



RAMADAN & FOOTBALL

WHAT IS RAMADAN?

Ramadan is the ninth month in the Islamic calendar and lasts for one lunar month (which is a maximum of 29 or 30 days). The start and end of each month within the Islamic lunar calendar are determined by a sighting of the moon. Each year the month of Ramadan starts around 11 days earlier in terms of comparison with the Gregorian calendar year.

This is a blessed month of fasting and abstaining from things considered to be impure for the mind and body. Those partaking (adult Muslims and those who have reached puberty) in Ramadan abstain from food, drink and to maintain positive thoughts and manners between the hours of sunrise (Fajr) and sunset (Maghrib), allowing them instead to focus on prayer and connecting with Allah (God). A day of fasting starts with a meal before dawn called Suhoor and ends with a meal to break fast at sunset called Iftar.

For Muslims, Ramadan is one of the most important and spiritual times of the year, therefore they may change their routine, activities and work/life balance during 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.

The act of fasting allows the individual to understand the pain and suffering of millions around the world who live in poverty and famine, leaving the participant feeling more grounded and grateful for all that Allah (God) has given them.

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 it up later in the year or donate a set amount of money towards providing meals for those experiencing poverty. This is known as Fidya, which is a charitable form of compensation for missed fasts. Individuals can consult with their local Imam (a person with an Islamic leadership position, such as a leader of a Mosque) for clarity on this.

During the holy month of Ramadan, it is believed that Allah (God) revealed the first verses of the Qur'an, (Holy Book of Islam), to the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon Him), on a night known as "The Night of Power".

At the end of Ramadan, there is a final act of celebration following a month of fasting known as, Eid al-Fitr (Festival of the Breaking the Fast).



WHEN WILL RAMADAN BEGIN AND END THIS YEAR?

Ramadan 2025 in the United Kingdom is expected to begin in the evening of **SATURDAY 1ST MARCH** and end in the evening of **SUNDAY 30TH MARCH**

Ramadan will conclude with Eid al-Fitr (roughly translated to 'Festival of Breaking Fast') which is expected to be **SUNDAY 30TH MARCH 2025**



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 a 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, the 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 and 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 so you are then in a good position to accommodate any changes needed.

STANDARD GREETING:

"Ramadan Kareem!"

This translates to "have a generous Ramadan" The appropriate response to Ramadan Kareem is "Allahu Akram" which means "God is much more generous"

Suggested Tweet or Message:

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



HOW TO SUPPORT THOSE OBSERVING RAMADAN

- Acknowledge those who will be observing Ramadan
- Wish Muslims well by saying “Ramadan Mubarak” (“have a blessed Ramadan”)
- Try not to eat or drink in front of a person that is fasting (if possible)
- Consider the challenges that come with fasting; e.g. Muslim players may still be more prone to dehydration and fatigue even if a session or match is outside of fast times, therefore 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 it’s new to you!



If you would like to discuss anything regarding Ramadan & Football
or have a case study you would like to share - Get in touch!

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