

# RAMADAN & FOOTBALL FACTSHEET 2019



**FOR ALL**

# EVERY YEAR, DURING THE HOLY MONTH OF RAMADAN, MUSLIMS AROUND THE WORLD FAST DURING THIS HOLY MONTH

THIS FACTSHEET HOPES TO EXPLAIN WHAT RAMADAN AND FASTING MEAN TO FOOTBALL AND THE MANY MUSLIMS WHO ARE INVOLVED IN THE GAME

## WHAT IS RAMADAN?

Ramadan is observed by Muslims worldwide as a month of fasting to commemorate the first revelation of the Quran to the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) according to Islamic belief. Fasting during the holy month is one of the five pillars of Islam, which also include prayer and charity. Ramadan lasts for one lunar month which is a maximum of 29 or 30 days and its start and ending dates are determined by the sighting of the moon. This means it comes around 11 days earlier each year and so starts on a different date each year.

Ramadan is the most important and spiritual time of year for Muslims, people will change their routine, activities and work life balance for this period. Whilst fasting is a large practical part of it, people's mindsets and the way they treat other people may vary significantly due to their focus on their faith at this most holy of times.

During daylight hours adult Muslims and those who have reached puberty are required to abstain from eating, drinking and smoking. 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 specific days fast, they may need to make up for this later on by either fasting for a day after Ramadan or giving a meal to someone more needy or donating the value of that meal to charity.

## WHAT FOOTBALL RULES APPLY TO RAMADAN?

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 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.

### WHEN WILL RAMADAN BEGIN AND END THIS YEAR?

Ramadan is expected to begin this year on 5 May and end on 4 June (both dates depending on the sight of the moon).

### RAMADAN AND YOUTH FOOTBALL

There is no set age when Muslims start fasting, it is generally post-puberty which 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 best practice for leagues would be to ask any predominantly Muslim teams about their plans to fast and play.



*“Football crosses so many boundaries – cultural, social and economic. I’m a Syrian refugee who fled to the UK in 2015. Football has helped England feel like home, whether playing with my mates or following the Three Lions. Last year, I cheered on England against Nigeria during Ramadan. It was an exciting event to celebrate during the Holy Month, especially since England won!”*

**Ahmad Al-Rashid**

International Organization for Migration (IOM)  
The UN Migration Agency

## FASTING

Fasting combined with extra prayers and a lack of sleep can leave people feeling a little more tired and dehydrated than normal. Many Muslims will find it harder to play football and may not want to take part.

Muslims who are fasting do not expect you to stop eating or drinking, although it would be polite not to eat, drink or smoke in front of them. They may also enjoy sitting together and sharing food when they break their fast (Iftar) and will welcome non-Muslims to join in. To fast with Muslim friends, even for part of the day, is a good way of enhancing your understanding.

*“Faith and football are two essential parts of who I am. The flexibility that I’ve been shown in this regard has been vital in my journey in football. Taking note of Ramadan and all other faith events will help make football a game for everyone”*

### Robina Shah MBE

High Sheriff of Manchester  
Manchester FA IAB Chair & Board Director  
FA Disability Committee & Womens Board

## PRAYING

Muslims may practice their faith more during Ramadan and may wish to offer prayers during the day. This will normally be two to three times a day (during working hours) for a few minutes a time for which they will require a small private area. Muslims may also attend extra prayers, known as ‘Tarawih’, during the night.

## ACKNOWLEDGING THOSE OBSERVING RAMADAN

As with any religion, showing your Muslim friends that you know it is Ramadan is likely to be appreciated. Posting an acknowledgement on your website, Instagram or Twitter or simply a notice in your clubhouse is a good idea.



## WHAT HAPPENS WHEN RAMADAN ENDS?

The end of Ramadan is marked by the festival of **Eid** for which Muslims may take time off. The day Eid falls on will depend on the sighting of the moon therefore flexibility is necessary. The appropriate way to express best wishes to a Muslim at Eid is to say **“Eid Mubarak”**.

## SUGGESTED TWEET OR WEBSITE MESSAGE AT THE BEGINNING OF RAMADAN

**“Ramadan Mubarak to all our Muslim Brothers and Sisters. Best wishes to you for this the holy month of Ramadan.”**

*“Throughout my career I have always tried to embrace football culture without compromising my beliefs. Faith can be equally balanced alongside a career in the game. Whilst misconceptions still remain, there has been significant progress recently with an influx of Muslim footballers plying their trade in the Premier League.”*

### Zesh Rehman

Former QPR, Bradford and Fulham player  
Pro License Holder  
Pakistani International  
First British Muslim to play in the Premier League

## GUIDANCE AROUND FIXTURES

It is always important to take note of any important religious dates when planning fixtures. Ideally, if a team has a significant number of Muslim players it is best practice to try and avoid arranging fixtures during Ramadan.

Annually The FA produces a calendar of religious dates in order to support the game, this guidance has been written to provide you with the most significant dates for religious observance together with some information on them. Click here to see the current **calendar**.

