

# Leeann Dempster supportive of football suspension decision

Hibernian Chief Executive Leeann Dempster is supportive of the governing bodies' decision to suspend football in Scotland and has revealed that all of the players will be 'off site' for the next week.



Speaking to Hibernian TV, Ms Dempster said: "Other sporting events have been cancelled and, if I'm honest, there was an expectation that football would be next. That's proven to be the case and, for me, that's the right decision. Football's come to the right decision because nothing is more important than the health and wellbeing of the nation.

"Last night we thought we'd have a game on Saturday. We woke up today thinking we'd have a game on Saturday. Within a couple of hours that had changed. We don't know what's going to happen in the next week or so but we're trying to do everything we can as a club to prepare ourselves for that.

That means the larger staff group at Easter Road and the players. We've had a direct line to the SPFL, the Scottish FA and the Scottish Government. We feel well informed and like we've been part of the conversation.

"It's totally the right decision. No-one really knows where this is going at the minute. They don't know how long it's

going to be or what the consequences might be. Football is important in everyone's life but it's not the most important thing in everyone's life. We've no issues at all with the decision. We're supportive of it.



Scottish Cup Quarter Final – Hibernian v Inverness Caledonian Thistle.

Easter Road Stadium, Edinburgh, Midlothian, UK.

28/02/2020.

Pic shows: Hibs comfortably beat Inverness Caledonian Thistle by 5 goals to 2 to in the quarter final of the Scottish Cup at Easter Road Stadium, Edinburgh.

Credit: Ian Jacobs

“After the news of the postponement came through, we were able to talk to the players, the coaches and everyone who works down there. We

spoke to them as people – not as players and coaches – to help them organise

their lives and our lives. Importantly, we've put some protocols in place that

keeps the big wheels of the club turning. It keeps us ready for when the games

resume and I hope they will resume. But we have to remember that everyone has

families and concerns. We talk about being a community club – and we use the We

Are All Hibs strapline – so at times like this the proof is in the pudding.

“We've instructed the players to be off-site for the next week. It's about keeping the wheels of the club turning, so the players will be

ready for when they come back. Up here at Easter Road, we don't have any

matches to prepare for but the stadium is a big part of the community with a

lot of events taking place. We're doing our best to try and

deliver some of those events. For example, we have exams taking place within the stadium next week – as we do fairly often – and we want to make sure we don't disappoint there. There will be other things we don't do, regrettably, like the Football Memories project. It might not be right to get a group in who may have some underlying health conditions. Scott Allan was due to do an event with some young people around diabetes. Rightfully, we've cancelled that. It's changing all the time. What's right today might not be right tomorrow.

“Absolutely. It's just following what the rest of the country is doing. The Scottish FA and the SPFL have helped us get to where we are. The leadership at that end has been good and we're grateful for that. They've been very clear. It's not just the Premiership we're talking about here. It's right down to grassroots.



Ladbroke's Scottish Premiership – Heart of Midlothian v Hibernian.

Tynecastle Park, Edinburgh, Midlothian, UK.

26/12/2019.

Pic shows: Hibs' winger, Martin Boyle, celebrates the second of his 2 goals as Hearts go down 0-2 to Hibernian in the Ladbroke's Scottish Premiership, Edinburgh Boxing Day derby at Tynecastle Park, Edinburgh.

Credit: Ian Jacobs

“There are some immediate things. We had a game tomorrow and some people who were due to come. People bought tickets for that. I'd ask supporters to bear with us on that. We need to organise ourselves. This is normally when season tickets would go on sale and we'd

actually planned to do that this week. We'll be revisiting that because the income around that is important to us but clearly we're now doing that in a difficult environment. We'll come back and talk to supporters about all of that next week. I'd ask supporters just to give us a little bit of time and space. We're trying to organise the larger staff group, their lives and priorities. We're not closing down but we're trying to be pragmatic about people coming to their workplace.

"This really is unprecedented, and it changes by the hour. Like everyone else, you see the news bulletins coming in and wonder what's going to happen next. The most important thing is the health and welfare of the nation. Football is important in people's lives but it's not that important. People in the UK are dying at the moment. We need to treat this seriously but I also think that football has a role to play. We're a big anchor in society. I keep saying that. Football clubs, across the country, can mobilise when needed, whether it's to help with communications to a wider group or for use of the stadium. Football's a real anchor within Scottish and British life. As and when required we'll be able to play our role."