



Dear Member Clubs and Players,

RE: POSTPONED GAMES 7/8/9 AUGUST 2020

We want to take this opportunity to provide some clarification on the recent decision by Hills Football Incorporated (HFI) to postpone all football matches on the 7/8/9 August 2020 and to issue several apologies surrounding the manner of the communication of the decisions.

HFI apologises for the following:

1. The timeliness of the decision – HFI has endeavoured to provide as much football in this contracted season as is possible. To that end, the team at HFI held off on making a final decision to postpone the round until as late as possible. The timeliness of this decision, in hindsight, caused significant inconvenience to our players and for that, we apologise.
2. Information Communicated – Once the decision to postpone games had been made, HFI made an effort to communicate this to the players of HFI as quickly as possible. This communication lacked the required information supporting the decision made by HFI. As a consequence, this left several of our clubs, players, referees and other participants in a position of uncertainty. For this lack of communication and consultation, we apologise.

Despite the above shortcomings, the decision made by HFI to postpone matches was one made as a result of social and community responsibility that is vested in us together with communication received from member clubs regarding the closure of grounds for the weekend.

1. The Hills Shire Council (THSC) issued a statement on their website to leave grounds open at club discretion. Following this, clubs inspect their fields and advise HFI of their intent to either leave grounds open or close the grounds for the weekend. At the time HFI postponed the round (5:54PM) the status of grounds was:

Open

Bernie Mullane 1,2
Fred Caterson Reserve
Hills Centenary Reserve
Francesco Reserve
Annangrove Park

Closed by Club

Balcombe Heights Reserve
Arnold Ave Reserve
Caddies Creek Reserve
Hills Grammar
Bernie Mullane 3,4,5
Ted Horwood Reserve
Hazel Ryan Reserve
North Rocks Park
Kenthurst Park
Glenhaven Oval
Holland Reserve
Gooden Reserve
Max Ruddock Reserve
McCoy Park
Redbank reserve
Eric Mobs Reserve

Open but at Serious Risk of Closing

Bella Vista Oval
Murray Farm Reserve
Coolong Reserve
Les Shore Oval



With the majority of grounds closed by clubs or at serious risk of closing, HFI, as per normal protocol postponed the round to a later date.

2. A secondary concern that HFI must review each week is related to Covid-19 risk factors. We are currently living in a pandemic with cases of Covid-19 on our doorstep. Football intrinsically draws crowds to games of parents, siblings and friends. When the weather is wet, two things happen:
 - Spectators, Officials and Players will seek shelter and warmth. This behaviour often leads to a lack of social distancing.
 - Increased risk of transmission due to cold weather and compromised immune systems.

We at HFI have a responsibility as an organiser of the competition to reduce risk due to Covid-19 and, if not attainable to a certain level than postpone or cancel games. Hills Football WILL NOT put the Volunteers, Players, Family and Friends in situations where they are exposed to additional risk.

We at HFI, love Football. We love seeing our wonderful Community play and enjoy everything that this game gives us; however, we love our community and fellow humans more. Given the same situation expect Hills Football to make the same decision, but with a far better manner of communication and with better timeliness. Decisions will always be made with the welfare of the greater community at the forefront and not for the benefit of a select few.

What Next?

We have learnt several valuable lessons over the weekend, and the following will be initiated:

1. The postponed games from 7/8/9 August 2020 will be rescheduled as a matter of priority.
2. There will be a review on the Wet Weather Policy.
3. There will be a working group set up with the following objectives:
 - a. Collation of Common Criteria Clubs use to determine the safety of the playing surface of grounds when wet weather is involved.
 - b. Best practice for timing and method of communication of any wet weather decision (either a Final decision or an ongoing decision to be monitored each day).
 - c. Ensure a COVID-Safe approach underpins every decision.

Kind regards

Eddie Palaci

Caretaker General Manager