



Professional
Footballers'
Association

MUSLIM PLAYER CONSIDERATIONS

Creating an inclusive, high-performance
environment





INTRODUCTION

Muslim footballers are represented from nations across the world in the Premier League, English Football League and Women's Super League, with representation also improving at all phases of the academy system.

This resource therefore aims to provide guidance for coaches, managers and multi-disciplinary teams (MDTs) in supporting Muslim players all year-round within elite environments. It contains contextual information around Islam and some of its religious practices, guidance for creating an inclusive culture within your squad and considerations for supporting players through the month of Ramadan.

The religious month of Ramadan is set to fall within the domestic and international football calendar for the next 18-20 years. So, understanding and embracing cultural differences within squads is important when striving to achieve the highest level of wrap-around support for players, and - in turn - improving welfare and performance.

Small marginal gains are often spoken about on the pitch. But quality off-pitch support can be just as crucial when creating a high-performance, inclusive environment which enables players to perform at their best.

We hope you find this resource useful. The PFA is here to help, and we would be delighted to support you and your team further with any questions or specific requests.



Mohamed Salah is one of the most popular Muslim players in the UK and one thing that is a constant in each of his celebratory routines is the performance of a prayer of thanks to God (Allah) by getting to his knees and placing his head on the ground.

This act is known as sajdah Al-shukr, the prostration of thanksgiving, and is also performed by a number of Muslim footballers across the world.

ISLAM

Islam literally means “submission” to the will of God. Muslims, the followers of Islam, believe that the religion was revealed to the world through the *Prophet Muhammad, “Peace Be Upon Him” (PBUH), in the holy city of Makkah (Modern day Saudi Arabia) over 1400 years ago.

Muslims believe that Islam is a code for everyday life. The Quran (the Muslim holy book) is believed to be the direct word of God which was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). In combination with the Hadith (sayings of the prophet Muhammed) a way of life is formed commonly termed “shariah”.

The Quran will often give the command for actions and the hadith indicate how those commands are to be enacted. This rules-based order governs not only worship, but almost all everyday dealings and relationships. There is a rich history of scholarship and jurisprudence on both which leads to a variety of methods of enacting those fundamental beliefs which may lead to intra individual differences between Muslim players.

For players, it is important to acknowledge that each individual will be on their own faith journey. Some aspects of their faith may be more important than others or change in importance as players get older. Practising Islam requires dedication and patience, these are attributes that can be used to foster development and enhance performance. You cannot underestimate how much support and accommodation around faith will be appreciated. This will also breed a sense of belonging and loyalty.

It is important to note, that the 'last' Prophet, Muhammad (PBUH), 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 who are all mentioned numerous times in the Quran.

5 PILLARS OF ISLAM

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 way.



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

Salah (Prayer): to pray five times a day (at dawn, past-noon, early evening, sunset and night).

Zakat (Charity): to donate 2.5% of one's wealth every year to those in need (subject to minimum net wealth).

Sawm (Fasting): to fast during the holy month of Ramadan.

Hajj (Pilgrimage): to make a pilgrimage to Makkah at least once during a person's lifetime as soon as it can be afforded in the 12th month of the Islamic Calendar (Dhul Hijjah).

IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF ISLAM AND THEIR FREQUENCY

The table below highlights the important aspects of Islam and their frequency.

Event	Occurrence	Description
Salah	Daily	Mature Muslims are required to offer 5 daily prayers at distinct times (at dawn, post-noon, early evening, sunset and night). The call to prayer is known as the 'Athar' (Ezan).
Jumuah*	Weekly	The afternoon prayer on a Friday which is compulsory to be offered in congregation.
Ramadan	Annually	The 9th month of the Islamic lunar year lasts 29 or 30 days (depending on moonsighting) where food and water is not consumed between dawn and sunset.
Eid	Twice a year	There are 2 Eid festivals. One at the end of Ramadan to celebrate the end of the fasting period known as Eid ul Fitr. The other during the days of Hajj known as Eid ul Adha.
Hajj	Annually	Pilgrimage to Makkah, which is done once in a lifetime subject to health and wealth. It is considered to be neglectful to delay unnecessarily.
Umrah	N/A	A pilgrimage to the holy city of Makkah which is encouraged frequently but not limited to a specific time like Hajj and therefore can be done all year round.

