

Information on the future of the European handball season 2019/20



Vienna, 24 April 2020

OFFICIAL STATEMENT: The Executive Committee of the European Handball Federation has decided on the further rundown of the current European handball season

The EHF Executive Committee in a video conference on Friday has taken a series of decisions regarding the further rundown of the European handball season, concluding that no matches can take place in June and that a number of competitions have to be either postponed or cancelled.

The decisions were made in the light of COVID-19 pandemic after intensive monitoring of the current situation, including the analysis of governmental measures such as travel restrictions and bans of major events.

Furthermore, over the past two weeks procedures have been discussed and

consultations took place with all stakeholders of the EHF, the respective boards such the Nations Board, the Professional Handball Board, the Women's Handball Board and the Men's and Women's Club Boards, as well as the International Handball Federation.

Basis for the procedure and the subsequent decisions was **the EHF's feasibility study which had been confirmed by the Executive Committee in March**, granting the mandate to amend the 2019/20 as well as the 2020/21 calendar and also outlining qualification criteria should it not be possible to resume the season in June.

The overarching aim was to finish the 2019/20 season in the best possible way, while at the same time build the foundation to start the 2020/21 season in a structured way with the least impact possible from the current season. It was kept in mind that all handball stakeholders will face a challenging next competition and economic cycle.

EHF Executive Committee decisions on competition matters:

VELUX EHF Champions League

The possibility was checked to have the remaining knock-out rounds played in autumn 2020. However, in the light of the dense calendar in men's handball and the EHF's new media and marketing agreement from next season onwards with potentially different media and marketing partners, this was not deemed feasible.

- Therefore, the remaining matches in the Last 16 and quarter-finals are cancelled. As already announced, **the VELUX EHF FINAL4 2020 will take place on 28 and 29 December** in Cologne.
- Based on the final group phase ranking, qualified for the VELUX EHF FINAL4 are the best two teams of groups A and B: Barça, Paris Saint-Germain HB, THW Kiel, Telekom Veszprém HC.

DELO WOMEN'S EHF Champions League

- The quarter-finals' playing dates in June are cancelled. The DELO WOMEN'S EHF FINAL4 is scheduled to take place on 5 and 6 September in Budapest.
- Currently EHF and EHF Marketing are checking the possibilities of playing the quarter-finals together with the EHF FINAL4 (Thursday and Saturday/Sunday on 3, 5 and 6 September). Should it not be possible to

stage the EHF FINAL4 in September, an alternative date, together with the Hungarian Handball Federation as organisers, will be sought for the month of October. In this case, quarter-finals are not feasible anymore due to the already ongoing season and new media and marketing contracts.

- If the quarter-finals cannot be played, qualified for the DELO WOMEN'S EHF FINAL4 are the best two teams of the two main round groups: Metz Handball, Team Esbjerg, Györi Audi ETO KC, Brest Bretagne Handball.

MEN'S EHF Cup

- The remaining group phase matches as well as the quarter-finals are cancelled.
- In agreement with the organisers, Füchse Berlin, the MEN'S EHF Cup Finals scheduled for 29 and 30 August are cancelled. The tournament will not be carried out.

Women's EHF Cup, Challenge Cup

- The remaining matches in the Women's EHF Cup as well as in the Men's and Women's Challenge Cup are cancelled.

Women's EHF EURO 2020

- The remaining four rounds of Women's EHF EURO 2020 Qualifiers are cancelled.
- Based on the ranking of the Women's EHF EURO 2018 the following teams have reached the final tournament: France, Russia, Netherlands, Romania, Sweden, Hungary, Montenegro, Germany, Serbia, Spain, Slovenia, Poland, Czech Republic, Croatia.
- Norway and Denmark are qualified as hosts.
- The draw for the Women's EHF EURO 2020 takes place on 18 June in Vienna.

Men's World Championship 2021 Play-offs Europe

- The remaining European play-offs en route to the Men's World Championship 2021, part 1 as well as part 2, are cancelled.
- Based on the final ranking of the Men's EHF EURO 2020 the following teams are qualified for the World Championship in Egypt: Slovenia, Germany, Portugal, Sweden, Austria, Hungary, Belarus, Iceland, Czech Republic, France.
- Spain, Croatia and Norway are already qualified as the three best-ranked

teams at EHF EURO 2020; Denmark are qualified as defending champions.

Younger age category tournaments

In close coordination with the International Handball Federation, and their approach to the Women's 18 and Women's 20 World Championships, the EHF will postpone this summer's Younger Age Category events.

- For the Men's 20 EHF EURO in Austria / Italy and the EHF Championships in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Latvia staging the event in January 2021 prior/during the Men's World Championship will be analysed. A final decision is planned for the June meeting of the Executive Committee.
- For the Men's 18 EHF EURO in Slovenia and the EHF Championships in Bulgaria, North Macedonia and Montenegro staging the event in January 2021 prior/during the Men's World Championship will be analysed. A final decision is planned for the June meeting of the Executive Committee.
- In close cooperation with the organisers, the Women's 16 European Open in Gothenburg, Sweden, scheduled for June/July 2020 has been cancelled.

Beach Handball

- The ebt Finals 2020 scheduled for June 2020 in Larnaka, Cyprus have been cancelled.
- The qualification championships for the Beach Handball EURO 2021, scheduled for July 2020 in Georgia and Greece, have been cancelled.
- The Men's 16 and Women's 16 Beach Handball EURO scheduled for July 2020 in Silvi Marina, Italy has been postponed. The new dates proposed are 24 to 27 September 2020 in Italy. A final decision, after coordination with the organisers and the participating federations, is planned for the June meeting of the EHF Executive Committee.

Men's EHF EURO 2022 Qualifiers / Olympic Qualification Tournaments

A central part of the discussions on the level of the Nations Board, Professional Handball Board and Women's Handball Board during video conferences on 23 April, as well as during the EXEC meeting, was the harmonisation of the European calendar with the men's and women's Olympic Qualification Tournaments to be scheduled by the IHF for spring 2021.

The Executive Committee approved the draft proposal for the men's matches. This proposal will not add an additional team week in order not to overload the existing competition schedule.

As a consequence, the six European teams playing the Olympic qualification (Germany, France, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden) will play their respective EHF EURO 2022 Qualifiers, instead of during the week of the Olympic Qualification Tournaments, now in the period from 6 to 9 January 2021, an already existing national team week in the calendar.

The EHF will develop the details prior to the draw for the EHF EURO 2022 Qualifiers which will take place on 16 June 2020.

For the women's Olympic Qualification Tournaments a national team week in spring is available.

Final decisions on the Olympic qualification are within the responsibility of the IHF and all respective information will be issued by the IHF after coordination with the IOC.

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