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Rail company defies strike threat and says NO to Olympics bonus

Pay deal struck in February covers staff during Games



No bonus: South West Trains has refused extra pay demands (FILE PHOTO)

Dick Murray, Transport Correspondent

02 July 2012

A major commuter rail company today defied RMT union strike threats and has flatly refused to pay staff a separate Olympic bonus.

Stagecoach-owned South West Trains (SWT) which runs local and long distance services into mainline Waterloo, declared: "No more money - even if union votes for strike or industrial action."

It came as union barons announced the start of four rail strike ballots this week - three in support of Olympic bonuses and one in protest over a sacked official.

More than 500 staff on Sir Richard Branson's West Coast Main Line Virgin Trains are being urged to support strikes after a union rep was sacked at the company's head office.

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Each of the four ballots results are scheduled a week before the start of the Olympic Games - threatening strike action coinciding with the opening ceremony on 27 July.

In the Virgin Trains dispute union bosses have already earmarked Thursday, 26 July for a walkout if there is no agreement.

Meanwhile, bus union leaders and employers meet in crisis session today at Acas, the conciliation services, in an effort to avert 24-hours strikes, one this Thursday - 5 July - and then again three days before the Games on Tuesday 24 July. The Unite union is demanding £500 a time tax free bonuses for more than 20,000 London bus staff.

SWT - which now face an increased threat of strike action - launched a stinging attack on the RMT. It accused the union of attempting to "renege" on a "significant" 4.75 per cent pay increase in February part of which, it said, was to cover extra work during the Games.

A spokeswoman said: "We want the union to be 100 per cent clear about our position; we will not be renegotiating our agreement that also covers Olympic arrangements.

"This means we will not be paying more money and that situation will not change even if RMT members vote for a strike or other industrial action."

The RMT will also begin strike ballots at two other rail operators; Greater Anglia and First Great Western.

Manuel Cortes, general secretary of the TSSA transport union, whose members including ticket office and managerial grades, said of the Virgin Trains dispute: "Our rep, Martin Hodges, was fired for simply carrying out his trade union duties. We protested and he is now suspended on full pay because Virgin is refusing to allow him back into the office to resume his normal job."

In the bus dispute - the first strike 11 days ago halted two thirds of the capital's services - Unite claimed an offer from the 20 private sector employers last week would mean staff having to work illegally long hours.

The union rejected a £500 offer for some staff - paid for out of an £8.3 million fund from the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) a deal brokered by the Mayor.

Steve Turner, Unite executive director of policy, described the offer as "highly dangerous" but also "illegal under drivers' hours and working time regulations which stipulate minimum rest periods and maximum hours on duty."

He said the offer would require staff to work all 29 days of the Olympics and Paralympics in order to achieve the £500.

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Cancel-The-Olympics 2 days ago

SWT does not serve Stratford

Reply

+1



Anonymous 2 days ago

I see file photo is as competent as ES is on transport matters - (ie an East Coast train with OVERHEAD WIRES) for 3rd rail South West Trains!!

Reply

+1



pauldavies 3 days ago

All companies should now follow this example and refuse to pay Games bonuses even if already agreed. Let these idiots strike, let the trains and bus companies stand firm even if they go out of business. They could then all be restarted with non union new employees who would be grateful to have a job at all in this economic climate

Reply [2 replies](#)

+3



Anonymous 3 days ago

aha typical idiot reply.

Reply

[1 reply](#)

-3



brianw1 2 days ago

So you remain anonymous? Scared of revealing your identity Mr Crow?

+2



peter 3 days ago

Still can't understand why a local train driver in Cornwall or Wales who will be no where near London during the Olympics should be getting a Bonus, I think the rail unions are trying to do a lot of damage to the country just to prove how powerful they are.

Reply [1 reply](#)

+2



Anonymous 2 days ago

Because his passengers will be going to the sailing in Weymouth!!

Reply

+1



Anonymous 3 days ago

Sacrifices have to be made to pay for all the board's Olympic party commitments, so come on Bob, be more considerate, they are gonna have to suffer four weeks of boring chat, endless booze, rich food and celebrities getting tiddled and photographed doing so, would you want to have to suffer that on behalf of the railway industry?

