



MEMORANDUM

Reference: 200220

To: All FSC Stakeholders
From: FSC CEO and MD
Date: 23 March 2020
Subject: COVID-19 : Update Number 2

To our Football Family;

BACKGROUND

On the 17th March FFA advised that all sanctioned grassroots football activity in Australia will be suspended until 14 April 2020. The suspension applies to all sanctioned matches and competitions, including National Premier Leagues, FFA Cup, youth and grassroots football (including MiniRoos and futsal) as well as training and associated football related activities.

The following is a Question and Answer guide to provide Clubs, Coaches, Players, Referees and all key stakeholders an update on the information that has come to hand at this particular point in time, in relation to football activity.

As you can understand, information is changing daily and we will continue to provide information in a timely manner in response to information provided by the Government, FFA and FNSW.

Questions and Answers

1. Can I continue to (1) train (2) play in competitions or (3) play in trial games?

No, you cannot. All Football Activity has been suspended until at least the 14th April (Subject to Change).

2. What is meant by All football Activity?

- Training sessions
- Preseason friendlies
- Competition matches
- Trial games
- Coach education courses
- Football Club events

3. What information has been used to form the decision around the suspension of football activity?

FSC is taking its advice from the Federal Government, and directly from FFA and FNSW.

Our clubs, volunteers, players and coaches are affiliated to FNSW and the FFA, therefore FSC will comply with all guidelines and directions from these organisations as appropriate.

4. Am I insured if a group of us play/train/have a kick around?

Any football activity which takes place during periods of suspension is not sanctioned by FSC nor FNSW and, therefore, the Personal Accident insurance cover that is provided as part of registration may not apply.

In addition, any breaches of suspension periods will be managed under the FSC Dispute and Disciplinary Regulations as 'Misconduct' with potential sanctions including the loss of competition points.

5. Do clubs need to shut down their club academy sessions/extra training programs/links to external providers?

Players or registered coaches (Play Football system) are not permitted to take part in any football activity, which includes programs or extra training sessions that are directly or indirectly associated to your Club.

Clubs need to be vigilant in ensuring this does not take place and follow instructions that all football activities are suspended. The club, players and coaches will not be insured.

6. What about private academies / extra training / one on one sessions some players inevitably take part in?

If players make individual decisions to attend one on one coaching or take part in external exercise activities they need to seriously consider the ramifications for ANY player contracting the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) on the wider Illawarra football community.

7. What does this mean for FSC Competitions?

FSC is currently working on different scenarios and competition structures across all of our competitions which include:

- MiniRoos
- Junior Graded Competitions
- Women's Competitions
- Community League Competitions
- Men's Premiership (both the Premier League and District League)

These scenarios will focus on football activity being able to commence on the 15th April with **competitions to commence on the weekend of the 2nd May 2020.**

Commencing the season on this weekend will provide clubs with additional time to prepare and organise club activities whilst allowing a 2 week 'pre-season' preparation for teams. It will also avoid further disruption due to school holidays, ANZAC Day and Orthodox Easter weekends.

FSC is also working on other scenarios in the event that football activity is further postponed. These competition models and scenarios have been sent to clubs after review by each Football Council, as elected club delegates, and the FSC Board.

8. Is there a chance that football will resume with limited spectators or only essential people which was initially indicated by the FFA?

There is a possibility that this could happen. However, competitions such as the Illawarra Premier League are semi-professional and therefore have ongoing seasonal costs for players and coaching staff. Given this is the case, this competition will need to be assessed to take this into account and ensure clubs are able to remain financially sustainable.

We are also liaising closely with FNSW who will have the same considerations and issues in relation to their NPL competitions and will provide further updates to all relevant clubs.

9. Can the season be pushed back if required?

We are looking at all options however need to factor in the sharing of grounds with other sporting codes such as cricket. FNSW will be speaking to NSW Cricket in relation to the potential for football to utilise grounds for a further period of time. For our local competitions the key impact is to Juniors, Womens and Community League.