***Muslims perform the Jumuah prayer every Friday. The origins of the word Jumuah stems 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 day of the week. The accompanying prayer is a short sermon addressing different aspects of life. Players may wish to visit a nearby Mosque for this obligation. During the winter months, once clocks go back, the prayers usually take place between 12-1pm. In the summer months there is a greater window to perform Jumuah after 1pm. The scheduling of training could be adapted to make attendance easier.**

POPULAR MUSLIM PHRASES

Not all Muslims speak Arabic, but there are popular Muslim phrases you may hear.

As-Salaam alaykum

greeting meaning “peace to you”

Wa-alaykum us-salam wa-rahmatullah wa- barakatuh

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

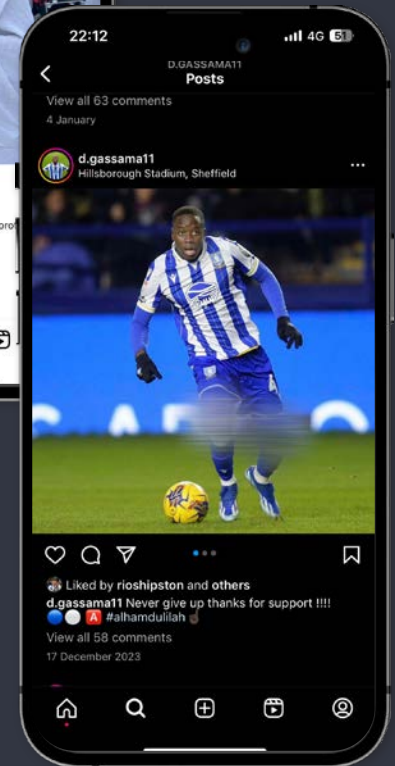
The greetings above are intentional communications to acknowledge someone’s presence or to make someone feel welcomed. They are used prior to a conversation and are said to be good manners. The greeting is considered an important Islamic duty and obligation.

Alhamdulillah “praise be to God”

Mash’Allah “what God has willed”

Insh’Allah “if God wills it”

Bismillah “in the name of God”



ALL YEAR-ROUND 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. Best practice is to provide in-house prayer mats for players, staff and visitors.



Dietary requirements / Adjustments – 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 within 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.



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.



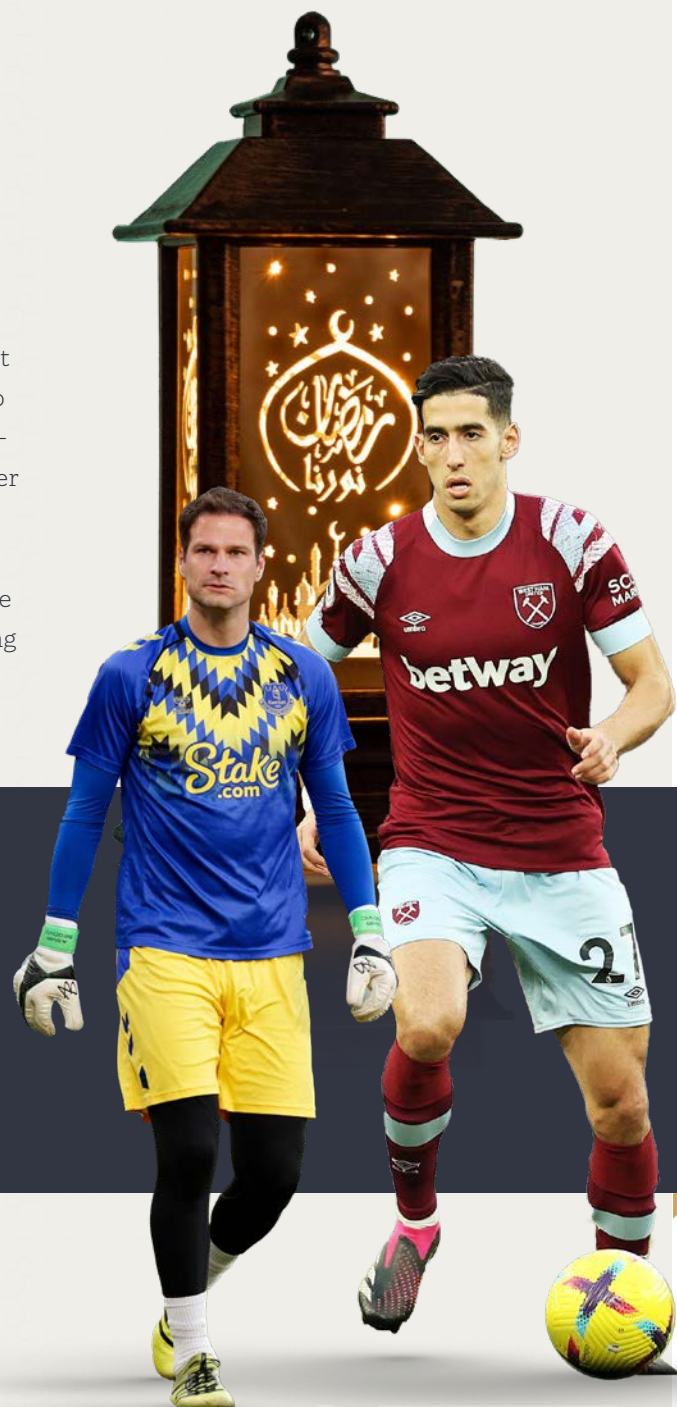
***Halal is an Arabic word which means permissible. Halal certified products are ones which are permissible or acceptable for consumption in accordance with Islamic law. Halal meat is procured through alternative means of slaughter which incorporate certain religious practices. Muslims are also forbidden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

