



Professional
Footballers'
Association

MUSLIM PLAYER CONSIDERATIONS

Understanding and embracing
differences in football



Muslim footballers are represented from nations across the world at Premier League, EFL Championship, League One, League Two, Women's Super League, as well as a growing number of Muslim players emerging across all phases of the academy system.

Muslims make up around a quarter of the world's population, speak hundreds of different languages and come from very diverse backgrounds. In the UK, the Muslim population makes up over 3.8 million people (ONS, 2022) with this number increasing year on year.

With the religious month of Ramadan falling within the domestic and international football calendar, understanding and embracing cultural differences is key to achieving the highest level of wrap-around support and in turn improving welfare and performance.

This resource aims to offer understanding of various considerations which can improve the working conditions for Muslim players during Ramadan* and throughout the year.

*Ramadan (Ramazan, Ramzan, Ramadhan or Ramathan) is observed by Muslims during the 9th month of the Islamic calendar and involves fasting, prayer, reflection, and community engagement.



Mohamed Salah is a devout Muslim and one thing that is a constant in each of his celebratory routines is to perform a prayer of thanks to God by getting to his knees and placing his head on the ground. The act is known as **Sujud** and it is also performed by a number of Muslim footballers across the world.

PLAYER SPOTLIGHT

Sam Sayed Morsy - Ipswich Town



Samy Sayed Morsy is a professional footballer who plays as a defensive midfielder for EFL League One club Ipswich Town, where he is also club captain. Born in England, he represents the Egypt national team.

How important is your faith to you?

First and foremost, it is a moral accomplishment for how you want to act and how you want to behave. Football can be a high-level stress environment which brings its own pressures, such as to play and perform well. My faith gives me balance. I see a lot of times, especially with young players where you end up over consuming yourself and fear pops in. Faith gives you a way out of that in terms of seeing the bigger picture. Yes, football is important but in the grand scale of things, there are a lot more important things and having faith keeps you measured, down to earth, and your feet on the ground.

Have you turned to your faith/beliefs in a particularly difficult time in your career?

Many times, to be honest. Both, personally and professionally with family, kids and different parts of my career. Your faith is always there. Probably more so personally. I think professionally with the right guidance and trying to be a good Muslim, good things will happen for you.

What would be the one thing you could tell non-Muslim fans to help them understand Ramadan and the religion a bit better?

Fasting has become a lot more popular and people are actually seeing the benefits of fasting, not just the physical but the mental clarity and putting things into perspective. When you're fasting, your anger, your ego, all goes out the window as you are in submission. I encourage people to try fasting really, and you will see for a lot of Muslims it's the most peaceful month of the year. Ramadan is beautiful, it is challenging but it's not there to overexert you and it something that you can do. Sometimes people look at it as a massive hurdle to do it, but if your intentions are clear, you can do it.

What is your earliest memory of Ramadan growing up?

Probably when I was a kid. My dad would take us to the Mosque on Fridays for prayers and just seeing as a child your dad fasting, the discipline, breaking fast and eating together, doing Suhoor and seeing the whole community coming together. It's a beautiful thing really to see people come together to better themselves. That is what Ramadan is there for, to bring us closer to the creator and help us be better people. It's an amazing month and one I look forward to every year.

With Ramadan now falling during the season, how do you intend to manage your fasts around your training and games?

I've been lucky enough that my last few managers have been very accepting. We have a really good support team at Ipswich. Last year, the medical team were very forthcoming and wanting to see how they could help me and would go far and beyond to support. I've worked with different nutritionists over the years who have a really good understanding of what your body needs during the month. Sometimes you have the best intentions, but we are all human and may not be able to keep some fasts for whatever reason. That is ok, but just make sure you make up the missed fasts.

During 2018 World Cup in Russia, you observed Ramadan whilst on international duty with Egypt. What was that experience like?

