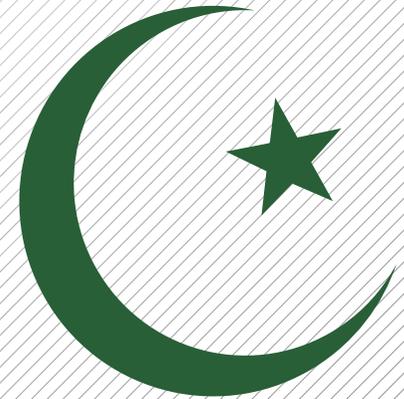




**ENGLAND
FOOTBALL**

LINCOLNSHIRE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION RAMADAN AND FOOTBALL



'ONE LINCOLNSHIRE COMMUNITY, UNITED AND INSPIRED BY THE POWER OF FOOTBALL'



WHAT IS RAMADAN?

Ramadan is the 9th month in the Islamic calendar.

Muslims believe it was during this month that God revealed the first verses of the Quran, Islam's sacred text, to Mohammed, on a night known as "The Night of Power". Ramadan lasts for one lunar month (which is a maximum of 29 or 30 days) and its start and ending dates are determined by the sighting of the moon - which means it comes around 11 days earlier each year, and so starts on a different date annually. However, it's important to note that there are cultural differences to the start of Ramadan.

Fasting during Ramadan is one of the Five Pillars of Islam, along with testimony of faith, prayer, charitable giving, and making a pilgrimage to Mecca. 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 and mentally unwell, travelling or pregnant. If any individual has not been able to observe a fast, they may make up later or donate a set amount to the poor.

Individuals are able to consult with their local Imam (a person with an Islamic leadership position, such as a leader of a Mosque) for clarity on this.

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

At the end of Ramadan there's a one-day celebration called Eid al-Fitr, or the Festival of the Breaking of the Fast.

WHEN WILL RAMADAN BEGIN AND END THIS YEAR?

Ramadan 2023 in United Kingdom is expected to begin in the evening of **WEDNESDAY, 22ND MARCH** and end in the evening of **FRIDAY, 21ST APRIL**

Ramadan will conclude with Eid al-Fitr (roughly translated to 'Festival of Breaking Fast') which is expected to be on **SATURDAY, 22ND APRIL**





HOW DOES RAMADAN IMPACT FOOTBALL?

The FA rules make it clear that all faiths are observed and respected:

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.

In practice, it means no-one can be compelled to play on a religious holiday unless they've consented, or are a professional player under contract. As far as grassroots football is concerned, the rule means that any fixtures that fall within Ramadan can be played either after sunset or delayed until after Eid al-Fitr (the celebration at the end of Ramadan).

It is important to consider that Muslim players, referees and coaches may not wish to take part in football during the Holy Month of Ramadan.

However, many individuals may wish to maintain the involvement and, in this case, it's important that we're all able to support their involvement as best we can.

Different Muslims will have different interpretations and observance of Islam and therefore it is always advisable to consult in advance with anyone affected.

HOW DOES RAMADAN IMPACT YOUTH FOOTBALL?

There is no set age when Muslims start fasting. It is generally post-puberty but can vary from between 8 and 16 years old.

This will affect Muslim participation in youth football during Ramadan, especially in the older age groups. As this is the case, best practice for leagues and clubs would be to consult with Muslim players and teams about their plans to fast and play.

2021 was the first year in history that the Premier League actively encouraged and adopted breaks in play to allow Muslim players to break their fast after the sun had set – in accordance with Ramadan.





HOW CAN I SUPPORT THOSE THAT ARE INVOLVED IN FOOTBALL THAT WILL BE OBSERVING RAMADAN?

If you're a non-Muslim club official, member of staff, manager, coach, referee, player or volunteer, you may well have peers, colleagues or players who are Muslim - so it's good to acquaint yourself with what Ramadan involves. That way you can ensure your club or team is inclusive, welcoming, and supports The FA's For All ethos.

It is important to note that Ramadan is the holiest month of the Muslim calendar, and it is a month where many Muslims will be immersing themselves in extra worship and a deep reflective period of introspection and mindfulness. The holy month of Ramadan is not only fasting from all foods and drinks, but also fasting from desires, foul language, bad behaviour and distractions.

FRIENDS AND PEERS

Ensure you know which of your colleagues or players are Muslims and the degree to which they will observe Ramadan. Without invading anyone's privacy, it's good to find this out.

Then you're in a good position to accommodate any changes this might make necessary. It also helps to get to know your colleagues and players better and to build stronger relationships – as you develop a stronger connection and understanding of each other.

ACKNOWLEDGE ANYONE OBSERVING RAMADAN

As with any religion, showing your Muslim colleagues or team members that you know it is a special time for them is likely to be appreciated. Even something as simple as learning an expression and saying it with a smile to your Muslim friends will go a long way toward making them feel comfortable and welcome.

It's not uncommon to say 'Merry Christmas' to your friends and family in December – and Ramadan is no different!

STANDARD GREETING:

"Ramadan Mubarak!" or "Ramadan Kareem!"

This translates to

"have a blessed Ramadan", or "have a generous Ramadan"

Suggested Tweet or Message:

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

APPLY COURTESY AROUND FASTING

Unless there are specific reasons (e.g. pregnancy), Muslims are required to abstain from eating, drinking and smoking during the daylight hours of Ramadan. The fast is broken after sunset with the evening meal known as 'Iftar'.