RAMADAN & THE FOOTBALL CALENDAR

Ramadan is the ninth month in the Islamic calendar and commemorates the month the Holy Quran was first revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). 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 daybreak and an evening meal (Iftar) 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. Although it can last up to two hours there are regular breaks ranging from 30 seconds to a few minutes during which water can be taken on. It would be good practice to ask players to sip on an electrolyte drink in these breaks with a view to rehydrating properly before the next fast.



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
(longer than a certain distance from their residence)



Pre-pubescent children



Elderly people



Pregnancy or when breastfeeding



Menstruation

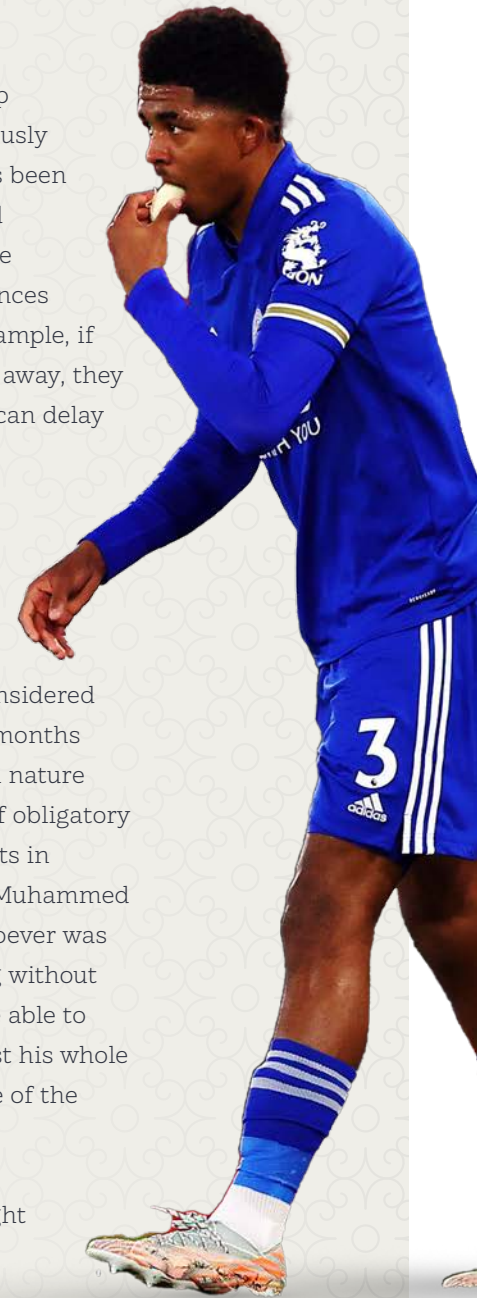
*There will be cultural and individual differences in the exemptions

Did you know? Fast is usually ended with a date, an olive, water or milk.

