

HELPING MEN LIVE WELL

“I had to get in touch with the stadium team at Tottenham to ask them to change where my season ticket was, so I was closer to the toilets.”



Tony Ellis , 62, a old business owner originally from Windsor - is a lifelong Tottenham fan and travels down to London for every Spurs home game. He now runs a printing business based in Newcastle, where he moved 20 years ago, and lives with his wife and his grandson. He was diagnosed with prostate cancer in 2018, and had surgery to remove his prostate, which has been successful in treating his cancer. Tony has experienced incontinence since having the life-saving surgery.

Club:
Tottenham Hotspur F.C.



Newcastle based Spurs fan who travels to London for every home game leads drive to get men with incontinence Back in the Game.

“I decided to go to the doctor because my friend and business partner Steve was diagnosed with prostate cancer, and he told me – ‘you should go and get yourself checked’. I didn’t have any symptoms or anything like that, and I sort of went to keep him happy. I was surprised when I went through the process and eventually the doctor told me I had prostate cancer.

“I don’t think anyone can ever prepare you to hear those words. It was hard. But I’m so grateful to my friend for pushing me to get myself checked out, because I am here now, and you just have to get on with things.

“The incontinence side of things, I wasn’t prepared for, but I don’t think anyone ever is. It can really get you down, and you don’t want to burden your family, so you don’t really talk about that side of things that much. I just had to keep reminding myself to get on with things.

“I’m quite a stubborn sort of person – and nothing was going to stop me going to the football. I think all in all I only missed about six weeks of games. I decided that prostate cancer and incontinence wasn’t going to stop me going, but it isn’t easy.

“I travel down to London from Newcastle on the train for the home games, which can be around four and a half hours door to door. When I book my train, I make sure I get the service where I can choose my seat, and I book myself next to the train’s toilet so I can change my pad in there if I need to. The bin in there is quite small and awkward, and shouldn’t really be for incontinence pads but what else can I do?

“When I get to London, I then have to get the tube to the ground, and obviously there are no loos on the tube. I know which tube stations have pubs near them, so I know where I need to jump off if I need to use those loos to change my pad. More often than not there are no bins in those toilets which is frustrating – what do people expect you to do with them? Flush them down the toilet, carry them out into the street? The constant planning and worry really does mount up.

“I had to get in touch with the stadium team at Tottenham to ask them to change where my season ticket is, so I am closer to the toilets. I had to prove that I had prostate cancer and explain why I need to be close to the toilets, and they were great about it, moved me no problem. I am constantly having to go to the toilet and occasionally have to change my pad during a game, so I wanted to be at the end of a row and close to the loos so that I don’t disturb anyone. I also don’t want to miss too much of the game!

“I do wish there were sanitary bins in the stadium, it would be nice to know that’s one less thing for me to be stressing about.

You don’t want to be carrying used incontinence pads around with you in your pocket and keep them on you, but sometimes that’s the only option, it’s just not right.

“I go to the games with the same group of guys and rather than be embarrassed about it, I decided to be really open about it and just make a joke of it. I thought, there’s no point in hiding it or feeling awkward about it, and everyone has been great about it. When I see them I wave my pads around and make a joke that I’m ready for a few drinks today!

“I know this isn’t easy for everyone though. Other men might not be as ready as me to make a joke about things and get down to the games no matter what.

“You see club managers and programme presenters wearing the Prostate Cancer UK badge, and that’s great – but I think it’s important to support men with what they really need after prostate cancer too – sanitary bins, pads, more openness about incontinence and prostate cancer. It’s not much to ask and if we had that, more of us could get back in the game.”

Supporting men, supporting the game. Find out more:

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