# Chief Constable warns ticketless Tottenham and Man United fans to avoid Bilbao Europa League final



Chief Constable Mark Roberts, the head of English football policing, has issued a stark warning to Tottenham and Manchester United fans planning to attend the Europa League final in Bilbao on Wednesday: if you don't have a ticket, it may be wise to stay home. His statement comes amidst an expected influx of ticketless fans into the city, a scenario Roberts deems concerning given Bilbao’s limited capacity and the exorbitant costs associated with travel and accommodation.

Roberts emphasised that the combined efforts of UEFA, local organisers, and law enforcement are geared towards ensuring a smooth event, particularly following the chaos that marred previous Champions League finals in Paris and Istanbul. “We’d really encourage fans without tickets not to travel,” Roberts conveyed. He pointed out that while the vibrant atmosphere of the city is appealing, the logistical realities—exorbitantly priced flights and hotel rooms—make it impractical for many. With estimates suggesting that up to 80,000 English fans might converge on the city for a stadium that holds just 53,000, the potential for disappointment is high.

Indeed, ticket allocations for the event were limited to 14,700 per club, which, along with a general sale of 11,000 tickets, leaves a significant number of supporters without guaranteed access. Roberts noted that the situation mirrors frustrations from prior finals, where supporters faced insurmountable barriers to tickets and accommodation. Ticket resale platforms have set prices starting at around £400, yet UEFA has made it clear that only tickets purchased through their official “mobile tickets app” will be valid, adding another layer of complexity for fans seeking legitimate access.

The chief constable expressed hope for a successful final, recognising the lessons learned from earlier events. “There is a real desire on behalf of everyone, and particularly UEFA, to have a very successful final,” he affirmed, highlighting enhanced relationships between English and Basque police that prioritise fan engagement and de-escalation of potential tensions.

However, there remains palpable concern among fans, especially when considering the stark rise in hotel prices. Reports indicate that accommodation in central Bilbao has skyrocketed, with prices for some rooms exceeding £1,000 per night as demand surged. This has left many fans scrambling for alternative options, with some indicating that local hoteliers are taking advantage of the situation. One supporters' group has voiced their frustrations, accusing hotels of “taking the mick” with inflated prices amid the anticipated demand.

Additionally, the risks associated with purchasing tickets from unauthorised sources are significant. UEFA has reiterated that tickets obtained from secondary markets will be cancelled, warning fans that entry to the stadium is strictly contingent on holding a valid ticket issued by UEFA. This insistence on legitimacy aims to prevent chaos and maintain order during the final.

Roberts acknowledged the shifting perceptions of English football supporters over the years. “We still go to some venues where people’s automatic reaction to an English team is: ‘Hooligans,’” he stated. Yet he argued that much of this reputation is outdated, pointing out that modern English fans primarily travel to enjoy the atmosphere rather than cause disruption.