Missed fasting days must be made up after Ramadan if missed for a religiously allowable reason. However, there has been great emphasis placed on the reward of fasting during Ramadan and hence why even under allowable circumstances players may still want to fast. For example, if an away game is more than 50 miles away, they would be considered a traveller and can delay the fast.

In the hadith there is emphasis on reward and admonition for missing these fasts. There are various narrations that emphasize the value of obligatory acts being considered seventy times greater than in other months and good deeds that are voluntary in nature being considered at the same level of obligatory acts. The admonition for missing fasts in Ramadan is also stark. The Prophet Muhammed (PBUH) is reported to have said, “whoever was to purposefully engage in not fasting without a valid excuse or sickness will not be able to replace it, even if the person is to fast his whole life.” This is due to the virtuous nature of the month of Ramadan.

We hope the above gives a little insight into why Muslim players may place great emphasis on Ramadan.



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 18-20 seasons.

The table below outlines the start and end dates of Ramadan as well as the two Eid festivals for the next ten years.

Football Season	Ramadan Start Date (+/- 1 day)*	Eid ul Fitr (+/- 1 day)*	Eid ul Adha (+/- 1 day)*
23/24	11th March	9th April	16th June
24/25	1st March	30th March	6th June
25/26	18th February	19th March	26th May
26/27	8th February	9th March	16th May
27/28	28th January	26th February	4th May
28/29	16th January	14th February	23rd April
29/30	6th January	4th February	13th April
30/31	26th December	23rd January	2nd April
31/32	4th December	2nd January	21st March

*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.

The table below outlines the daily prayer times during Ramadan as well as sunrise and sunset times. These times may vary slightly across the country, so it is advisable to download the Ramadan calendar from your nearest Mosque. This calendar can help MDTs to plan individual schedules.

Fast number	Date	Fajr*	Sunrise	Zhuhr	Asr	Sunset	Maghrib	Isha
1	11th March	04:31	06:23	12:10	15:15	17:59	17:59	19:44
2	12th March	04:29	06:20	12:10	15:16	18:01	18:01	19:46
3	13th March	04:26	06:18	12:10	15:17	18:02	18:02	19:48
4	14th March	04:24	06:16	12:09	15:19	18:04	18:04	19:50
5	15th March	04:21	06:14	12:09	15:20	18:06	18:06	19:51
6	16th March	04:19	06:11	12:09	15:21	18:07	18:07	19:53
7	17th March	04:16	06:09	12:09	15:22	18:09	18:09	19:55
8	18th March	04:14	06:07	12:08	15:23	18:11	18:11	19:57
9	19th March	04:11	06:04	12:08	15:24	18:13	18:13	19:59
10	20th March	04:09	06:02	12:08	15:25	18:14	18:14	20:01
11	21st March	04:06	06:00	12:07	15:26	18:16	18:16	20:03
12	22nd March	04:03	05:58	12:07	15:27	18:18	18:18	20:05
13	23rd March	04:01	05:55	12:07	15:28	18:19	18:19	20:07
14	24th March	03:58	05:53	12:07	15:29	18:21	18:21	20:09
15	25th March	03:55	05:51	12:06	15:30	18:23	18:23	20:11
16	26th March	03:53	05:48	12:06	15:31	18:24	18:24	20:13
17	27th March	03:50	05:46	12:06	15:32	18:26	18:26	20:15
18	28th March	03:47	05:44	12:05	15:33	18:28	18:28	20:17
19	29th March	03:44	05:42	12:05	15:34	18:29	18:29	20:19
20	30th March	03:42	05:39	12:05	15:35	18:31	18:31	20:22
21	31st March	04:39	06:37	13:04	16:36	19:33	19:33	21:24
22	1st April	04:36	06:35	13:04	16:37	19:34	19:34	21:26
23	2nd April	04:33	06:33	13:04	16:37	19:36	19:36	21:28
24	3rd April	04:30	06:30	13:04	16:38	19:38	19:38	21:30
25	4th April	04:28	06:28	13:03	16:39	19:39	19:39	21:33
26	5th April	04:25	06:26	13:03	16:40	19:41	19:41	21:35
27	6th April	04:22	06:24	13:03	16:41	19:43	19:43	21:37
28	7th April	04:19	06:21	13:03	16:42	19:44	19:44	21:39
29	8th April	04:16	06:19	13:02	16:43	19:46	19:46	21:42
30	9th April	04:13	06:17	13:03	16:43	19:48	19:48	21:44