It was amazing. We did Ramadan together. It was incredible really. The S&C coaches and nutritionist were being really inquisitive about Ramadan and felt the spirit of the brotherhood, with everyone fasting and praying together. The manager at the time, Hector Cuper, would fast with us which really brought us all together and something I will always remember fondly.



What advice would you give to young players who are preparing to train, play and fast this year?

It's important to work with the support staff so you can perform to the level you need to be at and making it as easier as possible for yourself. I think it's important when you're playing football to maybe have an extended period without food and drinks to start building up. I wouldn't recommend to going in straight away with the loads you have. Maybe with days off, start prolonging the fasts but definitely getting the nutritional advice so that you do not suffer too much. There are loads of good resources online, but it is important to speak to your club nutritionists. If there are young players who want to reach out to me to ask for advice I'm happy to share things. It is very important that everyone shares their experiences to make it easy as possible.

A common perception about Ramadan is that sports people could struggle to compete at the highest level, can you tell us what it's like for you?

Obviously, it comes with its challenges no doubt, but we've seen that players continue to perform at the highest level. It's about being strict, being disciplined with what you eat during the hours you can eat. It comes down to preparation. If you prepare

for it and you're methodical in your preparation, you take time beforehand and stick to the plan, you will be fine.

What are you trying to achieve this Ramadan?

Trying to be a better person and trying to improve in all areas. It's a big month for reflection when you are fasting. When the stomach is empty, emotions can get high, and things can pop up sometimes out of your control. I make intentions at the start of Ramadan to be the best person I can throughout the month.

What do you eat for Iftar (breaking the fast)?

When I open the fast, I usually start with three dates, water and I usually have a fruit bowl prepared so I will have that straight away. I'll then pray, and within the hour have my main meal, which is usually fish, chicken, rice potatoes, some vegetables. Not a crazy meal but just enough. The main thing is making sure I'm hydrating with electrolytes. I will already have prepared from the day before my drinks, salts, protein shakes, coconut water ready and always making sure my preparation is good so that I hydrate and replenish. But also, being mindful that I don't eat too much as well. It's a process. Usually just after eating a couple of dates you feel satisfied, so it is about slowing down, trusting the process and understanding that you are giving up your desires.

How do you celebrate Eid?

It depends where I am in the country and our games schedule. I will usually go to the Mosque for the Eid prayers and just spend the day with family and friends.



MUSLIM PLAYER CONSIDERATIONS

To foster a culture of inclusivity, the following considerations should be used as guiding principles by clubs to take practical and meaningful steps to better support players and make them feel accommodated for.

FACILITIES

providing suitable spaces for daily prayers (training ground & match days) and accommodating the congregational Friday prayer (Jummah* prayer).

DIETARY REQUIREMENTS

providing Halal** food and vegetarian options at the training ground, match days, travel and overnight stays. Where possible, it is advisable to incorporate these options within the standard food options, in order to ensure inclusion and remove any stigma.

HOUSING AND ACCOMMODATION

sourcing accommodation options close proximity to local Halal shops, restaurants, and places of worship. This is something to consider when signing players and sending players out on loan.

HOTEL AND OVERNIGHT STAYS

for those who wish to wake up for the early morning prayer, consider individual rooms or pairing Muslim players. Speak to loan clubs regarding room options for your player.

RELIGIOUS MANNERISMS

be mindful of cultural differences between Muslim individuals, particularly around handshaking and direct eye contact - placing a hand on heart/chest (instead of a handshake between genders) in greetings is practised in many Muslim communities and seen as highly respectful.

*Muslims perform the Jummah prayer every Friday. The origins of the word Jummah stem from the word gathering or congregation, hence why Friday prayer is done as such. In Islam, this day is given the most importance than any other days of the week. The accompanying prayer is usually a short a small sermon addressing different aspects of life.

**Halal is an Arabic word which means permissible. Halal certified products are ones which are permissible or acceptable for consumption in accordance with Islamic law. Halal meat is procured through alternative means of slaughter which incorporate certain religious practices. Muslims are also forbidden to eat pork or sweets/protein bars which contain gelatine or manufactured using pepsin.

