Fraud Strategy to tackle the UK’s most commonly experienced crime by strengthening partnerships across sectors, disrupting criminal operations and delivering better support for victims. This includes a £31m investment for a new Online Crime Centre, combining the data, expertise and capabilities of the police, GCHQ, banks, telecommunications and tech firms to shut down the avenues that fraudsters exploit, wherever in the world they might be.

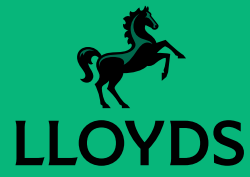
About the Stop! Think Fraud campaign

- Stop! Think Fraud is the UK Government’s national campaign to help people protect themselves from scams. Led by the Home Office and supported by partners across law enforcement, banking, tech, retail and the charity sector, the campaign empowers individuals and small businesses with the tools and knowledge they need to protect themselves.
- Launched in 2024, Stop! Think Fraud provides practical advice on how to spot the signs of fraud, secure personal information, and take action if targeted. The campaign encourages everyone to take a moment to stop, think and check before responding to suspicious messages or offers - because anyone can be a victim of fraud.
- By raising awareness and promoting simple, effective steps to stay safe, Stop! Think Fraud is building a national movement to disrupt fraudsters and protect communities across the UK.
- For more information visit: <https://stopthinkfraud.campaign.gov.uk/>

Methodology

Football ticket scam data: Figures based on analysis of relevant purchase scams (football tickets) reported by Lloyds Banking Group customers between October 2025 and March 2026, with comparisons made to data from October 2024 and March 2025.

Ticket scam data: Figures based on analysis of relevant purchase scams (tickets) reported by Lloyds



Banking Group customers between October 2025 and March 2026.