



CORONAVIRUS – JOINT RESPONSE GROUP UPDATE 24 June 2020

The Joint Response Group welcomes the First Minister’s update today on the Scottish Government’s route map out of the COVID-19 crisis and its positive implications for football.

We are pleased that plans are under way to introduce live outdoor events with physical distancing and restricted numbers, potentially as early as July 23. While we appreciate this area is subject to further public health advice, we will nevertheless work with the government to seek clarity on this advice in relation to the August 1 start to the Scottish Premiership season.

We also note the Phase 3 guidance that organised outdoor contact sport can resume for children and young people, potentially from July 13. Again, we will consult with ministers, government advisers and **sportscotland** to fully understand what this means for the gradual return of grassroots football.

We remain committed to working within the guidance issued by the government and will liaise with the National Clinical Director for Scotland to establish a safe and compliant process for the introduction of spectators to professional football matches and the restart of grassroots football for thousands of people in Scotland.

Ian Maxwell, Scottish FA Chief Executive: “Today’s news is welcome by the JRG and I am sure everyone involved in Scottish football from professional to grassroots level. While we must proceed with caution and respect the government’s current public health advice, none the less the First Minister’s announcement today gives confidence that, as the virus diminishes in Scotland, we can prepare for the gradual return of fans into stadia. The JRG is also currently finalising its Return to Playing guidelines for the commencement of the Scottish Premiership season and will share this with clubs shortly.”

The Scottish FA has created an online [Return to Football Hub](#) to provide relevant COVID-related information to the grassroots community. It will also host a series of webinar for the grassroots community, in conjunction with **sportscotland**’s facilities team, called Getting Your Facility Ready For Football.

The sessions, which take place from June 29 to July 9, will be split by region – South East, South West, Central, East, North and West - and will take clubs who own or operate a facility through the protocols that must be adhered to in order to reopen. More information can be found on the [Return to Football Hub](#).

“Today’s announcement is also hugely encouraging on the timeline for the reintroduction of football to the hundreds of thousands of recreational players in the country,” Maxwell added.

“This will obviously be dependent on adhering to the current guidelines, whilst seeking more detail on the phasing and scaling of phases 2 and 3. We welcome the opportunity to start planning on the re-introduction of children’s and youth football and look forward to clarifying the position on the adult grassroots game. It is clear that in the first stages of the re-introduction of grassroots football will focus on local activity within a club setting and no league or match activity will be possible within the proposed timescales announced today.”

Neil Doncaster, SPFL Chief Executive: “This is a vital step everyone in Scottish football has been waiting for. We are not taking anything for granted, and are committed to adhering to all relevant medical and government guidelines, but clubs and supporters can definitely now see light at the end of the tunnel.”

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