

Scottish Government considering 'pausing' football after COVID breach

The Scottish Government is considering whether a pause is needed in the resumption of Scottish football after Celtic player Boli Bolingoli travelled to Spain without his club knowing and then failed to self-isolate on his return.

Instead the defender continued to train with his teammates and came on as a substitute in Celtic's match against Kilmarnock on Sunday.

The Scottish Government said they had begun discussions with the club regarding the incident which follows on from two Aberdeen players testing positive for coronavirus and six others having to self-isolate after breaching rules by visiting a city-centre bar.



Ladbroke's Scottish Premiership – Hibernian v Celtic. Easter Road Stadium, Edinburgh, Midlothian, UK. 28/09/2019. Pic shows: A very animated Celtic Manager, Neil Lennon, as Hibs play host to Celtic at Easter Road Stadium, Edinburgh. Credit: Ian Jacobs

As a result, the Dons' game against St Johnstone was postponed and all Premiership managers and captains have been reminded of their responsibilities.

A spokesperson said: "The Scottish Government is aware of reports of a Celtic FC player having broken quarantine rules last week.

"We are currently in discussion with the club and football governing bodies to establish the facts.

"If confirmed as another serious incident within Scottish football, where protocols have been breached at the risk of wider public health, then the Scottish Government will have little choice but to consider whether a pause is now needed in the resumption of the game in Scotland."

In a statement, the club said: "Celtic Football Club has taken its response to Covid-19 extremely seriously and we are pleased that, to date, we have recorded no positive tests.

"Our staff have given so much in this area, working tirelessly to ensure that all players and other club personnel are safe, fully aware of their own responsibilities and familiar with all guidance and protocols.

"Safety must always be our priority. Clearly, a full investigation will now take place and the club will take all appropriate action.

"Subsequent to the player's return, he has recorded two negative tests in the past week."

Reacting on Twitter, Scottish Justice Minister Humza Yousaf said: "Utterly unacceptable from Bolingoli. With a number of incidents, Scot Govt left with little choice but to consider whether pause is now needed in resumption of the game.

"Operational matter for Border Force & Police Scot, I support whatever enforcement action they deem necessary."