PFA MUSLIM PLAYER & RAMADAN AWARENESS WORKSHOPS

The PFA have incorporated Muslim Player & Ramadan Awareness into a 45-minute interactive session for coaches on the PFA UEFA B License courses. The sessions provide participants with tangible actions and important considerations that can improve the inclusion and support provided to Muslim players leading into, and during the month of Ramadan.



Jim Hicks
Head of Coaching



On all the workshops there has been a fascination with the excellent material presented, but also in solving the very real 4-corners football challenges of Ramadan. These workshops allow debate and offer an opportunity for all of us to learn.



Patrice Evra
Former Premier League
player and France
International



Awareness training like the one I sat on with the PFA is important for other coaches and the wider support team as you can't make the decision and not play a player just because he is fasting. As a coach I need to make sure that I communicate early with him, be honest and build trust.



Ashley Cole
Former Premier League
player and England
International

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From sitting in on the workshop delivered by the PFA, I think the most important thing I took away is consideration for the player. On the back of this workshop, I feel better informed on how to support Muslim players and have a better understanding of the kinds of effects that go on in their day to day lives, especially during Ramadan.



Carlton Cole
Academy Coach & Former
Premier League player

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I've played in a majority Muslim country, and they were very accepting of me so it's important that we are accepting of Muslim players and their religious needs. From a coaches and managers perspective, you must find a way to communicate with the player, make it work and be open-minded. I've learnt a lot from sitting on the workshop and ultimately it comes down to your values and adaptability.

MULTI-DIMENSIONAL TEAM (MDT) SUPPORT

During Ramadan, it is important to manage players who are fasting on an individual basis, according to their training and games schedule, as well as how they are responding to fasting.

The first week of Ramadan can be the most challenging for some players as their bodies adjust to the difference in eating and sleep patterns. If managed poorly, some of the common side-effects during Ramadan can include tiredness, dehydration, low concentration levels, feeling lethargic and mood swings. It is therefore useful for players to follow a routine in terms of their fasting and training programmes.

Ramadan, in itself, is a lifestyle choice which must be considered as part of a player's training programme. As such, fasting players should be managed no differently to a player who is following, for example, a personalised post-injury rehabilitation programme. The Multi-Dimensional Team have an import role to play in promoting the inclusion, welfare, and performance of fasting players.



THINGS TO CONSIDER

Psychological

The player is in a non-Muslim team environment where friends, team-mates, coaches continue with their normal non-fasting routine. This can have social and psychosocial consequences.

Stage of the Season

During season, off-season and pre-season considerations will differ greatly. It is important to consider things like, the importance of the weekly fixtures or whether the player will be required to peak during this period.

Maturation Status

Maturing muscles / bones need more fuel to sustain activity and develop. In particular for those players entering Peak Height Velocity. This should be considered when supporting the player with diet planning throughout the month of Ramadan.

Subjective Markers

Perceived Onset of Mood State / Wellness Questionnaires, among others, can be used to monitor how well a player is managing the month and how well they adapt to non-fasting routines following the month of Ramadan. These insights can help staff to identify the most appropriate forms of support and intervention where necessary.

Performance Markers

Daily / Weekly Monitoring compared with Normative Data for that player. Some sports have used a weekly fitness test to determine the physical state of the athlete. Elite football environments make good use of data, this can be used by staff to manage performance expectations.

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Being more prepared to understand other people's beliefs and faiths can only help us improve our ability to recognise when a player may need a different kind of support from us. It is our responsibility to ensure we know our players as best as we can through a positive relationship to help develop them both on and off the pitch, through self-awareness and our education.



Kalam Mooniaruck

West Ham United FC
Academy Head of Coach
Development

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Like the community around us, we as a club have always strived to make all players feel welcome and understood. Working with Riz to deliver education to all of the staff at the club has really enabled us to develop the understanding from our staff of some of the challenges and considerations that players face during Ramadan which has helped us to ensure that the young people in our care feel as welcome and supported as possible.



