

Ian Mearns MP

Working for Gateshead
12 Regent Terrace, Gateshead, NE8 1LU



Mr Richard Masters
Chief Executive
The Premier League
Brunel Building
57 North Wharf Road
London
W2 1HQ

BY EMAIL

25th August 2020

Re: Premier League broadcast plans for 2020/21 season

Dear Mr Masters,

I'm writing today as both the Member of Parliament for Gateshead and as Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Football Supporters which operates in conjunction with the Football Supporters' Association.

Like many fans across the UK, I was extremely grateful with the pragmatic approach taken by the Premier League and UK broadcast partners to televise all matches as the game returned from the enforced break earlier in the summer. I was also delighted to see that they were an incredible success with the highest viewing figures in Premier League history.

While the Covid-19 restrictions have been partially lifted, we approach the beginning of a new season without any fans being permitted into grounds across the UK. Further, the proposals in their current form extend only as far as limited capacities of 17 – 33% at any given game to ensure social distancing can be maintained. Many clubs in the Premier League have a much higher proportion of season ticket holders than 33%, and we await the plans for how clubs propose to distribute tickets fairly for each match.

With social distancing looking set to stay for some time, and with the success of Project Restart earlier this year, I'm extremely disappointed to learn that the broadcasting arrangements seem set to return to normal for the coming season. This will mean that for many fans and season ticket holders, matches will take place involving their teams which

they cannot view or cannot attend because they have missed out in the ballot or have underlying medical conditions. Meanwhile many countries across the rest of the world will be showing all Premier League matches live. It would seem that the only countries where you would not be able to watch your team play every game for the coming season are North Korea, Saudi Arabia and the UK.

I would therefore urge you to listen to supporters, reconsider your position, and come back to fans with new proposals which provide regular match-going supporters with alternative ways to watch their team, including streams provided by their clubs to known season ticket holders and other fans committed to purchasing a ticket to attend the match, if they cannot return to stadiums.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ian Mearns', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ian Mearns MP