



MAINLAND FOOTBALL POSTPONEMENT PROTOCOLS SEASON 2023

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1 BACKGROUND AND KEY CONTACTS

This document sets out the protocols that Mainland Football, Clubs and teams will adopt for the 2023 season. These protocols form part of the Competition Regulations and are designed to protect the welfare of those involved in competitions within the MF region.

Information contained within these protocols are subject to change in writing to Participants at the discretion of MF in response to changes to public health advice or decisions made by Government. In the event of any inconsistency between the relevant public health orders and directions in each jurisdiction and these Protocols, the higher level of direction must be followed.

Key Contacts:

MF COMPETITIONS MANAGER: Josh McGirr (josh@mff.nz)

MF COMPETITIONS ASSISTANT: Ben Loader (ben@mff.nz)

2 COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH RESPONSE

New Zealand currently operates under the Covid-19 Public Health Response Order. As with the previous COVID-19 Protection Framework in place we are subject to a range of public health measures to allow football to take place:

- If you test positive, self isolate for seven days.
- Household or close contacts are no longer required to self-isolate.
- Surfaces and equipment should be regularly cleaned and disinfected.
- Good personal hygiene practices should be followed. Wash and dry your hands for at least 20 seconds, or use hand sanitiser, before and after activities. Cough into your elbow and don't touch your face.
- Read more at [COVID19.govt.nz](https://www.covid19.govt.nz).

3 TEAM AND MATCH ENVIRONMENT PROTOCOLS

The Team Environment is defined as any official club activity attended by persons (players, team officials, club officials), such as trainings or team meetings. The Match Environment includes all those involved in matchday including: players, team officials, match officials, broadcast/streaming personnel, competition staff, ground staff, club officials, medical support, integrity partners and others indicated by MF from time to time. Within the Team and Match Environment the below shall apply;

- **Anyone unwell should stay away from the team environment and should be tested**, as appropriate. This player or team member must self-isolate for seven days if they have tested positive. Close or household contacts are no longer required to self-isolate, unless otherwise indicated in the COVID-19 Public Health Order.
- Anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19 must stay away from the team environment and self-isolate for seven days.
- There should be regular cleaning of your team facility and equipment. Consider leaving doors (wedged) open where possible to minimise touch points.
- Each Match Venue must follow all relevant Ministry of Health and/or Worksafe MF advice and protocols

4 POSITIVE CASES

If anyone within the Team Environment has symptoms consistent with COVID-19, or any unusual or unexplained symptoms, they should seek an immediate test and comply with the requirements and advice of public health officials.

Any individual within the Team Environment who returns a positive Covid-19 test **MUST**;

- Notify the relevant club contact immediately of the positive test; AND
- Remain in isolation for a period of 7 days or in accordance with the relevant Ministry of Health requirements.

If the individual who returns a positive Covid-19 test entered the Team Environment within 48 hours of the positive test OR within 48 hours of being symptomatic the club **should**;

- Notify all members who were within the Team Environment that there was a positive case and request all members monitor themselves for symptoms.

If the individual who returns a positive Covid-19 test played within a competition fixture within 48 hours of the positive test OR within 48 hours of being symptomatic the club **should**;

- Notify all members of their respective Team Environment who also played in the competition fixture that there was a positive case and request all members monitor themselves for symptoms.
- Notify the MF Competitions Manager who will notify the respective opposition and other relevant persons.

For the avoidance of doubt the personal details of individuals who are Covid-19 positive will be kept confidential to other parties outside of MF.

5 POSTPONEMENTS

MF may accept requests for postponement due to a large number of individuals being unable to participate in a match for the below reasons:

- Positive COVID-19 cases
- Regional Team Duties for Representative teams within the MF Federation for Football and Futsal.
- National Team Duties for Member Associations of OFC
- Participation in OFC/FIFA Competitions
- Force Majeure

At all times MF reserve the right to request evidence in order to approve any postponement or dispensation request or following any approved postponement or dispensation request.

Any team requesting postponement must meet the set minimum **threshold for postponement** determined as per the below. Any team who makes a request for postponement who fails to meet this threshold will be declined and will be required to play the fixture as scheduled.

A Start List is defined as *“the list of all starting and substitute Players selected from a Participant to compete in any match within the National Registration System”*.

For a Participant to reach the threshold for postponement, in order to be granted the postponement request, they must have;

1. 35% or more (rounded up to the nearest whole number) of their respective Start List from the previous two fixtures unavailable for the scheduled fixture for reasons outlined above.
 - a. For example, a team who has used 19 players across their previous two fixtures, due to play 3pm Saturday, would require at least 7 of these players to be isolating after 3pm Thursday to request postponement. A team who uses just 16 would need 6 of these players isolating to reach the threshold.
 - b. For the purposes of a team's first game in the competition MF will request an initial 16 squad, including 2 goalkeepers, prior to Match Week 1. This must be a named 16 who are currently not-isolating on the date of submission. For the purposes of a team's second game in the competition their Start List from their first game only will be used.

OR

2. Their first and second choice goalkeepers, based on their previous Start List, unavailable for the scheduled fixtures for reasons outlined above.
 - a. As above, MF will request a pre-named squad, including 2 goalkeepers, prior to Match Week 1 for the purposes of the team's first game in the competition.
 - b. Should a team not list a second goalkeeper each week during the competition, the second goalkeeper will be the last other goalkeeper listed on a Start List OR from the pre-named squad if only applicable.