Colin Brand

Brighton & Hove Albion FC
Academy Player Care

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The Club and Foundation are committed to players and participants having equality of opportunity. It is so important as professionals within the sporting sector to understand the needs or factors that frame the lived experience of young people who observe different faiths. By understanding these needs we can provide a safe and inclusive environment for young people so that every player and participant can thrive, have fun and fulfil their potential.



Eleanor Rowland

Fulham FC
Head of Safeguarding

ISLAM, RAMADAN & FOOTBALL CALENDAR

Principles of Islam: Islam is a monotheistic religion that is followed by Muslims. The ritual obligations of Muslims are called the 'Five Pillars' - viewed by Muslims as essential to their faith. These pillars are acknowledged and practiced by Muslims throughout the world. Like other religions, Islam holds certain practices to be standard; however, that does not imply that all individuals who regard themselves as Muslims necessarily follow them in the same ways.

The Holy book: The Quran (Koran) is the Holy Book for Muslim which they consider to be the word of Allah (God). The Quran was revealed through the Angel Jibreel (Gabriel) to the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) in stages over a period of 23 years.

Prophets: It is important to note, that the 'last' Prophet, Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him), is highly respected and it is forbidden to depict the Prophet. Perhaps less known, is that amongst the several Prophets named within the Islamic faith, there are several who are also respected across other faiths, including, Abraham, Adam, Jesus, Moses and Noah.

Prayer patterns: Practising Muslims pray five times a day, of which the times vary depending on the time of the year. In Muslim communities and countries, the call to prayer can be heard, known as the 'Athar' (Ezan), broadcasted from the minarets of local Mosques.

Islamic calendar: The Islamic calendar is based on the lunar cycle and therefore reliant on the observation of the moon. Islamic dates for celebrations and religious events will therefore change from year to year. There are known cultural differences in the calendars followed across Muslim countries, with some countries following pre-agreed moonsighting dates.

Festivals: There are two main celebrations in the Islamic calendar called Eid. Eid ul-Fitr marks the end of Ramadan and is determined by the sighting of the moon. Eid ul-Adha is celebrated at the end of the Hajj period and is related to the stories of Abraham. The celebration of Eid is usually a vibrant and joyous time where families get together, exchange gifts and share food.

ISLAM, RAMADAN & FOOTBALL CALENDAR

A wide-angle, high-angle photograph of the Kaaba in Mecca at night. The Kaaba is a large, black, cuboid structure with gold bands and Arabic calligraphy, standing in the center of a vast, circular courtyard. The courtyard is filled with a massive crowd of pilgrims, many wearing white ihram clothing, who are gathered in concentric circles around the Kaaba. The surrounding architecture features multiple levels of arched walkways and balconies, all illuminated by warm, golden lights. The sky is dark, and the overall atmosphere is one of a significant religious event.

PILLARS OF ISLAM

SHAHADA

to verbally declare one's faith in the oneness of God and belief in Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him).

SALAH

to pray five times a day (at dawn, noon, afternoon, sunset, and evening).

ZAKAT

to donate from one's wealth every year to those in need (generally thought to be 2.5% of one's wealth).

SAWM

to fast during the holy month of Ramadan (where possible).

HAJJ

to make a pilgrimage to Mecca at least once during a person's lifetime if affordable and if the person is able to do so.

ISLAM, RAMADAN & FOOTBALL CALENDAR

Ramadan is the ninth month in the Islamic calendar and commemorates the month the Quran was first revealed to the Prophet Muhammad. It is a 29 to 30-day period of prayer, fasting, self-reflection, charity-giving, increased religious devotion and self-control over the need to eat, drink, smoke, sexual relations and oral drug intake between sunrise and sunset. Those fasting are recommended to have one meal (Suhoor) just before sunrise and an evening meal (Iftaar) after sunset during Ramadan.

