

SPFL clubs to vote on resolution that could see Hearts relegated

SPFL clubs are to vote on a resolution recommending the termination of the 2019/20 season in the Ladbrokes Championship, Ladbrokes League 1 and Ladbrokes League 2, with final season placings determined by points per game in league matches played to date by each club.



Ladbrokes Scottish Premiership – Heart of Midlothian v Hibernian. Tynecastle Park, Edinburgh, Midlothian, UK. 26/12/2019. Pic shows: Fine tackle by Hibs' midfielder, Lewis Stevenson, as Hearts go down 0-2 to Hibernian in the Ladbrokes Scottish Premiership, Edinburgh Boxing Day derby at Tynecastle Park, Edinburgh. Credit: Ian Jacobs

The resolution also recommends that matches in the Ladbrokes Premiership remain postponed for the time being, to give the best possible opportunity for the remaining 2019/20 fixtures to be played.

However, if the SPFL Board determines that the remaining Premiership matches cannot be played, the Ladbrokes Premiership would also be terminated, with final season placings determined on the same basis.

The Cabinet Secretary for Health announced on 17 March that NHS Scotland had been put on an emergency footing for at least

12 weeks until

10 June. In addition, the Scottish Government also publicly advised that

expectations are that restrictions could remain in place for at least 13 weeks.

That means the remaining fixtures in Ladbrokes League Season 2019/20 and the related play-off competitions cannot be scheduled without

significantly damaging the SPFL's ability to start and complete, on time, League

Season 2020/21 and next Season's Betfred Cup.

The SPFL has therefore today circulated a written resolution to its 42 Member Clubs recommending that SPFL clubs approve:

the immediate termination of Season 2019/20 for the Ladbrokes Championship, League 1 and League 2, without the remaining fixtures

in the League being played;

all play-off competitions being cancelled; and

final season placings to be determined by the number of points per game earned by each club in the matches they have played. This would

result in the following final divisional tables for Season 2019/20 in the

Ladbrokes Championship, League 1 and League 2:

If approved, this would result in the promotion of Dundee United, Raith Rovers and Cove Rangers, and the relegation of Partick Thistle

and Stranraer.

If the resolution is approved, the SPFL has also committed to consulting with Clubs over the possibility of League restructuring ahead of

Season 2020/21.

SPFL Chairman Murdoch MacLennan said: "These are extraordinarily difficult times for our entire country and, like every sports body worldwide, we have been wrestling with the enormous challenges caused by the outbreak.

"To their credit, every single club in the SPFL has been committed to completing the remaining fixtures for Season 2019/20, but they also all recognise we must prioritise the safety of players, officials and fans, and ensure our emergency services are given every possible assistance to focus on their vital work. Many football people have friends or family who are working with the emergency and health services or who have been affected by this awful virus and I have been struck by the strong sense of solidarity shown by everyone in our sport.

"The communication from the Scottish Government at least gives us a degree of clarity, meaning it will now be impossible to fulfil the remaining fixtures in the Ladbrokes Championship, League 1 and League 2 without causing huge financial damage and uncertainty for Clubs in those Divisions. We have recommended a way forward which we firmly believe enables the best possible outcome for Scottish football in these very demanding and unique circumstances."

SPFL Chief Executive Neil Doncaster added: "As a Board, we have consulted extensively with clubs in all four divisions since football was

suspended on 13th March and have taken expert legal and commercial advice.

“Now is the right time to act. Very regrettably, we must face the reality that it’s simply not possible for the remaining Ladbrokes Championship, League 1 and League 2 fixtures to remain postponed without causing significant further financial harm to clubs in those divisions. Further, many of our clubs are experiencing very challenging organisational and financial circumstances.

“Everyone in our game and in the country generally, is wrestling with the devastating impact of Covid-19. They all know there are no easy answers or simple solutions, but the Board’s recommended proposal will give us a far greater degree of certainty, minimise the harm to the game overall, and enable us make end-of-season fee payments now to Ladbrokes Championship, League 1 and League 2 clubs.

“The position for the Ladbrokes Premiership remains particularly complicated. Everyone is aware of UEFA’s desire for the family of European football to work together to resolve the issues that confront us all. We are keen to work with UEFA and remain in discussion with them over the situation in Scotland.

“The quicker we reach a final position the better, but there is no doubt this is the most complicated and challenging situation our game has faced in living memory.”