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 at Iftar and will welcome non-Muslims to join in.

You should be aware that fasting, combined with extra prayers (see below) and a lack of sleep may result in more tiredness and dehydration than normal. Many Muslims will find it harder to play football or concentrate on their work normally so please be sensitive to this.

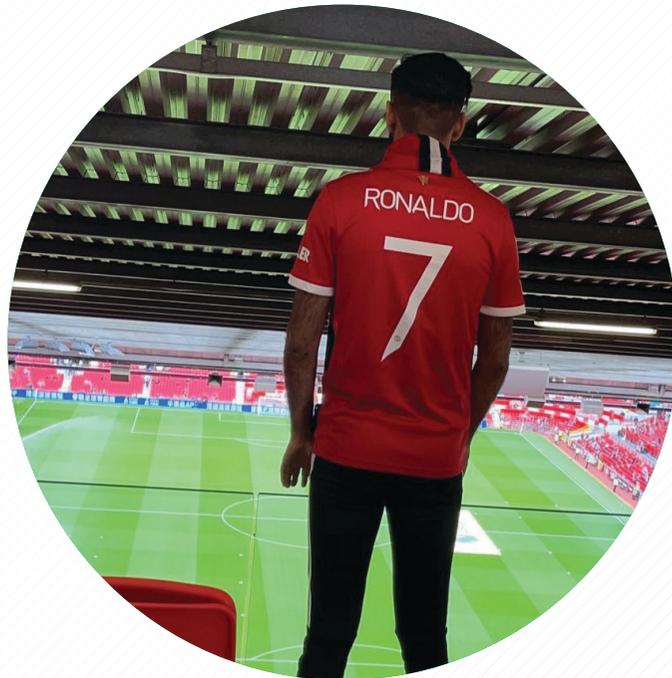
APPLY COURTESY AROUND PRAYING

Ramadan means just more than fasting to those that observe the Holy Month. Muslims may practise their faith more during Ramadan and offer prayers during the day. Most Muslims will pray five times per day year-round, and many will take part in extra prayers, known as 'Tarawih' prayers, especially during the Holy Month of Ramadan. This will normally be for a few minutes at a time when they will require a small, clean and private area.

Prayers may not affect your footballing or meeting schedule, but it's good to be aware, in case you need to make alternative arrangements.



CASE STUDY



MOHAMMED

"Ramadan is a month which comes once a year for Muslims. During the entire month of Ramadan, Muslims fast every day from dawn to sunset. Fasting serves several spiritual and social purposes. It is a time of spiritual discipline — of deep contemplation of one's relationship with God, extra prayer, increased charity and generosity, and intense study of the Quran.

Ramadan to me means everything as it is time for me to reflect on past actions and better myself, and increased spiritual contemplation. I try to personally stop any pointless or timewasting activities during this month and focus on my good actions and religion.

I play football regularly, sometimes even twice a day, and I go to games weekly at various stadiums. Football is a huge part of my life. However, Ramadan impacts ones sleeping and eating habits. Due to the late prayers and when we must stop eating in the early hours, this only gives us a few hours before we must start our regular day to day activities again.

Ramadan impacts our ability to play football as we may get extremely tired and thirsty in majority of physical sports, especially football. In this month, I tend not to play football and replace it with indulging in religious acts.

Coaches should not drop players from their squad due to their fasting, this is a compulsory act everyone must do. During Ramadan, coaches and referees should aim to be more considerate. They could let Muslim players have extra breaks or if it is the fast-opening time, excuse the player for a minute or two to break his fast with some water and dates.

It is recommended that a person should open his fast as soon as the time is up and not wait."

CASE STUDY



ABDELREHMAN

"Ramadan is the holy month for Muslims. We fast from eating food and drinks from dawn to sunset, and during Ramadan we are more motivated to morally act and speak.

Visiting and hosting family and friends is also another great part of Ramadan – it keeps people close. Ramadan has a positive impact on my daily life because we are obliged to stay away from sins and act better to get rewarded with our fast.

It could be a little tiring, but a person gets used to it after the first couple of days.

I play for the University of Lincoln Futsal Team and I watch football occasionally too.

Ramadan does not have much of an impact on playing football or any sport - a person could feel a little dehydrated or more exhausted than normal days, but I have played football while fasting or after breaking a fast and it was not as tiring as someone else would think.

It is more encouraged to utilise the holy month in worshipping but playing or watching football could be done as well.

If a player wants to continue their involvement with football during Ramadan, try to organize your time and conserve energy so you're able to play or watch football but still worship the holy month."



HOW TO SUPPORT THOSE OBSERVING RAMADAN

- Acknowledge those that will be observing Ramadan
- Wish Muslims well by saying "Ramadan Mubarak" ("Have a Blessed Ramadan")
- Try not to eat or drink in front a Muslim that is fasting (if possible)
- Consider the challenges that come with fasting; e.g. Muslim players may be more prone to dehydration and fatigue
- If a session or match is out of fast times, consider extra breaks for players to drink or eat
- Be courteous around prayer times
- Be open minded to the traditions and practices of Ramadan – especially if its new to you!

For more information on this document, please contact:

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