



RAMADAN AWARENESS IN FOOTBALL

PAWB
EVERYONE



ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Ramadan is a significant month for Muslims worldwide, during which they observe fasting from dawn until sunset as a means of spiritual reflection, self-discipline, and devotion to God.

Taking proactive steps to support Muslim players and staff observing Ramadan can help to create an environment that promotes inclusivity, respect, and well-being. Through awareness, flexibility, and addressing specific needs, football Clubs, league and match officials can ensure that everyone feels valued and empowered to perform at their best, both on and off the field, during this sacred time.

The purpose of this guide is to enhance your understanding of Ramadan while providing some practical guidelines to enable you to establish a supportive environment for those observing this sacred month.





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WHAT IS RAMADAN?

The Islamic year is made up of 12 months, of which Ramadan is the 9th month of the Islamic lunar calendar, during which adult Muslims and those who have reached puberty abstain from food, drink, smoking, and other physical needs during daylight hours. The fast begins at dawn with a pre-fast meal known as Suhoor and is broken at sunset with Iftar, the evening meal. The fast is not merely refraining from food and drink; it also involves increased prayer, Quranic recitation, and acts of charity.

Ramadan is observed by Muslims worldwide as a month of fasting to commemorate the first revelation of the Quran to the Prophet Muhammad according to Islamic belief.

Ramadan is the most important and spiritual time of year for many Muslims who may well change their routine, activities and work-life balance for this period.

The obligation of fasting does not apply to those who are physically and mentally unwell, travelling, women/girls during their menstrual period and those who are breastfeeding or pregnant. If any individual has not been able to observe a specific day's fast, they may need to make up for this later on by either fasting for a day after Ramadan, giving a meal to someone in need or donating the value of that meal to charity.

Muslims are not the only people who fast, almost all major religions have periods of fasting within the practice of their faith

WHEN IS RAMADAN?

The Islamic calendar is based on the lunar cycle and follows the phases of the moon. As a result, the start date of the Holy month of Ramadan is predicted and therefore subject to change. The date of Ramadan is different from year to year and also starts earlier each year by approximately 10 days.

New months begin with the first crescent of a new moon, and the day begins after sunset. This makes the Islamic calendar shorter than the Gregorian calendar by 10 to 11 days, so Islamic months travel throughout the seasons.

Ramadan lasts for one lunar month which is a maximum of 29 or 30 days and its start and end dates are determined by the sighting of the moon.

You can find out when Ramadan takes place this year by using the **FAW's Diversity Calendar**.

FASTING

Fasting during this holy month is one of the five pillars of Islam, which also include prayer, charity, profession of faith & pilgrimage. During this time Muslims will fast from dawn until sunset.

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 usually affect Muslim participation in youth football during Ramadan, especially in the older age groups.

Fasting poses a challenge to the body, but can have the following benefits:

- Weight loss.
- Improved blood sugar control.
- Improved cholesterol levels.
- Reduced inflammation within the body, leading to reduced risk factors for diabetes and cardiovascular disease.
- On a personal level, it teaches control and self-restraint.

Many Muslims will find it harder to play football due to fasting in addition to extra prayers and a lack of sleep. This can leave people feeling a little more tired and dehydrated than normal. Muslims who are fasting do not expect others to stop eating or drinking, although it would be polite not to eat or drink 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.

PRAYER

Muslims may practice their faith more during Ramadan and Muslims offer 5 daily prayers throughout a day at set times. Prayers usually last around 10 minutes. Muslims during the month of Ramadan also perform other prayers called Taraweeh which are performed at the very latter part of the night combined with Isha (the last) of the 5 daily prayers.

Daily prayers.

- Fajr – Early Morning prayer
- Dohr – Mid-afternoon prayer
- Asr – Late afternoon prayer
- Margrib – Sunset prayer
- Isha – Late evening prayer

GREETINGS

The appropriate way to express best wishes to the Muslim community during Ramadan is with the traditional saying, "Ramadan Mubarak" or "Have a (happy) blessed Ramadan."

To mark Eid, at the end of the month, the saying is "Eid Mubarak."

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN RAMADAN ENDS?

The official end of Ramadan is marked by Eid ul-Fitr, also known as the 'Festival of Breaking the Fast'. In Arabic, Eid means "festival" and the day on which Eid falls will depend on the sighting of the moon therefore flexibility is necessary.

Traditionally, Muslims will take time off for Eid, in the same way Christians would for Easter.

The end of fasting may be celebrated worldwide but on different days. In some countries, Ramadan ends when you can see a new crescent moon with the naked eye. Others use exact astronomical calculations.

Different time zones also play a part depending on where Eid is celebrated around the world.



GUIDELINES FOR PROVIDING SUPPORT DURING RAMADAN



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As with any religion, showing support to the Muslim community during Ramadan is likely to be appreciated. The following information provides guidance for Clubs, Coaches, league and match officials to consider implementing during this period.