*Fast must begin before daybreak



MULTI-DISCIPLINARY TEAM (MDT) SUPPORT

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. Managers, coaches and the MDTs have an important role to play in promoting the inclusion, welfare, and performance of those players who are required to train, play, and wish to fast.

Using the Ramadan daily calendar and the information and guidance provided in this section, should help support MDTs to forward plan and best prepare players during Ramadan according to their training and games schedules.

The first week of Ramadan can be the most challenging for some players as their bodies adjust to the difference in eating and sleeping 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.



**TECHNICAL/
TACTICAL**

PSYCHOLOGICAL

PHYSICAL

SOCIAL

Psychological: The player is in a non-Muslim team environment where friends, team-mates, and support staff continue with their normal non-fasting routine. This can have social and psychosocial consequences. Many players also report increased focus and less distractions during this period. This could this be used by MDTs to make progress on specific development areas which could be carried on after Ramadan.

Physical: 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. Where there is some evidence of performance being impacted, strategies could potentially be developed to minimise impact on games. The calorie restriction could also be used to promote certain adaptations. MDTs could compare key performance indicators related to performance, recovery and fatigue prior to and during the month to get a real understanding where each athlete may need help.

Social: If there is a risk of a player feeling very isolated, consideration may be given regarding what steps could be put in place to support the player. Perhaps the club or the MDT could connect with other Muslim players or the local Muslim community in some way (especially if new to the area). This could be used for clubs to demonstrate their respect of differences and engage with predominantly minority ethnic supporters and communities who will be partaking in Ramadan.

Technical/Tactical: There is undoubtedly an element of fatigue that may impact cognitive and physical performance and therefore impact decision making and technical execution. However, the latter part of the game is also characterised by such due to fatigue. This opportunity could be used to develop execution and performance under fatigue, a scenario that may be hard to replicate in training at other times of the year.

Other things to consider to support a player:

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. We think having a clear performance or development focus is essential for a coherent support plan.

Kick off time: Kick off times will range from morning to evening and that may provide challenges and opportunities if optimally preparing players for performance when fasting.

Using a pre-participation evaluation questionnaire for fasting players: This will aim to assist and guide discussions between the Sports Medicine & Science teams and fasting players to support their wellbeing and safe participation in sport during Ramadan.

A tailored sensitive approach can help to accommodate individual differences (for example some may not fast when traveling or in competition, whilst others may). It is important to start planning in advance with individual players.



Does Ramadan affect performance?

No doubt fasting with the associated calorie restriction, fatigue and dehydration has the potential to impact performance. The research on elite players with the support teams that are now common is negligible. Some research done on players in other countries or on non-elite populations does show that elements of performance can be impacted. However, anecdotal evidence from elite players suggests that they point to spiritual and psychological benefits they believe improve their performance. Karim Benzema in his final season for Real Madrid scored multiple hat-tricks while fasting. On the other hand, some coaches have been vocal in criticism of fasting players. This is an under-researched area. There is much scope to develop a more critically informed perspective on the spiritual and psychological benefits players allude to.

Is Ramadan the only time Muslims Fast?

No. There are many other optional fasts that players may want to engage in. These include weekly, on a Monday and a Thursday and monthly, on the 13th, 14th & 15th days of the lunar month (known as the moon-lit nights when the moon is in full). There are also fasts in the first month of the Islamic year (Muharram), during the days of Hajj and in the month following Ramadan (Sha'baan). As ever an open proactive conversation with players will allow both teams and players to understand the needs of each party.

