



No. 34/2021

TO UEFA MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS

For the attention of
the president and the general secretary

Your reference

Your correspondence of

Our reference
RIG/baw/mpt

Date
14 May 2021

Decision of the UEFA Executive Committee related to the amendments of the UEFA Return to Play Protocol

Dear Sir/Madam,

On 14 May 2021, the UEFA Executive Committee approved further amendments to the UEFA Return to Play Protocol (the Protocol), which was initially adopted on 9 July 2020 and amended on 24 September 2020 and 3 December 2020.

The latest amendments are a result of the adaptations required in light of the changing pandemic situation, as well as the evaluation of the operational implementation of the Protocol at UEFA competition matches. The approved changes to the enclosed Protocol mainly focus on clarifications and adjustments to current practices, as well as adaptations required following the decision taken by the UEFA Executive Committee on 31 March 2021 with regards to the admission of spectators at UEFA competition matches, communicated via Circular Letter No. 21/2021.

In particular, we would like to draw your attention to the amendments to section 7.8 and 7.9 of the Protocol.

In section 7.8 of the Protocol, concerning "*Previous confirmed cases*", it was already established that national associations and clubs who have verified confirmation that members of their team delegation have previously been infected with COVID-19 are strongly recommended to submit any relevant documentation in this respect to the UEFA Protocol Advisory Panel (UPAP), which will evaluate the case and potentially provide a recommendation to exempt such person from further PCR testing.

Following the latest scientific findings and evidence of the emerging variants, the UPAP, which is constantly monitoring the evolution of the pandemic, may now further recommend to individuals previously infected with COVID-19 to be exempted from PCR-testing and instead to undergo instrument-based antigen testing conducted by the UEFA Testing Service Provider. In this respect, the Protocol now includes a specific reference to **alternative testing methods**.

Any such recommendation from the UPAP remains strictly advisory, and it is the responsibility of the team to liaise with the authorities to obtain a final decision on the recommendation provided by the UPAP to the team.

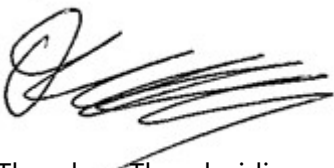
Section 7.9 is a new addition to the Protocol providing clarification that at present, persons who are already vaccinated against COVID-19 are not exempted from the UEFA testing programme. This is in line with the current scientific knowledge that vaccinated individuals could still potentially be infected with COVID-19, and may continue spreading the virus amongst other individuals. It is therefore necessary to continue testing all individuals concerned in order to protect those who have not yet had the possibility to be vaccinated, which is still the majority of all national team and club members within the UEFA territory. However, the UPAP is closely monitoring the evolution of the situation around the topic of vaccinations, and, if deemed necessary, this principle of the Protocol may be adapted when a significant number of team delegation members have been vaccinated.

Vaccination is a vital measure in the fight against the virus and is highly encouraged by the health authorities. UEFA therefore recommends all teams to pursue vaccination options as soon as reasonably available in their respective country.

Finally, it is once again important to emphasise that the successful continuation of UEFA competitions is dependent on the cooperation of our member associations and clubs and the ongoing compliance with, and implementation of the Protocol.

Yours faithfully,

UEFA



Theodore Theodoridis
General Secretary

Enclosure

- UEFA Return to Play Protocol version 4

cc (with enclosure)

- UEFA Executive Committee
- European members of the FIFA Council
- UEFA Honorary members
- UEFA Club Competitions Committee
- UEFA National Team Competitions Committee
- UEFA Women's Football Committee
- FIFA, Zurich