GUIDANCE FOR CLUBS

To support Muslim players and staff during the month of Ramadan consider implementing actions in the following areas:

AWARENESS AND EDUCATION:

- Host Ramadan awareness workshops and activities - Educate all team members, coaching staff, and management about the significance of Ramadan and its implications for individuals.
- Raise awareness about the importance of respecting the religious practices and cultural sensitivities of Muslim players and staff.
- Invite Muslim players and staff to share their understanding and experiences of Ramadan (if comfortable doing so).
- Arrange a 'fast day' alongside Muslim players and staff - even if this is for part of the day it is a good way of enhancing an understanding of the practice of fasting.

CREATING A SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT:

- Be aware of the dates of Ramadan and plan training sessions and meetings accordingly. (see [FAW Diversity Calendar](#))
- Open communication – encourage those observing Ramadan to be open about their religious observance.
- Collaborate with Muslim players and staff to discuss ways to support them during this time. Provide channels for individuals to seek assistance or adjustments as needed.
- Provide a small, clean and private area for praying.
- Foster a supportive team culture where Muslim players and staff feel comfortable discussing their needs and concerns related to Ramadan.

ACCOMMODATING SCHEDULES:

- Coordinate with football authorities and league organisers to minimize scheduling conflicts that may disproportionately affect fasting players, advocating for considerations such as avoiding midday matches or providing sufficient time between matches for rest and recovery.
- Many Muslims will find it harder to play football or concentrate on their work. Be flexible with working arrangements and time off for Ramadan. Fasting will likely have an impact on energy levels, coupled with longer nights spent in community and worship. Staff can be supported with more frequent rest breaks and more flexible working hours, particularly around prayer and fasting times.
- Understanding that some Muslims will attend late evening prayers and attend or perform early morning prayers will result in fatigue and a change of their usual patterns. Where possible Clubs can change training times and meetings to give some extra time for rest, especially in the mornings.
- Muslims won't know the exact date upon which Eid will fall (as this depends on the sighting of the new moon). This means that they may need to request time off at relatively short notice and others may request a range of 2-3 days off to make sure they will be off work at the right time.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

- Engage with local Muslim communities to demonstrate solidarity and support during Ramadan. Consider organising events or initiatives involving the Club's fans and the wider community.
- Ramadan is a time when Muslims will give extra to Charity either financially or through volunteering. This is something Clubs should be aware of if they would like to raise money for specific communities or organisations linked to the Club's initiatives, in conjunction with players.



GUIDANCE FOR COACHES

To support Muslim players during the month of Ramadan consider implementing actions in the following areas:

FLEXIBILITY IN TRAINING SCHEDULES:

- Consider adjusting training schedules and team meetings to accommodate fasting players. Early morning or late evening sessions (after sunset) may be preferable to avoid training during peak fasting hours. If training is taking place in the evenings allow time for players to iftar (to break fast and pray).
- Allow for flexibility in training intensity and duration to account for the potential effects of fasting on energy levels and physical performance.

NUTRITIONAL GUIDANCE:

- Collaborate with nutritionists and dieticians to provide tailored dietary advice and meal plans for Muslim players during Ramadan.
- Emphasise the importance of balanced nutrition during Suhoor and Iftar to support energy levels, hydration, and recovery.

REST AND RECOVERY:

- Recognise the potential impact of fasting on sleep patterns and fatigue levels. Encourage adequate rest and prioritise recovery strategies.
- Consider incorporating relaxation techniques and mindfulness practices into training sessions to support mental well-being during Ramadan.

CULTURAL SENSITIVITY:

- Be mindful of cultural customs and traditions associated with Ramadan, such as greetings of "Ramadan Kareem" or "Ramadan Mubarak."
- Foster an inclusive environment by acknowledging and celebrating religious diversity amongst players and coaches.



GUIDANCE FOR MATCH OFFICIALS

To support Muslim players during matches within the month of Ramadan consider implementing actions in the following areas:

IDENTIFYING MUSLIM PLAYERS AND BREAKING FAST:

Muslims during Ramadan will abstain from eating or drinking during daylight hours and players will need to break their fast once the sun has set which can often occur during some late afternoon or evening matches.

Match officials are encouraged ahead of the kick-off to try and identify any players who may need to break their fast during the game and agree on an estimated time for this to happen in conjunction with the coaching staff of both teams. This should take place during a natural pause in play to enable players to break their fast by taking on liquids, energy gels or supplements.

GUIDANCE FOR LEAGUES

To support Clubs with Muslim players during the month of Ramadan consider implementing actions in the following areas:

FIXTURE SCHEDULING:

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. Ordinarily, the best practice for leagues would be to ask any predominantly Muslim teams about their plans to fast and play.

Minimise scheduling conflicts that may disproportionately affect fasting players and take into account considerations such as avoiding midday matches or providing sufficient time between matches for rest and recovery.

FURTHER SUPPORT

If you have any questions regarding this guidance
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