Additional Prayers during Ramadan

Taraweeh prayer is a lengthy prayer and conducted only during the nights in the month of Ramadan. This prayer is believed to hold many rewards and virtues and can last for up to two hours per night. The Taraweeh prayer is not mandatory and can be performed individually or in small groups at home or at a mosque.

Fasting Exemptions

It is vital to know that not everyone is expected to fast and there are some exemptions including*:



Those with a physical or mental illness and on medication



People who are travelling



Pre-pubescent children



Elderly people



Pregnancy or when breastfeeding



Menstruation

DID YOU KNOW?

Fast is usually broken with a date, olive, water or milk.

Just as Muslims greet each other at the start of Ramadan, non-Muslim colleagues may also greet Muslim peers by saying '**Ramadan Mubarak**' or '**Ramadan Kareem**' which means 'have a blessed Ramadan.'

*There will be cultural and individual differences in the exemptions. It is also important to note that missed fasting days must be made up after Ramadan.

ISLAM, RAMADAN & FOOTBALL CALENDAR

Culture

As with all religions, there are individual and cultural differences in practices. Not all Muslims speak Arabic, but there are universal phrases you may hear.

As-Salaam-u-Alikum

greeting meaning “peace to you”

Alhamdulillah

“praise be to God”

Mash’Allah

“what God has willed”

Wa-Alaikumussalam wa-Rahmatullah

“may the peace, mercy, and blessings of Allah be upon you”

Insh’Allah

“if God wills it”

Bismillah

“in the name of God”



The exact dates of Ramadan change every year as Islam uses a calendar based on the cycles of the moon. This means the start of Ramadan shifts slightly from one year to the next, falling about 11 days earlier each year. Therefore, the religious month of Ramadan will fall within the domestic and international football calendar for the next 20 seasons. It is important that managers, coaches, and the wider multi-disciplinary team (MDT) have some understanding and an awareness of the various considerations on how to plan for and manage those players who are required to train, play, and wish to fast.

22/23	Ramadan Start - 23rd March Ramadan End - 21st April	23/24	Ramadan Start - 11th March Ramadan End - 9th April
24/25	Ramadan Start - 1st March Ramadan End - 30th March	25/26	Ramadan Start - 18th February Ramadan End - 19th March
26/27	Ramadan Start - 8th February Ramadan End - 9th March	27/28	Ramadan Start - 28th January Ramadan End - 26th February
28/29	Ramadan Start - 16th January Ramadan End - 14th February	29/30	Ramadan Start - 6th January Ramadan End - 4th February
30/31	Ramadan Start - 26th December Ramadan End - 23rd January	31/32	Ramadan Start - 4th December Ramadan End - 2nd January

*Dates can differ based on the sightings of the Moon's crescent, so some Muslims may celebrate a one day earlier than others, depending on their country or region of origin.

TRAINING, NUTRITION AND HYDRATION ADVICE FOR FASTING FOOTBALLERS

With Ramadan coinciding with domestic and international fixtures, this can particularly be challenging for those footballers who are required to train, play games and wish to fast. Below is some guidance to consider in relation to nutrition and hydration for those involved in the care of footballers who may be fasting.

Hydration

Normally a footballer would hydrate frequently, as even low levels of dehydration during training can have physiological consequences. A loss of 2% bodyweight (just 1.5kg for a 75kg person) is claimed to reduce performance by 10-20%. A fluid loss greater than 3-5% bodyweight, reduces aerobic exercise performance and impairs concentration and reaction time. A fasting footballer therefore needs to try and be well hydrated and energised before training and during the day. As for fluids, plenty of isotonic fluids may be consumed as opposed to water – ideally 2-4 litres during the time when eating and drinking is allowed. This helps with the fluids being retained in the body as opposed to being released quickly through urinating. In addition, some extra electrolytes in a soluble tablet form may also be taken which can help with absorption of water. Avoid caffeine whenever possible as it can act as a diuretic and increase fluid loss.

