



# Midland Football League

## Newsletter

25<sup>th</sup> February 2021

### League News

#### **Curtailement of the 2020/21 Season**

An update on Steps 3-6 of the NLS The FA's Alliance and Leagues Committees have now considered the large amount of data and information submitted by clubs across the National League System (NLS) Steps 3-6 as part of a survey to gather views on the continuation or conclusion of the 2020-21 league season, in addition to the information set out in the Government's roadmap this week. Submissions were made by 99.1% of clubs at Steps 3 and 4, and 95.8% of clubs at Steps 5 and 6. We would like to thank the clubs for submitting their views and the time taken in providing responses during what we appreciate is an incredibly challenging period for everyone. The results of the survey showed that over 76% of all clubs across Steps 3-6 indicated a preference to curtail the 2020-21 league season if it could not be restarted with limited spectator numbers and hospitality before 1 April 2021. During this process, taking into account views of clubs and leagues it was decided that extending the 2020-21 league season beyond the end of May 2021 would not be a viable option. This was due to various considerations, including the financial implications for many clubs, player contracts and the extent of the fixture scheduling issues caused by the national lockdown and various postponements which had resulted in there being 81% of matches left to complete for Steps 3 and 4, and 75% at Steps 5 and 6. Taking into account the survey results and the ongoing impact of Covid-19, which continues to adversely affect incomes for clubs due to restrictions on both spectators and hospitality, The FA's Alliance and Leagues Committees have reached a consensus that subject to the approval of FA Council, the 2020-21 league season for Steps 3-6 of the NLS should be curtailed with immediate effect, with no further league matches taking place this season. The Committees will now present their collective recommendations to The FA Council for ratification. It has also been decided that subject to FA Council's decision regarding the curtailment of the season at Steps 3 to 6, both committees will revisit discussions around a potential restructure at Steps 4-6 of the NLS, which was previously agreed and has been on hold since the 2019-20 season. A further update on this will be provided in due course.

Given the current situation and taking into account the Government 'roadmap', the MFL Board have made the decision that all other divisions will be curtailed with immediate effect. They are aware that a number of clubs below Step 6 also rely on spectators and secondary spend and would be unable to continue this season with no income being realised.

Once we receive any information regarding next season, we will communicate it as soon as possible.

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#### **Buildbase FA Vase**

The FA have announced their intention to continue with this season's FA Vase. Three MFL Clubs -Long Eaton United, Stourport Swifts and Walsall Wood remain in the competition. Word from the FA is to be ready to play those games in early April.

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## **Press Officer**

With the season over for all but three MFL Clubs, I would like to thank all clubs for their hospitality and co-operation over not only this season, but the previous five seasons. A special thank you to all the club secretaries who perform a sterling job, often under extreme circumstances, with limited appreciation.

My time as the MFL Press Officer is drawing to a close and I will be leaving when the season is completed, whenever that is deemed to be. After more years than I care to remember, I am hanging up my reporter's notebook and microphone, and will be attending the occasional game in the future as a supporter. I am glad to have played a small part in raising the profile of the Midland Football League over the past six seasons despite the many obstacles put in the way of football at our level. Thanks to everyone that has helped me over the past six seasons – league officials, club officials, managers, players, supporters, fellow scribes. I wish you all good luck for whatever the future may hold.

Gary Hazlehurst