



# **NATIONAL LEAGUE SYSTEM: CORONAVIRUS UPDATE**

## UPDATE 2 - 13 MARCH 2020



The advice from Government remains - there is presently no rationale to close or cancel sporting events, but this may change as the situation evolves.

There have, however, been some developments within the professional game this morning owing to the number of players and club officials that are having to enter self-isolation. The FA's press release in relation to this is below:

*"The FA, Premier League, EFL and FA Women's Super League and FA Women's Championship have collectively agreed to postpone the professional game in England until 3 April at the earliest.*

*This action, which will be kept under constant review, has been taken due to the increasing numbers of clubs taking steps to isolate their players and staff because of the Covid-19 virus.*

*It will also apply to all England team fixtures at every level and all FA competitions including the FA Cup and the Women's FA Cup, along with academy and youth-team matches.*

*The decision is being made purely on the number of cases requiring self-isolation and the impact on facilities. Given the steps being taken across clubs, there is no alternative but for today's action. However, all parties are committed at this time to trying to complete this season's domestic fixture programme and are liaising to establish appropriate options to do so.*

*The FA is liaising with the National League pyramids (men's and women's) and will continue to offer guidance and support. Any decision to continue playing or to postpone their respective competitions is a matter for each league as autonomous bodies within the game.*

*With respect to the senior men's fixtures against Italy and Denmark at Wembley Stadium, refunds will be processed to all ticket buyers within 14 working days.*

*Monies will be returned to the card used to make the original booking. The refund process for England's MU21 and MU20 home fixtures is still to be confirmed.*

*UEFA had already confirmed that all Elite Round qualifiers across U17 and U19 age groups had been postponed. Europe's governing body will meet on Tuesday to discuss further implications for international football including national-team and club competitions.*

*We will continue to monitor all Government advice with the situation under constant review, with the priority being the health and well-being of all. Further updates will follow in due course.*

**Next steps:** Please direct any media enquiries to [media.relations@thefa.com](mailto:media.relations@thefa.com) or 0800 0499901."

The current position within Step 1 to 6 Leagues is as follows:

| <b>Steps 1 to 4</b>   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>National League</b>  | Continue to play fixtures as per the schedule. Will review the position on Monday 16 March                       |
| <b>Isthmian League</b>  | Fixtures for Saturday 14 March and the midweek that follows are suspended. Will review the position w/c 16 March |
| <b>Northern Premier League</b>  | Continue to play fixtures as per the schedule. Will review the position on Monday 16 March                       |
| <b>Southern League</b>  | Fixtures for Saturday 14 and Saturday 21 March are suspended. Will review the position w/c 23 March              |
| <b>Steps 5/6</b>  |  |
| The FA is continuing to work with Leagues at Steps 5/6 and will provide updates on a regular basis. At the time of writing, the following Leagues have suspended their fixture programme or confirmed that fixtures will continue, as detailed below: |  |
| <b>Combined Counties Football League &amp; Youth Cup</b>  | Fixtures to continue   |
| <b>Eastern Counties Football League</b>   | Suspended fixtures until 4 April with a review on 31 March   |
| <b>Essex Senior League</b>  | Only matches with specific self-isolation cases will be postponed  |
| <b>Hellenic Football League</b>   | Suspended fixtures until 31 March with a review on 24 March  |
| <b>Northern Counties East Football League</b>   | Suspended fixtures until 31 March with a continuous review   |
| <b>Northern League</b>  | Suspended fixtures until 4 April with a review on 31 March   |
| <b>South West Peninsula Football League Ltd</b>   | Suspended fixtures until 4 April with a review on 31 March   |
| <b>Spartan South Midlands Football League</b>   | Suspended fixtures until 31 March with a continuous review   |
| <b>United Counties Football League</b>  | Fixtures to continue   |
| <b>Step 7</b>   |  |
| As Step 7 Leagues operate under the Standard Code of Rules they are advised to work in conjunction with the guidance provided to County Associations.   |  |

## FAQ's

### **A club has reported a player in self isolation, what should we do?**

Fixtures can continue as planned if the leagues are satisfied that the player has been in self isolation in accordance with advice from Public Health England. Individual players with illness would not normally trigger a necessity to postpone fixtures.

### **A club has a player who has tested positive for corona-virus and the team need to self-isolate?**

Fixtures may be postponed using the Standardised Rules (Steps 1 to 6). Leagues are, however, encouraged to use their best attempts to support clubs and show flexibility where needed on late postponements in these circumstances and the element of proof required (to be clear, flexibility with regards to the highlighted section):

- 8.10 When a Club obtains the consent of the Board to postpone a fixture because of an epidemic affecting the availability of their Players, that Club shall be liable to pay any direct expenses incurred, if any, to the opposing Club. The amount of claim will be at the discretion of the Board. **Requests for the postponement of a match for any reason will not be considered more than forty-eight hours before the scheduled time of kick-off.**

**Medical certificates for those Players affected, signed by the Players' own doctor, must be forwarded to the Competition Secretary within [fourteen days] of the postponement, along with a full list of contract and Non-Contract Players currently registered by the Club at the date of the match which was postponed, giving full reasons against each name for the Player's unavailability.**

### **The league wish to suspend their fixture programme**

Leagues have the autonomy to make the decisions they feel best fit their circumstances, however The FA are advising leagues to follow current Government advice, which is not suggested the postponement of sporting events on the basis of a mass gathering, at this stage. The decisions made in other areas of the game relate to positive cases of Covid-19 and/or self-isolation.

### **Getting the latest government advice/understanding if self-isolation should apply**

Read the latest information about the situation in the UK, along with guidance for what to do if you think you're at risk.

Go to [NHSUK/coronavirus](#) for information about the virus and how to protect yourself. Use the **111 online coronavirus service** to check if you need medical help.