To reduce the loss of fluid through sweating, cooling strategies can be employed during training such as the use of cold towels and mouth

rinsing with water, during sessions. Post sessions the use of a cold shower or plunge pool will assist in cooling down and therefore help reduce fluid loss.

Suhoor (pre-dawn meal taken to mark the start of a fast)

The main focus should be on carbohydrates that will release energy slowly over the day combined with a small amount of foods that will release in the short to medium term. Examples of slow-release carbohydrates are non-starchy vegetables such as spinach, kale, tomatoes, broccoli, cauliflower, cucumber and asparagus. Sweet, pasta, nuts, fresh fruit and oats / porridge also release carbohydrates slowly. A whey protein should be consumed in preparation for training and muscle repair.

Iftaar (the meal which marks the opening of the fast at sunset)

A small amount of quick release carbohydrates is good and will make the player feel better quickly. Examples of quick release carbohydrates are white rice, white potato, sugary drinks and dates. A whey protein

drink should also be consumed to help with the muscle regeneration and recovery. Try and not to eat a large meal immediately on opening the fast as the danger is that the body which will be in 'storage mode' and will then try and store any excess food as fat. To avoid over consumption at Iftaar, it is advised that players have a small meal and then after a couple of hours have another meal focusing more on protein and slow-release carbohydrate foods.

Sleep

This is clearly important for recovery and repair and can be disturbed during Ramadan with players waking up early morning for Suhoor and staying up late after Iftar. It would be advised to get an idea of the duration and quality of the sleep by monitoring using Wellness Questionnaire / sleep Apps / devices. It is also recommended to have a nap during the day around late afternoon for minimum 45 minutes.

Training load

Managers, Sport Scientists, and the Medical Team can also help players if they are able to agree on a training program which minimises fatigue, maximises performance and optimises recovery and sleep.

Tapering

The first week or so, of fasting tends to be the most difficult for the athletes. To help with this, the intensity and loads could be adjusted in this beginning phase and tapered to their normal exposures across the month, as appropriate. Mujika, Chaouachi, & Chamari (2010) suggest

that players should be allowed gradual adaptation or acclimatisation to changes during Ramadan. This should dissipate accumulated fatigue and maximise adaptation, to then allow for progressive loading.

Pre-acclimatisation

Other research suggests that fasting leading up to Ramadan intermittently would allow this acclimatisation and therefore tapering wouldn't be required. It could be suggested that the player begins to fast (partially) 2 weeks before Ramadan and some modifications could be introduced (Ramadan coping strategies).

Summary

Research emphasises that athletes should maintain the training intensity or load during Ramadan equivalent to that before Ramadan (Zarrouk et al, 2013).

Some managers allow their players to train in the morning only if there has been a double training scheduled and do some other gym work which is less strenuous in the afternoon. However, this means that it will be a long time before nutrition that helps with recovery can be consumed. Another option is that training can be done just before Iftaar to gain the maximum from recovery nutrition. However, training late means players don't maximise the benefits of the nutrition from Suhoor. This is why it is important for the multi-disciplinary team and the player to discuss the best options for the player, the team and how best to optimise nutrition, hydration, and recovery.



Dr Zafar Iqbal
(Consultant in Sports and Exercise Medicine)
MBBS, BSc, DCH, DRCOG, MRCGP, MSc (SEM), FFSEM (UK), Dip PCR
Head of Medical Crystal Palace FC

INFORMATION ON PROTEIN BARS AND POWDERS

PROTEIN BARS:

Many protein bars contain gelatine (not permissible for Muslims) from unspecified sources - always check the label for gelatine.

PROTEIN POWDERS:

Some whey protein powders are manufactured using pepsin (these are not permissible - this enzyme is derived from pig sources). This information is not usually found on whey protein powder labels but can be sourced from the manufacturer.

WHEY PROTEIN & PROTEIN BARS

PAS protein powders are informed sport tested and Halal certified. PAS protein bars are informed sport certified, free of gelatine, additionally, and the whey protein in the bars is Halal certified.