Further, in lieu of postponement MF may approve a Start List dispensation that supersede the Regulations if the nominated Head Coach as listed under Club Licensing, be required to isolate (or for other reason approved by the MF Competitions Manager) and are unable to be present in the Technical Area during a fixture then the team may request dispensation to MF to allow for no consequence of being unable to fulfil the qualification requirements.

Any team who requests postponement or dispensation **MUST**;

- Email the MF Competitions Manager, formally requesting the postponement / dispensation.
- Explain the reason for postponement/dispensation, including the detail of how the threshold has been reached.
- Provide evidence, if possible, within the request.

Should MF **APPROVE** the request for postponement or dispensation they will;

- Confirm in writing to the team requesting postponement.
- Notify the respective opposition and Match Officials.

MF reserves the right to reject any postponement requests that may interfere with the integrity, completion, or operations of the competition.

6 RESCHEDULES

For the avoidance of doubt MF may experience a number of rescheduled fixtures throughout the season. Considering the significant geographical challenges, travel requirements, and timeframes to complete the season all Participants will need to be prepared to play mid-week.

The following protocols will apply to reschedules;

1. Where a postponement request is approved by MF, involving two teams from the same city, the MF Competitions Manager or respective Regional League Competitions Manager **will set the reschedule as early as possible** following the originally scheduled fixture. The fixture will be set for the respective nominated mid-week venue of the 'home' team, unless this is unavailable at which point the discretion on venue will be at the Competitions Manager.
 - a. Should the postponement be for a game already scheduled for mid-week (Tuesday-Thursday) the game will be set for 14 days following the originally scheduled fixture.
 - b. Should one of the teams already be playing mid-week during the period of reschedule, then the game will be played the subsequent Match Week.
 - c. Should both teams already be knocked out of any National Cups then the Competitions Manager may allow the match to be rescheduled for a scheduled 'cup weekend'.
 - d. Should both teams agree to an alternate date, time and venue set by the Competitions Manager, within 14 days of the originally scheduled fixture, the Competitions Manager may approve the alternate arrangement at their discretion.
2. Where a postponement request is approved by MF, involving two teams from different cities, the Competitions Manager will first discuss the matter with both teams with consideration to the below;
 - a. For scheduled games that involve flight travel;
 - i. If there are free weekends (i.e. cup weekends where teams have been knocked out OR long weekends not already used in the calendar) the game will be rescheduled during this slot.
 - ii. If there are no free weekends the Competitions Manager may look to reshuffle the draw to free up the teams at a weekend in the future to replay the game, with the existing games able to be played mid-week.
 - iii. If there are no free weekends, and the travel could be done via driving, the Competitions Manager may decide to schedule the game mid-week at a match venue of somewhat equal distance between the two clubs.
 - iv. At all times due consideration must be given to play the reschedule as soon as possible.
 - b. Should the scheduled game involve road travel;
 - i. If there are free weekends (i.e. cup weekends where teams have been knocked out OR long weekends not already used in the calendar) the game will be rescheduled during this slot.
 - ii. If there are no free weekends, and the travel could be via driving, the Competitions Manager may decide to schedule the game mid-week at a match venue of somewhat equal distance between the two clubs.
 - iii. At all times due consideration must be given to play the rescheduled fixture as soon as possible.

3. Notwithstanding the above within Clause 5 the Competitions Manager may allow, if possible without detriment to the completion of the competition, any rescheduled fixture to be delayed one further Match Week to avoid a situation where a team plays either two mid-week games in two weeks, or three mid-week games across three weeks.
4. If both relevant teams and the MF Competitions Manager agree, an affected fixture may be brought forward to avoid clashing with an international window or FIFA/OFC tournament due to the threshold of postponement being reached as per Article 6.
5. At all times MF reserve the right to decide on the date, time, and venue for any rescheduled fixture at their sole discretion. Any team who refuses or fails to play a rescheduled fixture will be deemed to have defaulted (3-0 loss).

7 MATCH OFFICIALS

Any Match Official who cannot fulfil an appointment due to isolation requirements must notify their respective Appointments Officer immediately. At all times should only a singular referee be available the fixture will continue.

Any Match Official who tests positive to Covid-19, within 48 hours of being involved in a competition fixture must also notify their respective Appointments Officer immediately.

8 COMPLIANCE AND PENALTIES

Any Participant who fails to comply with these protocols is subject to sanction, in particular, any Participant who falsifies or misrepresents information in respect of postponement or dispensation requests will be found to have **defaulted the fixture**, be liable for up to a \$1,000 fine and may be subject to further sanction by the MF Disciplinary Committee.

MF request that all Participants understand their specific duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act (HSWA) and remain compliant with the measures outlined in this document - in plain language summary:

- take reasonable care for own health and safety
- take reasonable care that nothing they do or fail to do will adversely affect the health and safety of others
- cooperate with all policy or procedure that has been notified to them concerning health and safety
- In a situation where a player may breach COVID-19 Health and Safety protocols, every effort needs to be made to follow a good process of talking with the individual, explaining the situation and the risk for themselves and others, asking them to meet their responsibilities, and defining what MF would consider to be a clear breach.
- However, if after talking to and pointing out what is required and going over the Participant responsibilities to themselves and others where appropriate in the process, ongoing non-compliance may result in a Participant being removed from the home or training environment because of the risks they pose to their own/others health and safety and the viability of the competition. Sanction would likely be a direction not to assemble for a period.

9 ADOPTION

Compliance with these Postponement Protocols are mandatory for all Participants. These Postponement Protocols are therefore adopted as of 29th March 2023.