



# What Are Rail Seats?

Robust metal seats with a high back forming a sturdy rail for safe standing. Fitted in place of normal seats they link together to create a continuous, strong rail right along the row.

Height and strength comply with government requirements. They are also approved for use as seats by UEFA and FIFA, e.g. for World Cup and Champions League matches.

The seats fold up flush between the uprights, thus creating wider clearways than along rows of normal seats.

## BENEFITS OF THE RAIL SEAT SOLUTION

- Answers fans' call for choice
- Makes football more socially inclusive
- Counters problems of ageing fan base
- Safer than standing at low-backed seats
- Saves money on seat repairs
- Better access for paramedics / stewards
- Rails make it harder for offenders to flee
- Stadium remains UEFA / FIFA compliant



Rail seats are widely used in Germany. UK distribution is via the supplier of all 60,000 seats for the Emirates Stadium.

## The history of rail seats

German football clubs see standing as an integral part of fan culture. Every ground provides standing areas. At 2011 champions Borussia Dortmund, for instance, there is standing for 27,000 fans, a third of the stadium capacity.

In 2000, the clubs faced a challenge. UEFA stipulated that grounds staging Champions League and UEFA Cup games had to be all-seater. What to do? The clubs were committed to standing but had to comply with UEFA's new rules. They found three solutions. One was 'Variositze', 'rail seats' to us.

Some clubs with rail seats: Hannover 96, Werder Bremen, Stuttgart, Hoffenheim, Wolfsburg, Bayer Leverkusen and HSV.

## A solution for the UK?

We believe that rail seats now present a solution to the situation in the UK, where sizable numbers of fans want to stand, the authorities need to ensure maximum safety and top clubs need to comply with UEFA/FIFA requirements.

While seats can remain locked in the 'up' position for standing use, club staff can quickly unlock them in advance of UEFA/FIFA games with a special key (right).

## Limited numbers

Standing areas representing 10-15% of stadium capacity might be appropriate. 85-90% would thus remain exclusively for fans who prefer to sit.

Numbers could be limited to one fan per rail seat or, if clubs wished, a second row of fans could be accommodated by adding a rear step along each row.





## Why rail seats are a good idea

Creating designated safe standing areas in grounds that are currently all-seater by installing rail seats has numerous benefits:

### • Choice

A Football Fans Census in 2007 showed that 92% of fans want the choice to sit or stand.

### • Enhanced enjoyment

In a Premier League survey in 2008 15% of over 30,000 respondents said standing enhanced their enjoyment of the game. In line with this, we're suggesting 10-15% of a stadium might be designated for standing.

### • Increased crowd safety

The reality in many Premier League and Championship grounds today – despite the all-seater requirements – is that hundreds, if not thousands, of fans stand at every game and many clubs turn a blind eye.

These fans are standing in areas not designed for the purpose. They are standing behind seats with low backs or sometimes no backs at all. Any slight push can send them toppling forward. Indeed, a report in 2009 for the Premier League concluded that "standing in seated areas must be regarded as a significant risk".

Allocating fans who wish to stand a designated standing area designed specifically for the purpose with rails along every row of seats removes this risk and fulfils the club's duty of care to its customers.

### • Improved social inclusion

74% of Premier League fans come from the top two social classes, their average age is 42 and they've been going to games for 22 years\*. Rail seats offer clubs an opportunity to redress this demographic imbalance. An optional extra line of fans on each row permits more socially inclusive pricing, while still maintaining or even increasing overall revenue.

### • Greater crowd control

Admission to areas of rail seats will be controlled just as for normal seats by numbered, barcoded tickets. Any individual who misbehaves and tries to elude apprehension will find their movement restricted by the rails – more so than in areas of normal seats or on lower league terraces.

