# Controversy and Excitement at Wimbledon Championships as Fans Queue for Matches



On July 1, 2024, the Wimbledon Championships commenced in a lively atmosphere with fans camping overnight at Wimbledon Park to secure their spots in the famous queue. Despite the new "activation zone" featuring various sponsor booths, the area remained relatively quiet as fans hurried to watch the tennis matches.

The activation zone, promoted by Wimbledon’s partners including Barclays, Lavazza, and Evian, offered numerous freebies. Barclays provided free strawberries and cream ice cream to its banking customers, while Lavazza served complimentary coffee. Vodafone offered phone charging, ice cream, and a chance to win Wimbledon tickets. Evian featured a refillable water bottle station and a photo opportunity in a "fountain of youth" igloo.

Despite these offerings, many fans were initially displeased with the non-alcoholic beer option at the Stella Artois tent, priced at £6.60 per pint. Meanwhile, a small crowd of pro-Palestinian protesters from the Palestinian Solidarity Campaign and other groups gathered outside Court Number 1, criticizing Barclays’ sponsorship over alleged ties to defense companies involved in the Gaza conflict. Protesters held banners and staged a march from Southfields tube station.

Barclays responded, asserting their pride in the partnership with Wimbledon and emphasizing their financial services to the defense sector and sustainable energy investments. The All England Lawn Tennis Club stood by their partnership with Barclays, citing their collaborative efforts in supporting disadvantaged students through the Set for Success program.

Wimbledon has faced increasing pressure over the Barclays sponsorship, with various public figures and campaign groups calling for the tournament to drop the bank due to its ties to the arms trade and fossil fuel investments.