

# SPFL chairman Murdoch MacLennan 'sincerely commiserates' with Hearts

SPFL chairman Murdoch MacLennan has 'sincerely commiserated' with Hearts following the decision to relegate them from the top-flight.

The SPFL Board made the announcement at lunchtime today and in addition to Hearts dropping to the Championship next season, Celtic were officially named champions.

Ann Budge is considering legal action to prevent the club who were bottom of the table at the time football was suspended from being demoted and a statement is anticipated soon.



Around £7m in fees will now be distributed to the clubs.

MacLennan said: "Firstly, I would like to take this opportunity to officially congratulate Celtic on their achievement of winning the Ladbrokes Premiership this season, and also to sincerely commiserate with Hearts on their relegation.

"We would all have rather seen the league season played out on pitches, in stadiums and in front of supporters. This is not the way anybody involved with Scottish football would have wanted to conclude the league season but, given the grave and unprecedented circumstances that we

are facing, the  
Board has agreed that it is the only practical way forward.

“Covid-19 has wreaked havoc on sporting competitions around the world and the repercussions will be felt for a long time. Scottish

Government restrictions and deep concerns for both player and spectator safety

left the SPFL with no realistic option but to call the Ladbrokes Premiership

now and we thank the Premiership clubs for their support on this decision.”

SPFL chief executive Neil Doncaster said: “On Friday, Ladbrokes Premiership clubs expressed their clear and unanimous view that there was no realistic prospect of completing the outstanding fixtures from Season

2019/20. The SPFL Board met this morning and in line with the express agreement of member clubs in April, the Board

determined that League Season 2019/20 and the Ladbrokes Premiership be brought to an end.

“This decision now enables us to pay out around £7 million in fees to help clubs stay afloat during this incredibly difficult time. We will begin processing these payments immediately.

“The focus of all those involved in the game will now turn to how we get football up and running again safely as soon as possible. Next season’s Betfred Cup first round group stage is scheduled to begin in mid-July, with coverage from Premier

Sports. The 2020/21 League Season in all four of our Divisions is due to commence on 1 August, which coincides with the

start of our new and exclusive five-year broadcasting deal with Sky Sports.

“Nobody should be under any illusion as to how complicated and difficult a challenge it will be to return Scottish football to normality.

We will be liaising with Government on the best way forward and working to

ensure that all of our 42 clubs are playing football again as soon as humanly

possible.”