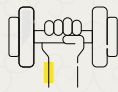


TRAINING, NUTRITION, HYDRATION, AND RECOVERY ADVICE FOR FASTING FOOTBALLERS

Below is some guidance to consider in relation to training, nutrition, hydration and recovery for those involved in the care of footballers who may be fasting. Key areas to focus on:



Suhoor
(pre-dawn meal)



Training



Recovery



Hydration



Iftar
(sunset meal)

Suhoor

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 potato, pasta, nuts, fresh fruit and oats / porridge also release carbohydrates slowly. Whey protein should be consumed in preparation for training and muscle repair.

Training load

Managers, Sport Scientists, and the Medical Team can also help players if they are able to agree on a training program which minimizes fatigue, maximises performance and optimises recovery and sleep. Discussions around competition and training loads should be framed in the context of a fasting player's health and safety and not exclude them from taking part unnecessarily. Where appropriate, expectations of the playing/training minutes and expected training loads should be sensitively discussed between the coaching staff and the Sports Science team. Teams should consider the objectives of the player and the team.

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 Iftar 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 MDT and the player to discuss the best options for the player, the team and how best to optimise nutrition, hydration, and recovery.

Tapering

The first week or so, of fasting tends to be the most difficult for the players as they adjust to the different eating and sleeping patterns. 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. It is recommended that players 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

It would be best practice that intermittent fasting leading up to Ramadan would allow this acclimatisation and therefore tapering would not 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).

Recovery & Sleep

Sleep is the most anabolic period for the human body and can be disturbed during Ramadan with players waking up early morning for Suhoor and attending late night spiritual prayers (Taraweeh) after Iftar. This will result in hormonal disturbances. It would be advised to monitor the duration and quality of the sleep by using wellness questionnaire / sleep apps / devices. It is also recommended to have a nap during the day around late afternoon for a minimum of 45 minutes.

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. It is important to understand the players evening routine, as this may provide opportunities for effective hydration strategies.

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.

Iftar

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. It is recommended to avoid a large meal immediately upon 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 Iftar, 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.

INFORMATION ON PROTEIN BARS AND POWDERS

BE AWARE - PROTEIN BARS:

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

BE AWARE - PROTEIN POWDERS:

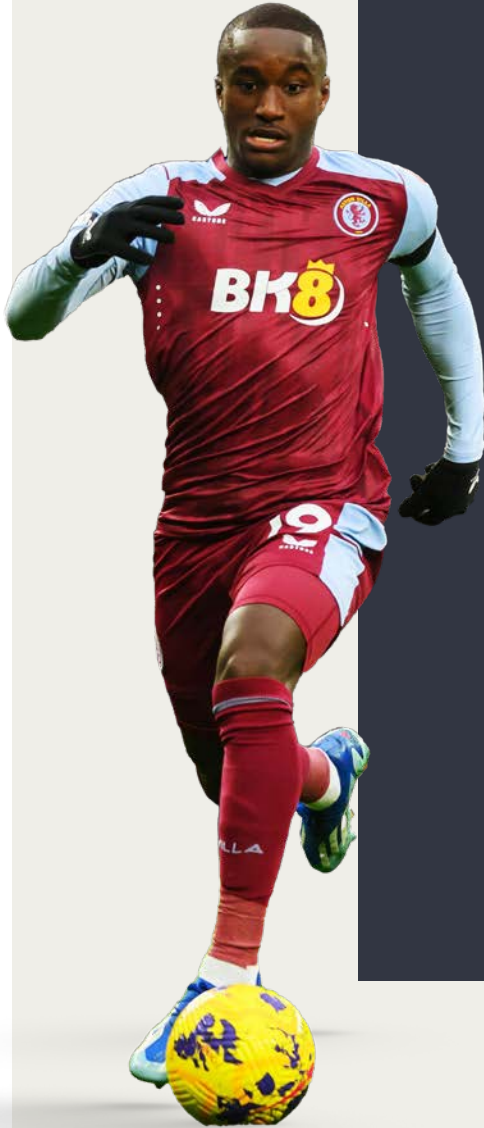
Some whey protein powders are manufactured using pepsin (these are not permissible - this enzyme is derived from pig sources). This information is not usually found on whey protein powder labels but can be sourced from the manufacturer.

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 gelatine, which may not be from Halal Bovine sources.



