

Scottish Rugby's 2019/20 season declared null and void

Scottish Rugby has joined its Irish, Welsh and Italian counterparts in declaring that the 2019/20 domestic rugby season in Scotland has been classified as null and void.

This decision follows the earlier interim suspension and then final closure of the season based on Government advice in relation to the Covid-19 virus and is being issued today, 31 March in line with the previous objective of informing clubs by the end of the month.



Stewart's Melville were on track for one of their best seasons in latter years

The decision to declare the 2019/20 season null and void – meaning there will be no automatic promotion/relegation – was reached following an extensive consultation process involving the participating clubs, the Championship and Competition Committee members and Scottish Rugby's own Rugby Development Department.

Five possible scenarios were presented, with around half of clubs favouring the null and void option. The remaining clubs were split between the other four options. The second most favoured option – finishing the season based on the league positions at the time of shutdown – received the support of around a quarter of clubs.

Further to the club consultation, the declaration of a null and void season was recommended by the Convenor of the Championship Committee, the Reserve League Committee Chair and the Chair of the Women's Competition Committee.

Their recommendation was supported by Scottish Rugby's Director of Rugby Development.

A paper summarising the consultation process, the possible season-ending options and containing a recommendation from Championship Convenor, the Reserve League Chair and the Women's Competition Chair was provided to Scottish Rugby Council for consideration and feedback.



The Women's 2019 season is unaffected by this decision as all competitions had been finalised and completed in December 2019. The Council's endorsement of the proposal was then ratified by the Scottish Rugby Board in its role to oversee the best

interests of the game, with authority then granted to the Championship Committee to bring the recommendation into force.

Scottish Rugby President Dee Bradbury said: "It was clear from the outset that, in terms of the consequential impact on the various leagues in terms of promotion/relegation there would be no "right" solution, particularly once it was clear that our preferred option of completing the season would no longer be possible.

"Every solution we looked at was likely to be problematic in some way – none was likely to be supported by everyone. It was therefore considered essential that the full range of options were explored, each potential option was sense checked and that, as far as possible, a broad consensus was reached across the game as to the most appropriate outcome.

"We fully accept some clubs will be disappointed with this decision and share their frustration that, for wider societal reasons beyond our control, their hard work to push for success this season hasn't yielded the rewards they deserve."

Scottish Rugby's Director of Rugby Development Sheila Begbie said: "It was important we went through a thorough process to canvass opinion and offer a range of options for how the season could be concluded.

"I would like to thank all the clubs that contributed to this process and for their valuable input. I know the Competitions Committees and Convenors have put in a huge amount of time to ensure there was a credible outcome for every club, and while there are obviously clubs who will be disappointed, I believe this is a fair solution for everyone in these unprecedented circumstances."



The first FOSROC Super6 Competition has also been concluded early.

Dougie Belmore, Championship Committee Convenor said: "Extensive discussion and consultation has taken place with the various Championship and Competition Committee members, together with representatives from a wide range of Clubs at all levels of the game.

"Following this exercise, the clear agreed position is that, due to the unprecedented events currently unfolding globally, Season 2019/20 should be declared null and void. A number of alternative options have been explored in detail, with the majority of Clubs supporting this outcome."

Scottish Rugby would like to thank everyone who contributed to this extensive and important process at such a difficult time and thanks all clubs for their valuable insight and understanding in the conclusion of the 2019/20 season.