As the countdown to the final continues, fans face a myriad of challenges that threaten to overshadow their excitement for the match. With high stakes on the pitch, the logistical hurdles for ticketless supporters may well lead many to consider watching from the comfort of local venues in Manchester or London instead of risking the uncertainties of travel. The hope remains that the event will create a positive experience for those fortunate enough to attend, restoring faith in the capabilities of UEFA and local authorities to manage the passionate crowd safely and effectively.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraph 1: [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/football/2025/may/19/english-football-policing-head-tells-fans-not-to-visit-bilbao-final-with-ticket), [[2]](https://www.theguardian.com/football/2025/may/19/english-football-policing-head-tells-fans-not-to-visit-bilbao-final-with-ticket)
2. Paragraph 2: [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/football/2025/may/19/english-football-policing-head-tells-fans-not-to-visit-bilbao-final-with-ticket), [[2]](https://www.theguardian.com/football/2025/may/19/english-football-policing-head-tells-fans-not-to-visit-bilbao-final-with-ticket)
3. Paragraph 3: [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/football/2025/may/19/english-football-policing-head-tells-fans-not-to-visit-bilbao-final-with-ticket), [[2]](https://www.theguardian.com/football/2025/may/19/english-football-policing-head-tells-fans-not-to-visit-bilbao-final-with-ticket)
4. Paragraph 4: [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/football/2025/may/19/english-football-policing-head-tells-fans-not-to-visit-bilbao-final-with-ticket), [[3]](https://www.uefa.com/news-media/news/0281-1824ff034fbe-1b4377db646d-1000--uefa-delivers-warning-about-unauthorised-tickets-for-upcom/)
5. Paragraph 5: [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/football/2025/may/19/english-football-policing-head-tells-fans-not-to-visit-bilbao-final-with-ticket), [[4]](https://www.theguardian.com/football/2025/may/09/spurs-manchester-united-fans-weigh-up-bilbao-travel-options-europa-league-final), [[7]](https://www.independent.co.uk/travel/news-and-advice/ferry-to-bilbao-flights-hotel-prices-b2747007.html)
6. Paragraph 6: [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/football/2025/may/19/english-football-policing-head-tells-fans-not-to-visit-bilbao-final-with-ticket), [[5]](https://www.skysports.com/football/news/11669/10285580/police-chief-warns-ticketless-liverpool-fans-over-europa-league-final), [[6]](https://www.skysports.com/football/news/11669/10270841/liverpool-fans-allocated-just-9-000-tickets-for-europa-league-final)
7. Paragraph 7: [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/football/2025/may/19/english-football-policing-head-tells-fans-not-to-visit-bilbao-final-with-ticket)
8. Paragraph 8: [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/football/2025/may/19/english-football-policing-head-tells-fans-not-to-visit-bilbao-final-with-ticket), [[4]](https://www.theguardian.com/football/2025/may/09/spurs-manchester-united-fans-weigh-up-bilbao-travel-options-europa-league-final)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2025/may/19/english-football-policing-head-tells-fans-not-to-visit-bilbao-final-with-ticket> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2025/may/19/english-football-policing-head-tells-fans-not-to-visit-bilbao-final-with-ticket> - The head of English football policing, Chief Constable Mark Roberts, has urged Tottenham and Manchester United fans without tickets for the Europa League final in Bilbao to refrain from traveling. He highlighted concerns over the city's limited capacity and the astronomical costs of flights and accommodations. Roberts emphasized the shared desire among UEFA, local organizers, and police to ensure a successful event, especially after the challenges faced during recent Champions League finals in Paris and Istanbul. He also noted that predictions of up to 80,000 English fans in the city were 'not unreasonable'.
3. <https://www.uefa.com/news-media/news/0281-1824ff034fbe-1b4377db646d-1000--uefa-delivers-warning-about-unauthorised-tickets-for-upcom/> - UEFA has issued a warning to fans about the risks associated with purchasing tickets from unauthorized sources for upcoming finals. The organization emphasized that all tickets are mobile-based and distributed exclusively through the official UEFA Mobile Tickets app. UEFA cautioned that tickets bought from third parties, including social media platforms and secondary ticketing sites, are in breach of ticket terms and conditions and may be canceled. Fans were also advised against traveling to the stadiums without valid tickets, as entry is only authorized with a valid ticket.
4. <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2025/may/09/spurs-manchester-united-fans-weigh-up-bilbao-travel-options-europa-league-final> - As Tottenham and Manchester United secured their spots in the Europa League final in Bilbao, fans began exploring travel options. UEFA allocated 15,000 tickets to each club, with an additional 11,000 tickets on general sale, for a stadium capacity of 49,000. However, fans faced challenges with soaring prices for flights and accommodations. Some supporters expressed frustration over the high costs, with hotel rooms in the city center priced at up to £1,000 per night. The scarcity of affordable options led fans to consider alternative travel routes and accommodations.
5. <https://www.skysports.com/football/news/11669/10285580/police-chief-warns-ticketless-liverpool-fans-over-europa-league-final> - Merseyside Police Chief Superintendent Jon Ward has advised Liverpool fans without tickets for the Europa League final in Basel to avoid the stadium. He emphasized that fans without valid tickets would not be allowed near the venue and encouraged them to enjoy the match at fan parks in the city center. UEFA and local authorities have implemented strict security measures, including perimeter checks, to ensure safety and prevent unauthorized access to the stadium.
6. <https://www.skysports.com/football/news/11669/10270841/liverpool-fans-allocated-just-9-000-tickets-for-europa-league-final> - UEFA has allocated only 9,000 tickets to Liverpool fans for the Europa League final at Basel's St. Jakob-Park stadium, which has a capacity of 35,000. The limited allocation has led to concerns about accommodating the large number of supporters expected to travel without tickets. UEFA has advised fans without tickets not to approach the stadium on the day of the final, citing tight safety and security measures. The organization emphasized that entry to the stadium is only authorized upon presentation of a valid ticket.
7. <https://www.independent.co.uk/travel/news-and-advice/ferry-to-bilbao-flights-hotel-prices-b2747007.html> - The potential influx of Manchester United and Tottenham Hotspur supporters to Bilbao for the Europa League final has led to a surge in hotel prices, with some establishments charging thousands of pounds for a single night's stay. Many fans, anticipating their team's advancement, booked travel arrangements in advance, only to find limited and costly accommodation options remaining. Most Bilbao hotels are already fully booked, leaving supporters scrambling for alternatives. A supporters’ group accused hoteliers of 'taking the mick'.