MATCHDAY CONSIDERATIONS

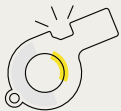
Matchdays (home) – Evening kick-off

The daily duration of fasting this year in the UK will be between 14-16 hours long.

- Fasts are likely to open either before the game starts or shortly after (check sunset time in the location where the game is being played)
- Plan ahead regarding meal on opening fast
- Food options if opening fast during game – dates (Islamic tradition), honey & banana smoothie, gel-based carbohydrates and isotonic drinks
- Appropriate meal ready post-game and to take away
- Consider area for player to be able to pray

Matchdays (away) – Evening kick-off

- If the player is travelling more than 50 miles from his residence, they are exempt from fasting. This is also taken into consideration if travelling the day before and overnight stay
- If the player insists on fasting, then same principles apply as for home game



Team captains can request a “drinks break” at an appropriate moment in the game following sunset to allow players to break their fast. Further drink breaks may be recommended subject to need.



OTHER RAMADAN SPECIFIC 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.
- 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 Ramadan”.

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 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, the latter applicable only to academy players.

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 and their guardians.

Recruitment:

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

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:

- 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.





PFA 'MUSLIM PLAYER CONSIDERATIONS' INTERACTIVE WORKSHOP

The PFA have incorporated a bespoke 'Muslim Player Considerations' workshop into a 60-minute interactive session for Managers, Coaches, Players and MDTs. The session provides tangible actions and important considerations that can improve the inclusion and support provided to Muslim players leading into and during the month of Ramadan.



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 kind of effects that go on in their day to day lives, especially during Ramadan.



Ashley Cole

Former Premier League player and England International



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



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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,
Head of Academy Coach
Development



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Today's workshop was very important and made me realise how important the Muslim faith is to players. It was interesting learning about it and I've come out knowing a lot more which will help me during my future coaching career.



David McGoldrick

Notts County FC striker

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The knowledge shared in the workshop from the PFA was excellent. I got a better understanding of how it is to be a Muslim and the purpose behind Ramadan, which is beautiful in many ways. The information shared better equips me to approach the players who are partaking in Ramadan as I now understand what they're going through. The wider support team were also equipped with more information about the day-to-day support that we can give the Muslim players all year round such as providing rooms for prayers as well as how our professional chefs and nutritionists can prepare food for when they get up early morning and when the fast breaks. There is no doubt that we will continue to use the skillsets and knowledge from within the PFA to help support our Muslim players during Ramadan so they (the players) can perform in the best possible way.



Thomas Frank

Brentford FC, First Team Head Coach





The session on Ramadan and how to support Muslim players was informative, practical and pitched at the right level. Everyone was highly engaged, and Riz created a safe space to ask questions and learn more. This session was incredibly useful to us and will help Brentford FC to ensure we are creating a more inclusive environment for all players during Ramadan, and they feel supported during that period and beyond.



Kaammini Chanrai

Brentford FC, Equity & Inclusion Director



Having such relatable delivery ensures that our young players are not only engaged within their learning, but that they can see the impacts and benefits of widening their understanding for their present and their future development. The benefits from the workshop have already been noticeable, with one of our first-year apprentices opening up about his own personal journey and experience with the Muslim faith. The workshop gave a sense of relatedness and a comfort to know that support is available to him, that he has a voice and is able to ask questions freely within his professional life. Really grateful for your continued support and the work that you do, it is massively appreciated by us here at Ipswich Town.



Kyran Clements

Ipswich Town FC, Academy Player Care Officer



204

During the summer of 2023, the Muslim Player Considerations was delivered on nine PFA UEFA B courses across the country with 204 members engaged in learning.

RAMADAN / EID MESSAGING & SOCIAL ACTION

Just as Muslims greet each other at the start of Ramadan, non-Muslim colleagues may also greet Muslims peers by saying 'Ramadan Mubarak' or 'Ramadan Kareem' which means 'have a blessed Ramadan.' At the end of Ramadan, you can simply say 'Eid Mubarak' meaning 'blessed Eid, and then, put any other message you wish after that.

