

Please see below the most recent statement from WDCU regarding a safe return to local cricket. Could you please ensure that your committee members are made aware of it. Also please ensure that all officials and members who are working on your potential fixtures for later in the season are made aware of this too.

Due to some direct queries received and some public conjecture, the WDCU would like to clarify some of the reasons why it has decided not to organise any competitions for season 2020 in light of the Covid-19 pandemic and, instead, encourage clubs who want to organise fixtures, to do so on the basis of local friendlies once arrangements for matches have been confirmed.

The unprecedented situation has given rise to a number of difficulties in organising and playing cricket and the WDCU has been in regular contact with Cricket Scotland and other regional associations since March. We have made decisions based on these discussions, and the subsequent communications from Cricket Scotland who have also been liaising with both sportscotland and the Scottish Government. Their advice has been paramount in arriving at our decisions.

The decision not to organise any competitive fixtures this year for WDCU clubs is fully supported by Cricket Scotland and is broadly in line with decisions of all other regional associations. The proposed start date of 1st August is still to be confirmed by Cricket Scotland and they have also yet to confirm the protocols for match play, as well as any additional regulations which might apply.

The WDCU wants their clubs and players to play as much cricket as they can, as safely as possible. However, there is a large variance in the ability of our member clubs to participate safely and within the protocols referred to above. These may involve significant logistical arrangements, time and cost for our clubs. There are likely to be a number of clubs and players who will not be able or willing, for many reasons, to adhere to all of these requirements and safely take part in matches. In addition, some clubs may have ground availability issues in both August and September. The WDCU did not want to put any undue pressure on any club or player to play by organising competitions. This position has been broadly adopted by the other regional associations and supported by Cricket Scotland.

The WDCU covers a geographically diverse area. We do not want to impose undue travel on clubs/players in order to compete in a mandated competition. Due to current social distancing protocols, this would, almost certainly, require significantly more vehicles and trips than normal. The WDCU also feels a responsibility to the wider public to reduce, as much as possible, any risk of potential spread of the virus through undue travel to take part in our competitions.

Given all of the above, and the understandable desire from clubs for decisions to be made as early as possible to allow plans to be made, it was agreed by Cricket Scotland and all regional associations that the best approach would be for matches to be arranged by clubs themselves as friendlies and on a local basis. It would allow those clubs and players who are keen to play to do so, within the regulations, and to arrange formats and teams that suit, while also allowing those that would rather not play, to avoid it. As we gain clarity on the match play regulations and start date, the WDCU will be happy to facilitate clubs to play as much cricket as possible, including but not limited to; assisting clubs requiring fixtures to access other club contacts and assisting those with ground and facility issues to find suitable alternatives. **THERE IS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR CLUBS TO OFFER COMPASSIONATE SUPPORT TO OTHERS MORE ADVERSELY AFFECTED THAN THEMSELVES.**

We have followed the lead of our governing body and have the safety of all our clubs, players, officials and the wider public as the absolute priority. The impact of the lack of cricket activity and match play on our clubs is acutely understood as all members of our committees have involvement at their own clubs and the hardship and distress felt by many is also felt by us. Since lockdown restrictions have been imposed the WDCU has attempted to proactively assist clubs in what are unprecedented times, including by reimbursing annual subscriptions, making hardship support payments to all clubs, offering loan repayment deferrals, agreeing to cancel ball orders and refunding ball order payments, and raising awareness of other funding support that became available and that many clubs have successfully been in receipt of.

Decisions like this are not easy to make, nor are they ever universally popular.

As always, the decisions made are, in the judgement of those involved in WDCU, in the best interests of all.

**Guidance on 'Local' Cricket:**

The WDCU would propose the following as guidance as to what it considers local to mean.

- Area Groups (such as exist for WDJCU purposes) or the McCulloch Cup 'areas' would be a starting point. However, there would be pragmatic leeway around these as some clubs may be closer to clubs in an adjoining area than some in their own area
- Travelling time as well as distance should be considered, as well as the needs of the more geographically distant clubs.
- Clubs would not be restricted to playing within the WDCU area if it is easier for them not to - Stirling or Stenhousemuir may find it easier to play clubs in the west of the ESCA region, whilst the Dumfries and Galloway clubs could also do so in Cumbria.
- As an indication of hypothetical examples, Kilmarnock travelling to East Kilbride, or Poloc to Uddingston would both reasonably be considered 'local' even though these are in different 'area groups'. Ayr to Stirling, or Greenock to Dumfries would not be considered as local.

*Iain Kennedy*  
WDCU Administrator