



POLICE USE DRONES AT BIRMINGHAM CITY CLASH WITH ASTON VILLA

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A drone has taken to the skies around a city football ground to catch hooligans and identify flashpoints at a derby clash between rival clubs.

Its video camera captured high-definition images of the streets around Birmingham City's ground for the game against Aston Villa earlier.

It was the first time West Midlands Police had used a drone to police a football match.

Aviation rules meant the device could not fly over the St Andrew's stadium.

Public safety

It was also prohibited from getting too close to residential properties.

From heights of up to 400ft, officers inspected areas in which there had been flashpoints in the past and looked for new ones.

Police said it formed part of a visible force presence" to "maintain public safety".



The match marked the first time the second city rivals had met in a league game for five years and followed Villa's relegation to The Championship.

A West Midlands Police spokesman said the wider policing operation was "substantial" and included "Section 60" stop-and-search measures to "tackle risk groups who are determined" to cause "serious violence".

Officers arrested 14 people during the afternoon, on suspicion of a range of offences including violent disorder, pitch encroachment and affray, but the force did not say how many were related to the searches and drone operation.

It said it would review camera footage "to take action against those involved in crime who haven't been arrested today".

Pub bombings

Fans and the managers of each side were united in applause in the game's 21st minute.

The gesture supported the successful campaign to have the inquests reopened into the deaths of 21 people killed in the 1974 Birmingham pub bombings.

Julie Hambleton, whose sister Maxine was among the victims, said it was a "fantastic way" for fans to show "solidarity for their own".

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SOURCE: BBC

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