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
- Iftar & Eid celebrations



MUSLIM PLAYER ACHIEVEMENTS



NICOLAS ANELKA

GOLDEN BOOT WINNER
2008/2009



RIYAD MAHREZ

PFA MEN'S PLAYER OF YEAR
2015/2016



N'GOLO KANTÉ

PFA MEN'S PLAYER OF YEAR
2016/2017



MOHAMED SALAH

PFA MEN'S PLAYER OF THE YEAR
2017/18 & 2021/22



MOHAMED SALAH

GOLDEN BOOT WINNER
2017/18, 2018/19 & 2020/21



SADIO MANÉ

GOLDEN BOOT WINNER
2017/2018

CONTRIBUTORS

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Liverpool FC and First Team Doctor Tottenham Hotspur

DR IBRAHIM AKUBAT

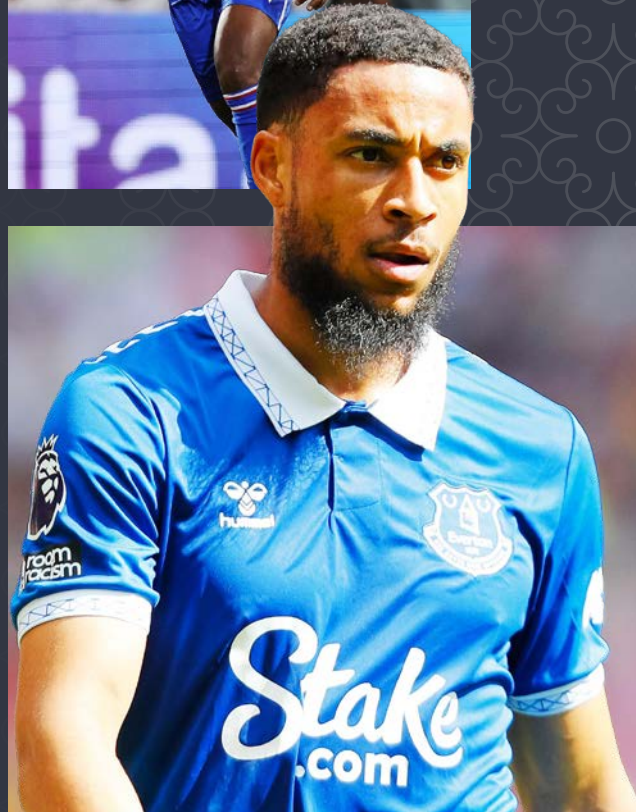
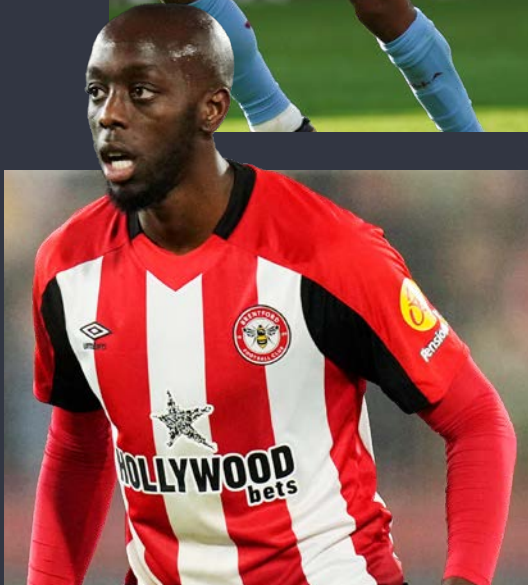
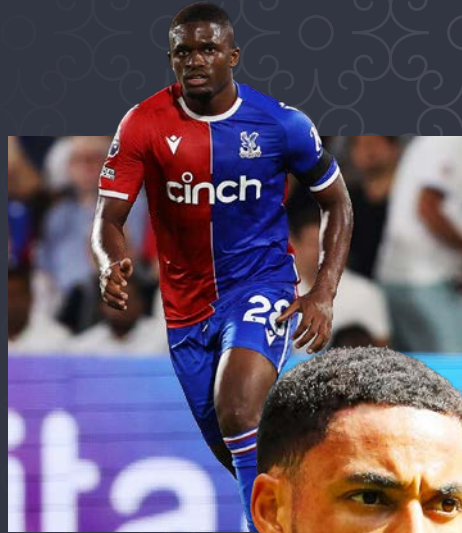
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