

Hopes of fans at Hampden for Scottish Cup semi-final diminishing

Lingering hopes that fans will be allowed into Hampden Park for the Scottish Cup semi-final between Hibs and Hearts are diminishing after First Minister Nicola Sturgeon said that the return of spectators from October 5 is “unlikely”.

The initial plans had involved test events and some fans returning to stadia from September 14 but that date was pushed back to October 5.



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

Test events have taken place at Edinburgh Rugby's match against Glasgow Warriors at Murrayfield Stadium as well as Aberdeen's Premiership game against Kilmarnock at Pittodrie and Ross County's game against Celtic at the Global Energy Stadium in Dingwall.

Although these events took place without incident, with increased restrictions being taken in a response to an increase of cases across the country, it is not expected that

paying fans will be allowed into stadiums from that date.

This means Scotland's Euro 2020 play-off semi-final with Israel on 8 October will almost certainly be behind closed doors as will be the Nations League visit of Slovakia three days later.

The semi-finals are due to take place on the weekend of 31st October at the national stadium but time is fast running out for spectators to be allowed access. Both Edinburgh clubs will lose an estimated £500,000 should the match be played in an empty stadium as each would receive one quarter of the total gate for both matches.

The winner would also receive half of the gate for the final.

Earlier today Ms Sturgeon told the Scottish Parliament: "It's important that I indicate, in light of the current situation, that the route map changes with an indicative date of October 5, are unlikely now to go ahead on that time scale."

The announcement means that there are now concerns over the lower-league football season, which is due to start on 17 October. That date was chosen with a view to having fans in the stadium, which would bring the revenue needed for clubs to function.

It's also unclear what the new restrictions could mean for testing protocols among clubs in the Scottish Championship, League One and League Two as current rules mean those teams could face each other without regular testing, but that may also be reviewed.