OTHER POPULAR PROTEIN BARS:

Be aware that Grenade bars (also informed sport certified) contain Bovine gelatin, which may not be from Halal Bovine sources.





RAMADAN CONSIDERATIONS

Player Individual Plans:

- Provide a safe space for players to share their individual experiences – promote a culture of listening and valuing.
- Ensure the use of an Individual training programme, tailored to best support individual needs.
- Consider making simple adjustments to the training schedule, to better accommodate prayer/fasting times.
- Creating an environment where players/ staff who will be observing Ramadan are able to discuss any requirements/ arrangements they need.

Communication & Marketing:

- Who are the key and wider stakeholders who need to be involved in conversations regarding Ramadan?
- Any promotional materials for events that are going out for this period could include a phrase such as “Arrangements are in place for guests who are observing

Information Sharing & Planning across MDT:

- Consider whether a player fasted last year? If so, how did they feel and how did they cope with it? If not, how can we best prepare them across the MDT?
- Pay close attention to the player's ability to adjust to fasting, especially during the first week whilst the player adjusts to the programme of fasting. The player may need to reduce their workload on particular days.
- Dietary adjustments and requirements can also be discussed across the MDT, taking into consideration any changes in the workload or schedules.
- Obtain a prayer/Ramadan timetable from the local Mosque (or website)

Policies & Policy Development:

- Having a Ramadan policy and guidelines around safeguarding, medical, recruitment, travel etc.
- Having a standalone risk assessment for this period with any considerations for players/participants who may be fasting and the impact on your training plans/weather/hydration breaks etc.
- Ensure all players/parents/guardians have received the club's up to date policies and best practice guidelines as well as completed and returned a permission slip for any Ramadan specific activities.

Safeguarding:

- If a player is known to be observing Ramadan and falls unwell, medical attention should be given priority and if hydration or sustenance is the solution this should always be prioritised. Your consent forms should re-iterate this to parents.

Facilities:

- A private and appropriate space to allow players to observe their prayers and areas to break their fast on site and at away venues, as well as contingency plans.

Recruitment:

- Ensuring that support is in place to attract and retain Muslim talent to roles both on and off the pitch.

Community & Partner Support:

- Additional support can be sought out from key stakeholders i.e., the PFA, FA, Premier League, Kick It Out and Show Racism the Red Card.





Player Activation:

- Empower Muslim players to lead on activities aligned to their faith, whilst also sharing and celebrating their cultural identities with their fellow teammates.
- Fundraising and community visits to support local Mosques and community groups during Ramadan.

Club Community Organisations & Football Club Foundations:

- An opportunity for cross-departmental collaboration to raise awareness, impact, and inclusion.
- Sharing expertise, best practice, resources, and role modelling across the business.

Empowering, Valuing & Supporting:

- Awareness activities which can involve player, staff and fan engagement, particularly around highlighting Muslim role models.
- Promoting appropriate use of language and tone of conversations and creating an open inclusive culture- for all faiths and none.

MUSLIM PLAYER CONSIDERATIONS WORKSHOP

The Muslim Player & Ramadan Awareness workshop is a 45-minute interactive session which has been facilitated to club and academy staff, players, and community club organisations. The session provides an insight into the important considerations which can improve the inclusion of, and support provided to Muslim players, staff, and participants.



I thought your 'light touch' approach worked very well and the one hour 'all-in' time frame was perfect in reminding us of our responsibilities around diversity, inclusion, well-being, and effective communication. We have a collective responsibility to ensure the potential in performance of all our aspiring players is maximised and this can only be enhanced with improved awareness and a normalisation of varying ethnic origins and religious persuasions.



Arran Pugh

Exeter City FC,
Academy Performance and
Operations Manager



Our staff found the workshop really insightful and thought provoking. Muslim Player and Ramadan awareness is a very important topic and one which we need to incorporate across our football practices. We look forward to using the information provided in the resource to develop staff training, as well as in our policy development and planning.



