

# RAMADAN & FOOTBALL FACTSHEET 2020





Open Iftar 2019 at Wembley Stadium

---

## RAMADAN 2020

Every year,  
Muslims around  
the world fast  
during this  
holy month.

This factsheet explains what Ramadan and fasting means to football and how it may impact the many Muslims who are involved in the game at all levels.

---

# RAMADAN & FOOTBALL FACTSHEET 2020

## WHAT IS RAMADAN?

Ramadan is observed by Muslims worldwide as a month of fasting to commemorate the first revelation of the Quran to the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) according to Islamic belief. Fasting during this holy month is one of the five pillars of Islam, which also include prayer and charity. Ramadan lasts for one lunar month which is a maximum of 30 days and its start and ending dates are determined by the sighting of the moon. Practically this means it occurs around 11 days earlier and thus starts on a different date each year.

Ramadan is the most important and spiritual time of year for many Muslims and people may well change their routine, activities and work life balance for this period. Whilst fasting is the practical focus of the month, people's mindsets and the way they interact with others may also vary due to their focus on faith at this time.

During daylight hours adult Muslims and those who have reached puberty are required to abstain from eating, drinking and smoking. The obligation of fasting does not apply to those who are physically or mentally unwell, travelling or pregnant. If any individual has not been able to observe a specific day's fast, they may need to make up for this later on by either fasting for a day after Ramadan or giving a meal to someone more in need or donating the value of that meal to charity.

Muslims are not the only people who fast. Almost all major religions have periods of fasting within the practice of their faith.

## WHAT FOOTBALL RULES APPLY TO RAMADAN?

FA rules make it clear that all faiths can be observed and will be respected within football:

### FA RULE B5 FOOTBALL & RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE

- a. A Participant cannot be compelled to play football on bona fide occasions where religious observance precludes such activity, save where the Participant:
  - (i) has consented to do so on such occasions; or
  - (ii) is registered as a player under written contract, which shall be taken as consent to play on such occasions unless otherwise provided for in the contract.
- b. Annually, when planning programmes, Competitions shall define and notify agreed dates of such occasions.

### COVID-19

This year, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, no football is scheduled to take place during Ramadan and all communal sports activities are suspended.

### WHEN WILL RAMADAN BEGIN AND END THIS YEAR?

Ramadan is expected to begin this year around 23 April and end around 23 May (both dates depending on the sighting of the moon).

### RAMADAN AND YOUTH FOOTBALL

There is no set age when Muslims start fasting, it is generally post-puberty which can vary from between 8 and 16 years old. This will usually affect Muslim participation in youth football during Ramadan, especially in the older age groups. This year, all communal sporting activities have been suspended due to COVID-19. Ordinarily, best practice for leagues would be to ask any predominantly Muslim teams about their plans to fast and play.



“

Ramadan is a great time for faith and family, but as a professional footballer I also had a duty to my club. Finding a balance between my faith and football has always been a positive challenge that I've relished

”

#### Freddie Kanoute

La Liga Ambassador and former African Footballer of the Year, Malian International and former West Ham, Seville and Tottenham player.

# RAMADAN & FOOTBALL FACTSHEET 2020

## FASTING

Fasting combined with extra prayers and a lack of sleep can leave people feeling a little more tired and dehydrated than normal. Many Muslims will find it harder to play football and may not want to take part.

Muslims who are fasting do not expect you to stop eating or drinking, although it would be polite not to eat, drink or smoke in front of them. They may also enjoy sitting together and sharing food when they break their fast (Iftar) and will welcome non-Muslims to join in. To fast with Muslim friends, even for part of the day, is a good way of enhancing your understanding.

## PRAYING

Muslims may practice their faith more during Ramadan and may wish to offer prayers during the day. This will normally be two to three times a day (during working hours) for a few minutes at a time when they will require a small, clean and private area. Muslims may also attend extra prayers, known as 'Tarawih', during the night.

## ACKNOWLEDGING THOSE OBSERVING RAMADAN

As with any religion, showing your Muslim friends that you know it is Ramadan is likely to be appreciated. Posting an acknowledgement on your website, Instagram or Twitter or simply a notice in your clubhouse is a good idea.

## WHAT HAPPENS WHEN RAMADAN ENDS?

The end of Ramadan is marked by the festival of Eid for which Muslims may take time off. The day Eid falls on will depend on the sighting of the moon therefore flexibility is necessary. The appropriate way to express best wishes to a Muslim at Eid is to say "Eid Mubarak".

## SUGGESTED TWEET OR WEBSITE MESSAGE AT THE BEGINNING OF RAMADAN

***"Ramadan Mubarak to all our Muslim friends and colleagues. Best wishes to you for this the holy month of Ramadan."***

## GUIDANCE AROUND FIXTURES

It is always important to take note of any important religious dates when planning fixtures. Ideally, if a team has a significant number of Muslim players it is best practice to try and avoid arranging fixtures during Ramadan.

Annually The FA produces a calendar of religious dates in order to support the game. This guidance has been written to provide you with the most significant dates for religious observance together with some information on them. Click here to see the current [calendar](#).



"Ramadan is meant to be challenging but in 2020 we have the additional challenge of Covid-19. We must all think of the greater good and strictly follow NHS guidelines, being extra mindful that we don't put ourselves at extra risk of further health issues. At this time, thinking of others has many meanings"

**Dr Zaf Iqbal**

Head of Sports Medicine, Crystal Palace F.C.

Go to [www.NHS.net](http://www.NHS.net) for further guidance.



"Ramadan is a very important time for Muslim families, men, women and children. Many Muslims of all backgrounds love football and it's our job as the gatekeepers to the game to make sure they can enjoy it appropriately during this time of togetherness"

**Yashmin Harun B.E.M.**

Founder of Muslimah Sports Association



Many thanks or contributions and support in this area of work from the Ramadan Tent Project, Muslim Chaplains in Sport, The PFA, The Muslim Council of Britain, The FA Faith and Football Network, Kick It Out, The Association of Muslim Footballers, Freddie Kanoute, Dr Zaf Iqbal and Yashmin Harun B.E.M.



[www.mcst.org.uk](http://www.mcst.org.uk)



[www.thepfa.com](http://www.thepfa.com)



[www.kickitout.org](http://www.kickitout.org)



[www.the-amf.com](http://www.the-amf.com)