

Season 2021 and Coronavirus

Cricket Scotland is very aware that everyone involved in the game in Scotland is keen to try and understand the prospects for cricket in 2021. Clearly, the evolution of the virus (and its variants) is still unpredictable, and the current lockdown demonstrates the continuing need for great care.

Last year, cricket in Scotland played its part in the fight against the virus and we will continue to work very closely with sportscotland and the Scottish Government, including in assessing how and when the 2021 cricket season can commence. The roll-out of the vaccines gives us all hope that we will be able to play more cricket this year than was possible last year but that cannot, of course, be guaranteed.

A first meeting was held last week between the Chairs of the five Regional Associations and the Eastern Premier League (EPL), representatives from the Cricket Scotland Match Officials Association (CSMOA) and Cricket Scotland to assess how we can maximise the season.

The consensus reached was that, in light of the uncertainties, we would have to be flexible in all our planning. Hopefully a full season might be possible, but it could well be necessary to plan for alternative programmes taking into account potential disruption to fixtures, for example, in the event of restrictions on travel or ground availability. In addition, there might be a need for different approaches in different parts of the country, depending on local restrictions and wishes.

The current assumption is that the lockdown will hopefully be sufficiently relaxed to allow the opening of the season in April; if that assumption proves incorrect then the start would clearly have to be put back.

Possible issues that will be considered over the next month or so include: -

- The possibility of any pre-season **indoor** practice
- The start of leagues may need to be delayed. However, that might be offset in some areas where it could be possible to extend the cricket season well into September.
- In the event of restrictions on car sharing and/or travel, clubs may be limited to playing localised fixtures at least in the early part of the season as at the end of last season.
- If there are significant reductions in league seasons, Regional Associations may consider dispensing with promotion and relegation this year.
- The availability of facilities, particularly those provided by local authorities.

Cricket Scotland will be meeting with **sportscotland** in the next week or so to discuss the plans for the season and the timescales involved for decision making. Following that there will be another meeting with the Regional Associations, CSMOA and EPL in the first half of February and another communication will be issued by Cricket Scotland in mid-February.

Gus Mackay

Chief Executive, Cricket Scotland