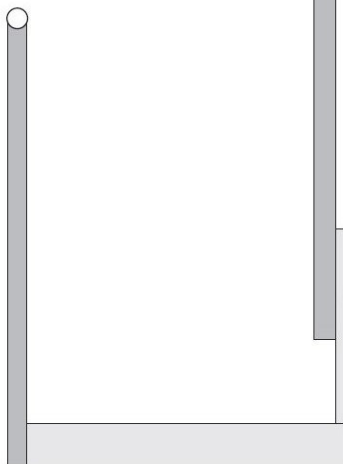
### • Easier paramedic access

Rail seats fold up flush between the uprights, which are just 50mm deep. The clearway space along a row of a typical grandstand is thus 750mm, more than twice that along many rows of normal seats, thus making it much easier to access and exit.

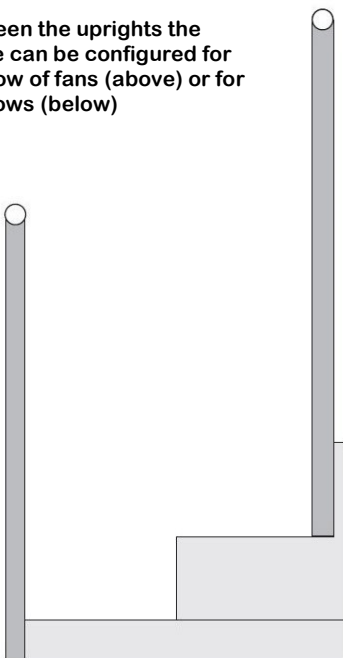
## Rail seat cross-section views

Looking along a row

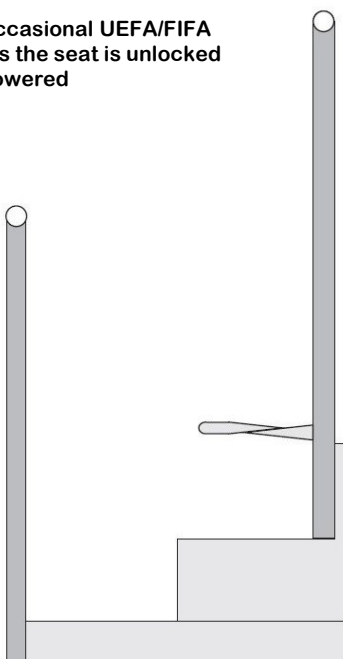
Seats fold up flush between the uprights, leaving a wide clearway with no trip hazards



Between the uprights the space can be configured for one row of fans (above) or for two rows (below)



For occasional UEFA/FIFA games the seat is unlocked and lowered



## Three popular myths:

**Myth: "Standing is unsafe." Not true.**

The Government's Green Guide to safety at sports grounds recognises that standing is safe. It sets out due safety standards for standing areas. We do not want these abolished or weakened, but applied consistently to football at all levels.

Many opponents of safe standing cite Hillsborough as evidence of standing being unsafe. Yet the tragedy was not caused by standing; the Taylor Report primarily blamed overcrowding, poor policing and bad stadium layout.

**Myth: "There's no appetite from fans for standing areas and it's unfair on those who wish to sit." Not true.**

Every week thousands of fans stand in front of their seats for the duration of the game – attempts to stop this have failed. Surveys regularly show the vast majority of supporters\*\* back having a choice to sit or stand. Nor is this issue just about those who prefer to stand. By giving supporters the choice, all fans benefit. Those who wish to stand can do so, while those who prefer to sit no longer have to worry about their view being blocked.

**Myth - "Statistics show that standing areas are less safe than seated ones." Not true.**

The Football Licensing Authority (FLA) collects statistics giving numbers of injuries for each ground. The injury rates are very low and, although slightly higher in grounds that retain standing accommodation, they do not distinguish where injuries occurred (seats, standing area, concourse etc). Nor do they correlate that area with the type of injury (e.g. wasp stings are not related to standing or seating) or take into account other factors such as the age of the stand. Although it has previously been claimed that the figures show that sitting is safer than standing, the FLA now agrees that the statistical analysis is not detailed enough to draw that conclusion.

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\* Premier League National Fan Survey, season 2006/07 (sample: 26,014)

\*\* FSF National Supporters Survey, 90% back choice