

RAMADAN GUIDANCE



WHAT IS RAMADAN?

The holiest month in the Muslim calendar, Ramadan is observed as a month of fasting, reflection, and community for many Muslims worldwide. Ramadan is the most important and spiritual time of year for many Muslims and those observing may change their routine, activities and work/life balance.

As a sport, we are proud to be Inclusive by Design and committed to supporting members of all faiths. This guide aims to help clubs, coaches, officials and players create respectful and understanding environments where sport and faith can be balanced effectively.

"Ramadan encourages Muslims to engender a sense of gratitude, self-discipline, and self-improvement, at both an individual and community level, which is encouraged throughout the year. Fasting encourages Muslims to feel an affinity with the poor across the world who have little or no food to eat. The breaking of fast meal (iftar) at sunset encourages families and local communities to share their meal together."

- Muslim Council of Britain, 2023



RAMADAN FACTS

- *Ramadan spans one lunar month, lasting up to 30 days. Its beginning and end are determined by the sighting of the moon.*
- *Since the Islamic calendar follows the lunar cycle, so Ramadan begins around 10 days earlier each year in the Gregorian calendar.*
- *Fasting during this sacred month is one of the Five Pillars of Islam, alongside prayer, charity, the declaration of faith, and pilgrimage.*
- *Muslims who fast during Ramadan abstain from all food and drink from dawn until sunset. The fast begins after the pre-dawn meal (suhoor) and ends with the evening meal (iftar).*

IMPORTANT TERMS AND THEIR MEANING:

- *Fajr – Early Morning prayer*
 - *Dhuhr – Mid afternoon prayer*
 - *Asr – Late afternoon prayer*
 - *Maghrib – Sunset prayer*
 - *Isha – Late evening prayer*
 - *Suhoor – Early morning meal before sunrise*
 - *Iftar – Sunset and the breaking of the fast*
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- *A common greeting during this time is “Ramadan Mubarak,” which means “Blessed Ramadan.”*
 - *Ramadan concludes with the celebration of Eid al-Fitr.*
 - *Within a club or organisation, some Muslims may choose to fast while others may not; it is a personal decision.*

GUIDANCE FOR ALL

INCLUSIVENESS

- *Create an environment where people feel comfortable discussing their religious needs. As with any faith, showing your Muslim teammates that you recognise Ramadan as an important time for them is likely to be appreciated.*
- *Different Muslims will have different interpretations and observance of Islam and therefore it is always advisable to consult in advance with anyone who may be observing Ramadan.*

RESPECT & UNDERSTANDING

- *Recognise that intake of food will fundamentally change during Ramadan with fasting individuals abstaining from food and drink from dawn to sunset.*

FLEXIBILITY

- *Ramadan can affect individuals physically, so adapting training and competition schedules where possible is helpful. With no daytime meals, the body relies on stored energy and adjusts how it functions.*
- *Dehydration is the biggest concern as it can cause fatigue and slow essential bodily processes.*

WELLBEING FIRST

- *Encourage open communication about energy levels, hydration, and performance expectations.*
- *Those observing the fast are advised to communicate with their coaches/ team members about their fasting, particularly if they need adjustments to their training or breaks.*

GUIDANCE FOR CLUBS

TRAINING AND SCHEDULING

- *If possible, avoid scheduling long sessions close to 'iftar' (sunset meal) unless agreed with players.*
- *Consider shortened sessions during the first week of Ramadan as bodies adjust for those who are fasting.*

FACILITY ARRANGEMENTS

- *If possible, provide a designated quiet area for:*
 - *Iftar (sunset meal)*
 - *Maghrib (sunset) prayer*
 - *Rest and recovery*

COMMUNICATION

- *It is helpful to understand who is observing Ramadan, without invading privacy, and ask how you can best support them.*
- *Share Ramadan guidance and any plans with all members in advance.*
- *Ensure clubs members are aware of:*
 - *Fasting basics*
 - *Signs of fatigue or dehydration*
- *Encourage a non-judgmental environment for members especially players choosing to fast or not to fast depending on health and competitive needs.*

GUIDANCE FOR COACHES

TRAINING ADAPTATIONS

- *Incorporate additional rest breaks for athletes who are fasting, ensuring they have time to manage energy levels throughout training.*
- *Consider reducing training intensity during fasting hours so athletes can work safely and effectively within their available energy levels.*

PLAYER SUPPORT

- *Check-in with players who are fasting around support and any specific needs they might have during Ramadan.*
- *Check-in with players who are observing the fast privately about energy levels.*
- *Avoid calling out players publicly for reduced intensity.*
- *Encourage players to listen to their bodies.*

GUIDANCE FOR OFFICIALS VOLUNTEERS AND EVENTS STAFF

COMPETITION SCHEDULING

- *When possible, avoid placing Muslim officials on matches:*
 - *During late afternoon (lowest energy period)*
 - *Just before 'iftar' (sunset meal), unless breaks are possible*
- *Allow officials to pause briefly at sunset for hydration and a light bite.*

MATCHDAY CONSIDERATIONS

- *If possible, ensure those observing fast can access quiet space to:*
 - *Iftar (sunset meal)*
 - *Maghrib (sunset) prayer*
 - *Rest and recovery*

PROFESSIONAL AWARENESS

- *Maintain fairness without special treatment but remain mindful that fasting members may have:*
 - *Lower physical stamina*
 - *Slightly slower reaction times*
- *Communicate any scheduling adjustments with respect and privacy.*

GUIDANCE FOR PLAYERS

MANAGING TRAINING WHILE FASTING

- *Reduce high-intensity activity during fasting hours.*
- *Save maximum-effort training for:*
 - *After iftar*
 - *Before suhoor (pre-dawn meal) if you prefer morning session*
- *If training before iftar, prioritise mobility, technical drills, and low-intensity work.*
- *Focus on maintaining performance instead of building new gains.*

HYDRATION & NUTRITION

- *Hydrate strategically between iftar and suhoor.*
- *Prioritise:*
 - *Complex carbohydrates*
 - *Lean protein*
 - *Electrolytes*
 - *Steady hydration*
- *Avoid over-exercising immediately after large meals*
- *Avoid too many caffeinated drinks as these may cause you to lose fluid and salts.*
- *Focus on balanced meals supporting muscle maintenance and providing sustained energy.*

GUIDANCE FOR PLAYERS

MATCHDAY/TRAINING TIPS

- *Let your coach or club know if you are observing Ramadan, so they can understand your needs and support you appropriately.*
- *Communicate early if you have any concerns about training loads, match days, recovery, or travel during this period.*
- *If playing a match or training during fasting hours:*
 - *Communicate early with event organiser if you have any special requirements.*
 - *Plan ahead for competition days to manage energy and hydration.*
 - *Use timeouts and substitutions wisely – focussing on recovering and reserving energy.*

LISTEN TO YOUR BODY

- *Expect natural fluctuations in energy levels.*
- *Stop training if you feel dizzy, lightheaded, unusually weak or unwell.*
- *Health and wellbeing should always come first.*
- *Adjusting load during Ramadan is a smart performance strategy.*

FAITH AND FLEXIBILITY

Remember, Islam allows exemptions from fasting for:

- *Travel*
- *Illness*
- *Physical hardship*

Discuss with family, coaches, and trusted advisors to make the best decision for your health, performance and following of your faith.