



# Gianni Infantino ponders salary caps in post-coronavirus football

The guardian - The Fifa president, Gianni Infantino, has admitted salary caps may be necessary to re-structure football's finances in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic.

The suspension of games, the curtailment of leagues and the absence of paying spectators will affect the profitability of all but the biggest clubs and Infantino feels this could be a time for the game to step back and reflect. After inviting member associations to submit their views on possible ways forward Infantino says he was struck by the need for clearer and stricter financial regulations.

"I heard some interesting proposals on a wide range of topics," the president said. "From salary caps to transfer-fee caps or other taxation mechanisms, to the possible obligation of governing bodies to contribute to a reserve fund which can be of assistance in hours of need such as now. Fifa is already doing a lot of work in this area, even if we face some strong vested interests who fight against our plea for better governance. These measures, projects and ideas should be discussed at all levels.

"I know that this will spark intense debate, but debate is healthy and we should speak about it as we stand together in this difficult period."

Infantino also promised to look into the number of matches top players are asked to play each season and the harmonising of competitions between continents.

Since most club managers hold Fifa largely responsible for the excessive demands on their players, few will expect a streamlining of the season any time soon, though the financial difficulties presently facing clubs are real and whenever football returns to something like normal, calls for a fairer distribution of income will be hard to ignore.

Salary caps bring their own problems but with the likelihood of clubs going out of business their appeal is obvious. Tottenham have just taken out a £175m bank loan to help cope with loss of income through cancelled crowd events at their new stadium, but smaller clubs are not in such a fortunate position.

"The need for top club football to resume has understandably taken priority, but we must also consider national teams, women's football, lower-tier domestic leagues, youth and the grassroots game," Infantino said. "We have to show unity across all aspects of football."

Spurs are scheduled to play their first game back against Manchester United on 19 June and Project Restart had another boost on Saturday after zero positives were found from a total of 1,195 players and club staff tested on Thursday and Friday.

Ole Gunnar Solskjær has confirmed Marcus Rashford and Paul Pogba are fit and should be available to face Spurs. "Marcus and Paul are back and so are Eric Bailly and Scott McTominay," the United manager said.



## "It's annoying" - Flick unhappy Lewa and Muller will miss Gladbach clash

The two star players will miss the Bundesliga leaders' next match, much to the frustration of their manager.

Bayern Munich coach Hansi Flick has expressed his frustration after Robert Lewandowski and Thomas Muller earned yellow cards in the win over Bayer Leverkusen which will rule them out of their next Bundesliga match.

Despite falling behind early on, Bayern rallied and ultimately ran out comfortable 4-2 winners, with Kingsley Coman, Leon Goretzka, Serge Gnabry and Lewandowski on target.

For Lewandowski, his effort took him on to 44 for the season across all competitions, a personal best, while Muller claimed a pair of assists to move him to 20 for the 2019-20 Bundesliga campaign, tying Kevin De Bruyne's record. However, both of Bayern's key men were booked, meaning they will miss next weekend's visit of Borussia Monchengladbach. Although Bayern have a commanding lead at the summit, Flick did not hide his irritation at having the pair ruled out.

"It's annoying but we cannot change it and have to accept the situation," he said. "You are emotional on the pitch, but I spoke to the referee Manuel Grafe. He said that Lewandowski was

hitting the opponent and that's why he saw the yellow card. I didn't see it so I cannot really comment.

"Thomas was blocking the ball when they had free-kick, so the yellow card was okay. It is what it is. We accept it.

"We will have two other players. This is also good sometimes, but it's important that both can play 90 minutes against Eintracht Frankfurt [in the DFB-Pokal] on Wednesday. Then we try to prepare ourselves well for the game against Gladbach."

Goretzka was a standout performer once again and that was not lost on Flick, who is desperate for the Germany midfielder to remain injury-free.

"We are knocking on wood [hoping Goretzka remains fit] and hope he continues like that," Flick said. "Of course, how we fought back was also due to the intensive pressing - we were more aggressive and had good ball possessions. "Leon was directly involved in those moments and had a big influence on the first two goals. He showed exactly what you need as a team when you still have to find your way to the game. He did that great.

"Regarding his physical condition, he has a very strong role on the pitch and this helps us a lot."



## Ligue 1 could resume with play-offs before August 2, say UEFA

Ligue 1 could resume with play-offs before August 2 despite the fact the top-flight season has been voided, UEFA have said.

French prime minister Edouard Philippe announced the cancellation of all sporting events across the country on April 28, amid the ongoing fight against the coronavirus pandemic.

Football authorities subsequently voided the 2019-20 campaign, with final positions in both Ligue 1 and Ligue 2 decided on a points-per-game basis.

Paris Saint-Germain were crowned French champions for a third successive year, having already established a 12 point lead at the top of the table when the action was initially stopped in March.

Marseille and Rennes both earned a place in the Champions League after finishing second and third respectively, but seventh-placed Lyon missed out on European football completely for the first time since 1996.

The cancellation of proceedings also saw Amiens and Toulouse relegated, and Lyon have joined the two clubs in vowing to fight the final decision in the courts.

Lyon president Jean Michel Aulas has publicly voiced his intention to sue the French state in order to get the season restarted, and UEFA president Aleksander Ceferin has now responded by clearing the path for such a scenario.

Ceferin wrote in an official UEFA communication on

Friday: "We would first of all like to clarify that it is the competence of national associations to decide on the format of their domestic competitions, in particular by taking into account the circumstances and restrictive measures specific to the country.

"As mentioned by UEFA a few weeks ago, the French authorities' decision to cancel the season was taken relatively early.

"Nevertheless, and provided that the national associations are able to coordinate with the competent national authorities a potential restart of domestic competition, August 2, 2020, would be an appropriate date to end the domestic competitions."

A number of players and experts have criticised the decision to end the Ligue 1 season prematurely, with PSG winger Angel Di Maria the latest to insist that greater patience should have been shown.

An easing of lockdown measures allowed the German Bundesliga resumed on May 18, with the Premier League and La Liga set to follow suit in England and Spain later this month.

Di Maria doesn't understand why France didn't take the same approach, as he told L'Equipe: "Like many, I think we rushed to make such a decision. From what we can see, France is today one of the countries where the health situation is the most favourable, and yet everything has been totally stopped for good."