

# Temporary suspension of lower league football extended to 14 February

The Scottish FA has this week undertaken extensive consultation with representatives of leagues and clubs affected by the temporary suspension announced on Monday, 11 January 2021.

This process has been beneficial in understanding the specific challenges faced by clubs at those levels within the men's and women's games, in particular understanding the key components required to facilitate return to play within each competition when it is safe to do so.



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Given that current lockdown measures implemented by the First Minister will now remain in place across Scotland until at least the middle of February, the existing temporary suspension of football will be extended until midnight on Sunday, 14 February. This affects leagues with predominantly part-time clubs – although a number of full-time clubs have been affected.

The Scottish FA will continue to work with those affected to develop league and division-specific plans for a return to training and playing, including adequate training and conditioning time. Those circumstances vary across our game and will be kept under constant review with any restart of the game likely to happen on a progressive basis.

A further update will be communicated by Wednesday, 10 February.

The Scottish Cup Fourth Round fixtures scheduled for 20 February will not now go ahead, and all ties will be rescheduled and information communicated in due course. Consequently, Saturday, 20 February can be released as a fixture date for league matches.

The Scottish FA will continue to work with Scottish Professional Football League colleagues to accommodate the dislocated Scottish Cup fixtures when it is deemed safe and practical to do so.

Rod Petrie, Scottish FA President: "The conversations we have had with representatives from the clubs and leagues affected by the temporary suspension have been hugely beneficial. We have been able to further communicate the rationale behind the decision in the midst of an ongoing pandemic whilst also hearing at first hand the most important issues facing clubs and leagues at each level of the game.

"We have also been greatly encouraged by the sense of togetherness shown by the clubs and the robustness with which protocols and measures have been implemented in the interests of player and staff safety within football.

"A number of initiatives have been suggested which may help to make the eventual return to playing efficient without compromising safety.

"The decision to extend the suspension is necessary given the Scottish Government's own extension of existing lockdown measures. Football will play its part to support the collective effort to reduce the spread of the new variants of the COVID-19 virus.

"We are grateful for the input of all groups involved in our online discussions this week and we will continue to liaise

ahead of our next public update on February 10th.”