

Hearts pin hopes on league reconstruction as Dundee back SPFL proposal

The SPFL

tonight announced that the 2019/20 league season for clubs in the Championship

and Leagues One and Two have been called to an early cessation with the present

points total of all clubs being deemed their final tally for the season. The announcement

follows Dundee's decision to back the SPFL's proposal for such a move – five days

after voting against it.

The SPFL's

decision means Dundee United, Raith Rovers and Cove Rangers have been declared

champions of their respective leagues and will all be promoted accordingly while

Partick Thistle and Stranraer have both been demoted. League Two basement club

Brechin City have been spared the very real possibility of being relegated to the Highland League as the play-off between them and the winners of the semi-final play-off between Brora Rangers and Kelty Hearts has been scrapped. This decision has been called into question as the chairman of Brechin City, Ken Ferguson, sits on the SPFL board.

The decision whether to call an early cessation to the Premiership has been delayed until the SPFL receive guidance from UEFA and the impact on subsequent entries to the Champions League and Europa League but the likelihood is there will be a similar outcome for the top flight – which means Hearts, presently bottom of the league, will be relegated to the Championship.

However, all is not yet lost for the Tynecastle club. The SPFL has also said it would explore league reconstruction for next season with the possibility of increasing the number of clubs in the Premiership – meaning relegation could be scrapped. The SPFL have appointed Hearts owner Ann Budge and Les Gray of Hamilton Academical to lead a taskforce to provide input and support.

SPFL chairman Murdoch MacLennan said:

“It is no exaggeration to say that this was an existential matter for Scottish clubs, with many of them telling us they were at real risk of going under unless the situation was resolved very quickly, so I’m pleased that

the game has moved decisively.”

“There was always going to be a highly-charged and passionate debate about how we secure the future of Scottish football. But what has been agreed today is not just the best way forward, it was the only realistic way forward.

“I now call on all 42 clubs to move forward in a constructive and positive way.”