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## WORLD

# Paris Attacks: Suicide Bomber Was Blocked From Entering Stade de France

A suicide bomber had a ticket to the France-Germany soccer game, but his explosive vest was found during a security check at the gate

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PARIS—At least one of the attackers outside France’s national soccer stadium had a ticket to the game and attempted to enter the 80,000-person venue, according to a Stade de France security guard who was on duty and French police.

The guard—who asked to be identified only by his first name, Zouheir—said the attacker was discovered wearing an explosives vest when he was frisked at the entrance to the stadium about 15 minutes into the game. France was playing an exhibition against Germany inside.

While attempting to back away from security, Zouheir said, the attacker detonated the vest, which was loaded with explosives and bolts, according to Paris prosecutor François Molins. Zouheir, who was stationed by the players’ tunnel, said he was briefed on the sequence by the security frisking team at the gate.

A police officer confirmed the sequence, adding that police suspect the attacker aimed to detonate his vest inside the stadium in order to provoke a deadly stampede.

Around three minutes later, a second person also blew himself up outside the stadium. A third suicide attacker detonated explosives at a nearby McDonald’s, police said. One civilian died in the attacks, police said.

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PARIS ATTACKS

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account sheds light on why the suicide attacks on Stade de France failed to cause the carnage that occurred at the Bataclan concert hall and restaurants across Paris. At least 129 people died in the string of attacks Friday.

The blasts occurred during the first half of the game, sowing confusion throughout the stadium. At least two blasts were heard clearly inside the stadium, witnesses said, and on the television broadcast. Loud blasts aren't uncommon at soccer matches on the European continent where fans sometimes set off firecrackers.

At first, Zouheir said he too thought the early blast was a firecracker. Then his walkie-talkie came alive with chatter, and he noticed that French President François Hollande—who was in attendance at the Stade de France—was being ushered out of the stadium.

“Once I saw Hollande being evacuated, I knew it wasn't firecrackers,” said Zouheir, who could see the VIP box from his post. He added that President Hollande left after the first

blast.

The game continued for the regulation 90 minutes. French soccer federation head Noel le Graet said that the information wasn't communicated to the fans or the players in order to avoid a panic. Witnesses reported that news began to spread inside the stadium late in the second half.



Police guarded the Stade de France stadium in Paris on Nov. 14, 2015, after a suicide attacker was prevented from entering France's national soccer stadium on Friday. *PHOTO: EUROPEAN PRESSPHOTO AGENCY*

“During the second half I started getting news alerts about attacks in Paris, but I didn’t make the connection immediately,” said Pierre Tissier, 27, who heard the explosions during the game, but said he thought it might have just been firecrackers.

A spokesman for the French soccer federation didn’t respond to requests Saturday to comment on the events.

Germany manager Joachim Löw said after the game that he feared an attack as soon as he heard the blasts.

“Of course we thought of it,” he said. “It was very loud. You could imagine what had happened.

The German team was already rattled by a bomb threat at its hotel on Friday morning, when the five-star Hotel Molitor in the tony 16th district was evacuated.

On Friday night, the squad decided to remain at the Stade de France. “Mattresses were brought in,” the team said in a statement on its website. “Some players managed to fall asleep but a number of them stayed up to discuss what was going on.”

## The Germans flew home from Paris early Saturday morning.

The attacks came seven months before France is set to host the monthlong European soccer championships. Mr. Le Graet told reporters that the incident raised new concerns about security for the tournament.

Euro 2016 is set up to be played at 10 venues around the country with two in the capital region: the Parc des Princes in the western part of the city and the Stade de France in the northern suburb of St. Denis. It is the first major soccer tournament in the country since the 1998 World Cup.

A video Zouheir shot on his phone Saturday showed the gate where the suicide bomber was turned away and what appeared to be blood and viscera on the sidewalk outside the gate. On Saturday, street-cleaning crews spent several hours hosing down the area.

Security at the Stade de France gates was manned in part by a company called MCS, which handles events all over the French capital, including soccer games at Paris Saint-Germain's home stadium of Parc des Princes.

Reached by phone, MCS President Christian Glaz said he was collecting feedback and couldn't be sure how close any of the attackers got to entering the stadium. He said that several of his security guards were injured in the bombing, but didn't have a specific figure. Mr. Glaz declined to give any further specifics.

—*Noemie Bisserbe contributed to this article.*

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