What's that? You are going to have to, at the same expensive restaurants you were filmed drinking £300 bottles of champers for your birthday, my, my, the things you have to suffer on behalf of the bruvvas.

Better not let too many railway workers know you are a massive hypocrite cos' they may go on strike against the RMT. Now that wouldn't do would it, all the surplus funds are for senior bruvvas like ya'self', not for the mugs who pay in for years to cover their strike booze ups like yours eh! You tell em' Bruvva.

Reply

+2



brianw1 3 days ago

As far as I understand it, a bonus is only paid when an employee performs his/her duties over and above his/her normal contracted requirements. The Union barons don't understand this. All they want is for their members to be guaranteed an extra payment even if they do not perform up to the required standard. So, what happens if an employee does not turn up for work with no valid reason/excuse? Does he/she still get paid a bonus let alone the daily wage?

Reply [2 replies](#)

+2



JohnSmith 3 days ago

"a bonus is only paid when an employee performs his/her duties over and above his/her normal contracted requirements"

is this is why the more bankers fiddled Libor rates, the higher the bonuses they got?

Reply [1 reply](#)

0



Anonymous 3 days ago

More likely why the Tories at the 2010 general election had so much funding.

0



Anonymous 3 days ago

These companies always say there is no money available and then like magic some will appear later.

BTW - Come on editors...The photo is not a SWT train.

Reply [1 reply](#)

+2



Anonymous 2 days ago

Its East Coast which is run by DFT so are they paying OB?

Reply

0



Benny, remember the ozone layer, it never went away did it ? 3 days ago

They will get a bonus because the ODA will pay it, this is just the train operating companies ensuring they don't pay the bonus. The train operating companies are playing a game as it gets closer to the Olympics as they know they will get the cash.

As for sacking the Union official for allegedly just doing his union duties, was this instant dismissal or had he received the relevant warnings, staff in railway companies need union representatives to act for them as they are so fragmented even though they work for the same company, you have hundreds of people working for the same firm but only a few at each separate location, bully boy tactics again.

[Reply](#)+1 **ChrisON1** 3 days ago

Finally, some sense. Good for you, Stage Coach. About time someone stood up to Bow Crow and his lefty union hardmen.

[Reply](#) [1 reply](#)+9 **Anonymous** 2 days ago

Funny how these right wingers are against free enterprise that Bob Crow practices - If its good enough for Bankers then its good enough for Train driver tankers!!

[Reply](#)0 **Anonymous** 3 days ago

virgin are playing a dangerous game...

to say no to bonus is one thing but their treatment of the reps (sacking them for being union officials) is just asking for it..

good luck with your train service

[Reply](#)0 **Lord Zarg** 3 days ago

Good on 'em, if only Boris hadn't caved in so easily.

[Reply](#) [3 replies](#)+3 **peter** 3 days ago

Boris did not cave in,he offered some money which was not enough for the greedy unions & I believe that money is no longer available

[Reply](#) [1 reply](#)0 **colinhenry** 3 days ago

And again,in Peter,s haste to defend his hero he gets it all wrong.That pittance was for the busmen.And petr,he did cave in.Why is he terrified to meet Bob Crow face to face?.

+1 **Anonymous** 2 days ago

Well it was cave in or meet Bob Crow knowing how Bob would have his eyes out he took the cowards option!!!

[Reply](#)+1 **Anonymous** 3 days ago

What is a union baron? Is that below King and above banker in the social hierarchy?

[Reply](#) [3 replies](#)+3 **peter** 3 days ago

A very rich man living in a council house

[Reply](#) [2 replies](#)+4 **JohnSmith** 3 days ago

a £100k year before taxes makes one a rich man now Peter?

+1



Anonymous 2 days ago

So if you bought the Council house you become - A very rich man living in a Ex Council House (Oh and Thatcher stopped councils spending money under Right to Buy in new Council houses so might as well pay rent and invest ones money in Barclays!!).

+1

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