Mark Harrison

Aston Villa FC,
Academy Manager



We operate in a diverse industry and we work with talented young players from different backgrounds. It is paramount that we understand the needs of these players and that our staff are confident in providing the best possible support for them to excel. This resource and the workshop have equipped our teams in planning appropriate support and policies. We hope to roll out training to our players across all phases of the academy.



Dean Rastrick

Tottenham Hotspur FC,
Academy Manager



The awareness workshop was very insightful and has got us thinking about how we can support Muslim players at all levels. As the senior management, we now understand the layers of policies and procedures we need to develop in order to provide the necessary training for staff to support Muslim players. We are excited to begin implementing the knowledge we've received in the workshop and this resource.



Kalam Mooniaruck

West Ham United FC,
Academy Head of Coach Development

CLUB SPOTLIGHT

Crystal Palace FC and Palace For Life Foundation

Palace have made significant strides to improve inclusion across the business. Given the diverse nature of the local demographics in South London, there has been a need to understand and engage with individuals from a variety of ethnicities and religions.

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It is important to have Club, Academy and Foundation wide joint activities to have the greatest impact and raise the most awareness internally, externally and across our local community and fan base. Individual Clubs have the potential to make meaningful change in society and across the wider football community, nationally and internationally. We want to be part of this change and lead the way.

Hazmi Bahrin

Community Development Coordinator



The Community Development Coordinator has worked closely with internal and external stakeholders, including the PFA, to develop a Muslim and Ramadan specific plan. The plan for the coming years includes some of the following areas of best practice:



- 'Muslim Player/Staff and Ramadan Awareness' staff training in collaboration with the PFA.
- A targeted social media and communications plan leading up to and during Ramadan, including 'top tips' from the Head of Medical, Dr Zaf and an article highlighting the meaning and importance of Ramadan.
- Fundraising activities, as well as donation of food, dates (fruit used to break fast) and water to local Mosques and community groups.
- Virtual panel discussion raising awareness about Ramadan, Muslim role models and tips for those fasting (working with CPFC staff, players, PFA staff and charities who are specialists in engaging with the Muslim community, like the Zesh Rehman Foundation).
- Academy player led social action considerations, incorporated into PLCF and PL-PFA funded programmes.
- Targeted sessions to continue Muslim engagement across Ramadan, including evening football sessions, as part of Palace For Life Foundations PL-PFA funded 'Get Involved' - Asian Inclusion Project.
- Staff virtual iftar event, with non-Muslim staff volunteering to fast and share their experiences, alongside 'day in the life of' content with Muslim players and staff.

SOCIAL MESSAGING & SOCIAL ACTION

Stakeholders including clubs, club community organisations, players and fans are encouraged to share their work, experiences, well-wishes and even questions about Ramadan and Eid via social media, to amplify the impact and raise awareness of inclusive best practices.

Organisations and individuals (Muslims and non-Muslims) are also encouraged to post well wishes at the start of Ramadan and to celebrate Eid at the end of Ramadan. Historically, these social media posts have taken many forms.

In addition to this, it is hoped that with the support provided and the collaboration suggestions, organisations will also be able to highlight Muslim players, Muslim staff, Ramadan, and Eid across their platforms. Some examples of how to do so include (but is not limited to):

- Fundraising and donations
- 'A day in the life of' content
- Interviews/Q&A with Muslim players, staff and/or participants
- Highlighting Muslim role models
- Web/Programme Articles
- Awareness & celebratory workshops
- Iftaar & Eid celebrations



PFA MEN'S PLAYER OF THE YEAR – MUSLIM WINNERS



RIYAD MAHREZ

2015/2016



N'GOLO KANTE


2016/2017



MOHAMED SALAH

2017/2018 & 2021/2022





FROM EVERYONE AT THE PFA PLEASE HAVE A WONDERFUL AND SPIRITUAL RAMADAN

For further information or support, please contact:

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