



# Tebas wants La Liga 2020-21 to start on September 12 and warns of €700m losses due to coronavirus

Goal - La Liga president Javier Tebas wants the 2020-21 season to start on September 12 and has warned clubs face €700 million (£630m/\$780m) collective losses due to the disruption caused by coronavirus this year. Spain's top flight was suspended in March due to the pandemic but there are plans in place to resume the season on June 11 with the derby between Sevilla and Real Betis. Tebas says organisers have been working hard behind the scenes to make restarting the season practical, although many of the logistical problems will depend on how the country's regional governments are easing lockdown measures. Restrictions are gradually being lifted across Spanish territories, with several areas now having moved from Phase One to Phase Two, which allows people greater freedom to travel and exercise in small groups away from their homes. Madrid and parts of Catalonia, including Barcelona, are still in Phase One, however.

«We'll start, God willing, on June 11,» Tebas told Marca. «Let's hope Madrid and Barcelona go to Phase Two.

«There are more than 130 people at La Liga working so that everything can be done, in a new way: travelling, organisation, everything.

«We're prepared and the important thing will be the day we finish the competition. The next will start on September 12.» Clubs including Barcelona and Atletico Madrid have had to agree to wage reductions or deferrals due to the loss of in-

come caused by matches being suspended and the prospect of the rest of the season being played behind closed doors.

Tebas hopes to see struggling clubs given sufficient support given the significant losses they are due to make.

«It's important that the disaster of the pandemic does not generate an economic disaster afterwards,» he said. «This is a study to see who believes in the sports industry and who doesn't. It will be important to see who our allies are.

«Returning does not mean we are not going to lose millions. Our clubs will lose at least €700m and that will have to be recovered. In that push, it will be good to see who has believed in the industry from the start.»

Tebas says La Liga is also testing methods of adding virtual crowd noise to empty grounds, to give television viewers the option of watching games with audible chants in the background.

Similar sound effects have been used in recent Bundesliga and K League 1 matches, with viewers able to turn the noise on or off via an app.

«Tonight, we will have tests so that, at an audiovisual level, the viewer can choose two images: the real one, and the one with the fans and virtual sound,» said Tebas. «In the Bundesliga, they've chosen virtual sound with great success and we're working on providing that option. We want to give the fans the alternatives: silence, or virtual stands.»



## Police want any match where Liverpool can win title played at neutral venue

The Guardian - Police have set out the Premier League matches they would like to be played at neutral venues, which would include any Liverpool game where the title could be won.

The matches which have been requested to take place at neutral grounds are Manchester City v Liverpool, Manchester City v Newcastle, Manchester United v Sheffield United, Newcastle v Liverpool and Everton v Liverpool. The police statement adds that “the game in which Liverpool could secure the league title” should also be moved but this may end up needing to be more than one match if the Jürgen Klopp's side do not clinch it at the first attempt.

Deputy chief constable Mark Roberts of South Yorkshire Police, the UK's football policing lead, said in a statement: “Our discussions with the Premier League throughout this process have been positive, with a shared focus on the priority of public health. As such we have reached a consensus that balances the needs of football, while also minimising the demand on policing.

“The majority of remaining matches will be played at home and away as scheduled, with a small number of fixtures taking place at neutral venues, which, contrary to some reports, have yet to be

agreed. The views and agreement of forces which host Premier League clubs have been sought and where there were concerns, the Premier League has been supportive in providing flexibility in arranging alternative venues where requested.

“This plan will be kept continually under review to ensure public health and safety and a key part of this is for supporters to continue to respect the social-distancing guidelines and not to attend or gather outside the stadiums.”

Newcastle, in 13th, are the lowest-ranked side to be involved in a match at a neutral venue as things stand. There had been complaints from some clubs towards the bottom of the table, including Brighton, about the impact of playing at neutral venues on sporting integrity.

Clubs will hold further discussions on whether to proceed with the season on this basis when they meet again on 4 June. The police statement did not mention any matches in the English Football League.

Championship clubs are back in training with a view to restarting next month and an EFL spokesperson said: “It remains our intention to play all remaining league matches at clubs' home grounds as long as they comply with the relevant government guidance.



## Lewandowski and Bayern wants goal in Düsseldorf clash

Bundesliga.com - Bayern Munich striker Robert Lewandowski will be out to add Fortuna Düsseldorf to his long list of conquests at the Allianz Arena on Saturday.

The Bundesliga's record non-German marksman, Lewandowski has put away an eye-watering 229 goals in 316 Bundesliga appearances down the years. He's scored against 17 of the German top tiers 18 current clubs - including one against current employers Bayern in his Borussia Dortmund days - but needs Düsseldorf to complete the set. It's a curious sub-plot to a fixture the record champions are widely expected to win, not least after taking down second-placed BVB in midweek. Joshua Kimmich scored the decisive goal - a sublime one at that - as Hansi Flick's side opened up a seven-point lead at the summit with six rounds of fixtures remaining. Bayern have some potential banana skins to come - they face top-four rivals Bayer Leverkusen and Borussia Mönchengladbach in the weeks ahead (the only teams to defeat Flick's men this term) - but it would take an uncharacteristic nose dive to halt the Bavarian giants' charge to an unprecedented eighth successive league title. Thiago joins Philippe Coutinho and Corentin Tolisso on the sidelines. Indeed, Flick may well stick with the same team that did the

business in Dortmund.

Fortuna famously held Bayern to a 3-3 draw in Munich last season, but it's some 30 years since they last recorded a Bundesliga win over the record champions. Snapping the streak would be some feat, especially in the context of Bayern's 14-game unbeaten league run and Die Flingeraner's fight against relegation. The appointment of Uwe Rösler as coach is beginning to deliver results, with Düsseldorf claiming points in each of their last six and moving to within one of outright safety on the back of Wednesday's come-from-behind win over Schalke.

Kenan Karaman and Rouwen Hennings grabbed the quick-fire goals - the former making it five in as many games, the latter ending a 10-match lean spell - as Fortuna climbed five points above the automatic drop zone. The same pairing can be expected to line-up once again in the Bavarian capital, but Lazio loanee Valon Berisha could lose his place in midfield to Adam Bodzek. US international Alfredo Morales is also in line for a recall, in which case Marcel Sobottka would likely be the man to make away. Manchester City-owned compatriot Zack Steffen - Fortuna's first-choice goalkeeper prior to injury - remains on the sidelines.