However, we need to be aware that any impacts of delaying the cricket season could also delay the commencement of the 2021 football season. Locally, initial discussions have taken place with Wollongong, Kiama and Shellharbour City Council and will continue as the situation further develops.

10. What about FNSW Competitions such as State Cup, the FFA Cup and Champion of Champions?

State Cup

The consensus from all associations was the priority for the remainder of 2020 should be on local grassroots competitions. FNSW is expected to review this and provide a final decision as soon as possible to allow local associations to prepare their competition schedules.

FFA Cup

FNSW is in discussion with FFA on the implications of this competition which is further complicated with broadcast agreements.

FNSW will be looking into a number of options including a condensed competition or other mechanisms to determine the four NSW teams that need to compete as part of the competition structure.

Champion of Champions

No determination has been made on this competition yet, however the consensus across all associations was that the local competitions are a priority at this point in time and ensuring all grass roots football participants are able to play within the fullest extent possible within their competitions.

11. What happens to my registration fees?

At this stage the suspension of football takes into account a minimal disruption that we will work to make up throughout the season as best as possible. We are delaying the start of the season, not cancelling, and are working towards scenarios that will allow as much football to be played as possible.

Registration fees comprise of the following components; FFA, FNSW, FSC and Clubs.

As you can imagine the initial concerns of all organisations have been focused on the initial response to the actual issue. At this point in time FNSW and FFA have not given any indication in relation to fees and this will form part of the broader discussion around the viability of all levels of the game moving forward.

We will continue to work through the detail and our priority is to ensure Clubs, FSC, FNSW and FFA are able to get through this difficult time in a position that will enable football to continue into the future.

We need to make sure that when football and life in Australia returns to normal that we have a sport, clubs and infrastructure that will allow us all to continue to play.

Additional, FNSW and FFA are liaising with all levels of government and FIFA to ensure that football obtains the appropriate support to provide our services to our local communities through grassroots football.

For those who may recall, a number of years ago we lost half of the season due to wet weather. The season still went ahead with a modified format.

12. What happens if I deregister?

A player is entitled to de-register but they need to understand that any player that de-registers at this point (after the grading of teams) can only re-register and obtain refunds at the discretion of FSC. Refer to the FSC Registration Regulations Policy (section 13).

We are awaiting further direction from FNSW and FFA in terms of refunds for registered referees, although this is likely to be a similar situation as registered players.

There are continuing conversations with FNSW and FFA around refunds of fees and any decisions will be based on the broad principle of ensuring that all Clubs, FSC, FNSW and FFA are able to get through this difficult time in a position that will enable football as we know it to continue into the future.

13. Clubs have already paid a Nomination Fee – what happens with this?

Men's Premiership - Nomination fees for the IPL and IDL are utilised to cover prize money. In the event that there are any changes to prize money and structures, these fees can either be refunded or utilised for the 2021 season.

Community League and Womens – please refer to responses provided under point 11 as nomination fees are an extension of player registration fees.

14. What happens to Council fees?

Wollongong City Council charges for usage by the hour therefore there is minimal impact whilst the season is suspended. Councils such as Shellharbour has fees that are applied per season per player. We have contacted Shellharbour Council requesting them consider their fee structures as a result of suspension periods during the season.

15. What will be the impact on VISA Players?

VISA players have registered as amateurs therefore there are no contractual obligations to these players. These players will need to ensure that any requirements or conditions in relation to their entry into Australia is complied with as per any relevant legislation.

16. What is the impact on contracted players within the Men's Premiership?

We are working with FNSW and the FFA in relation to any contractual obligations.

The NPL competition will also be heavily impacted by these contractual obligations and further information will be communicated to clubs in due course.

17. I have registered for a Coach/Referee Education Course/Workshop, will they be rescheduled?

We will endeavour to re-schedule Coach/Referee Education events once the suspension of football activities is over. Registered participants have been contacted and FSC is currently working through the schedule to outline new dates.

Kind Regards,

Ann-Marie Balliana
CEO and MD, Football South Coast