



Thursday, 26th March, 2020

RE: Season 2019-2020 Termination

To National League System Leagues

May I firstly thank you for your ongoing support and co-operation during this most unprecedented of times facing us. It has been important that all leagues of our National League System (NLS) pulled together during this COVID-19 pandemic and each league has played an important role in this.

As you will be aware, The FA has been consulting and listening to all leagues within the NLS and feeding this into both the Alliance and League's committees to attempt to give clarity to all stakeholders as soon as was feasible.

The clubs within the NLS are facing challenging times and the FA will continue to gain as much guidance from Government by way of support that we can, in terms of information for clubs on the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and other Business Support packages announced by the Treasury.

In light of the unprecedented challenges we face, The FA and the leagues have been in discussions regarding the potential options which are available with regard to the 19/20 season. This letter sets out the outcome of those discussion with regard to Steps 3 to 6 of the NLS. In assessing the available options for Steps 3 to 6, we have considered the impact of each option on clubs, players, staff and the fabulous volunteer network within the NLS. We have also taken into account the interests of supporters and the impact of any decision on the sporting integrity of the NLS and football more generally, as well as any commercial or financial considerations for all those involved in football at this level. We also need to consider the impact of any decision on season 20/21.

As you will appreciate, football is a broad church and there is no one-size fits all solution to the current situation across football. This means that consideration must be given to the unique circumstances of each level of the game, and a solution is reached which best serves the needs of each level.

Consideration has been given as to whether the season could be extended indefinitely, or to some later date in the future in order for it to be completed. However, given the current uncertainty regarding when it will be possible to resume competitive football in England, and the fact that many clubs and contracted players want certainty over when football will resume, this option is likely to present great difficulties for football between Steps 3 to 6.

On the basis that the season is ended now, consideration was given as to whether a mechanism should be used to calculate final league tables and preserve promotion and relegation between Steps 3 to 6.



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Whilst inevitably some clubs will favour this option and the merits of this option have been fully considered by The FA and the leagues, it has been decided that this is not the best option to serve the particular needs of Steps 3 to 6 of the NLS.

As a result, The FA and the Leagues at Steps 3 to 6 of the NLS have therefore reached a consensus that, the 2019/20 season for Steps 3 to 6 will be ended with immediate effect and all results will be expunged. This will mean no promotion or relegation of clubs between Steps 3 to 6, or relegation from Step 2.

In light of the above, these decisions will also apply to the Leagues and Clubs who play at Step 7 of the National League System.

The FA will continue to assist and support The National League (Steps 1 and 2 of the NLS) to determine the outcome of its 19/20 season as quickly as possible.

The planned implementation of the restructure of the NLS will be deferred until the start of the 2021/22 season. The decisions reached by the NLS leagues will be recommended to the FA Board and FA Council for final ratification.

We will continue to communicate with you via our NLS Updates and also where needed by way of direct communication. The detail of this decision will be released publicly by The FA at 3.00pm today.

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Laurence C Jones', written in a cursive style.

Laurence C Jones
Head of National League System