

Hearts to play in 27-game Championship after reconstruction vote fails 16-26

Hearts will now play in a 27-game Championship this season with the starting date estimated at mid-October, unless potential legal action succeeds.

Hopes of a reconstruction which would have saved them from relegation were dashed when earlier today the SPFL Board today announced that a league-wide consultation exercise has shown there is insufficient support for a new divisional structure and that the current 12-10-10-10 format will remain in place for Season 2020/21.

16 of the 42 clubs favoured changing to a 14-10-10-10 structure, but this was short of the numbers required* and, as a result, the SPFL Board has agreed to draw a line under reconstruction talks.



Ladbroke's Scottish Premiership – Heart of Midlothian v St Mirren. Tynecastle Park, Edinburgh, Midlothian, UK. 09/11/2019. Pic shows: Hearts' Australian Central Midfielder, Oliver Bozanic, heads home to put the home side 3-2 ahead as Hearts play host to St Mirren in the Ladbroke's Scottish Premiership, Tynecastle Park, Edinburgh. Credit: Ian Jacobs

Separately, the ten Championship clubs have voted to approve a 27-game programme, with teams playing each other three times, rather than four.

Neil Doncaster, chief executive of the SPFL said: "In recent weeks, we've been consulting closely with our clubs regarding possible reconstruction and, based on the feedback we received, the board decided to ask all 42 clubs to give their views so that we could have absolute clarity, which we've achieved today.

"Whilst a number of clubs were in favour of a new divisional set-up, the support for it was insufficient and we will now move forward with a fixture programme for Season 2020/21 based

on the current 12-10-10-10 structure.

“Due to the restrictions forced upon us by the coronavirus outbreak, the Championship clubs also voted overwhelmingly to play each other three times next season, rather than four, which enables a later start to the Championship league season.

“Now that we have a confirmed structure for next season, the SPFL’s fixturing team will begin work on the Premiership fixture list, which will start on the weekend of 1 August, and the Championship fixture list, which will start on the weekend of 17 October.”

Discussions regarding arrangements for Leagues 1 and 2 remain ongoing.