

SPORTS

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Formula One expects shortened season

Formula One chairman Chase Carey “fully expects” the 2020 season with 15-18 races

Reuters | London

Formula One expects to run a shortened season of 15-18 grands prix once racing can resume after the coronavirus pandemic, hopefully during the European summer, chairman and chief executive Chase Carey said on Monday.

The original 2020 calendar had a record 22 races but the season has yet to start with the first eight postponed or cancelled and more likely to be called off.

Two, the opener in Australia and the showcase Monaco Grand Prix, have been cancelled while the others -- Bahrain, Vietnam, China, the Netherlands, Spain and Azerbaijan -- need rescheduling.

“We are all committed to bringing our fans a 2020 championship season,” Carey said in a statement.

“We recognise there is significant potential for additional postponements in currently scheduled events, nonetheless we and our partners fully expect the season to start at some point this summer, with a revised calendar of between 15-18 races.”

Formula One needs a minimum of eight races for the season to be a proper championship.

The next race that is still on is the June 14 Canadian Grand Prix in Montreal but that also



Members of the Ferrari team arrive to pack up their equipment after the Formula One Australian Grand Prix was cancelled in Melbourne

looks uncertain, as does France on June 28, and some are already questioning whether Formula One will race at all in 2020.

The coronavirus has laid waste to the sporting calendar, with the European Championship soccer tournament moved from June to next year and the Tokyo Summer Olympics in July-August set to be postponed.

Revised calendar

Carey recognised that nobody

could be certain when the situation might improve but said the 10 teams would be ready to go racing when it did.

The revised calendar would be considerably shaken up from what was previously published, he added.

Formula One has already brought forward the traditional August break to three weeks in March and April so that it can create a space for rescheduling some of those races that had to

be postponed.

Carey said he expected the season, which was due to finish in Abu Dhabi on Nov 29, to run into December “with the actual sequence and schedule dates for races differing significantly from our original 2020 calendar.”

“It is not possible to provide a more specific calendar now due to the fluidity of the current situation,” added the American. “But we expect to gain clearer insights to the situation in each

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CHASE CAREY

of our host countries, as well as the issues related to travel to these countries, in the coming month.”

He said the situation also offered an opportunity “to evolve the sport, experiment and try new things” through initiatives such as esports and developing more innovative content.

“We’re confident we’ll all get through this and see better days ahead, and, when we do, we’ll ensure that everyone invested in this sport at every level feels rewarded,” said Carey.

Maldini expects to recover in a week



Ex-Italy captain Paolo Maldini reacts during a match (file photo)

AFP | Milan

Former Italy football captain Paolo Maldini said Monday he expects to recover “within a week” after being diagnosed with the new coronavirus.

Maldini, 51, now the technical director at AC Milan, and his 18-year-old son Daniel, a youth team player, had been in self-isolation at home for two weeks.

The team announced on Saturday that they would “remain in quarantine until clinically recovered” from COVID-19.

“With this video I wanted to thank all those people who expressed on social media their love and concern for my and my son’s health,” Maldini said.

“We’re fine -- we should be able to get rid of this virus within a week.”

“Thanks for your continuing affection.”

“I wanted to thank all those doctors, nurses, health workers, civil protection and law enforcement officers who are facing this emergency with the utmost professionalism and enormous courage.

UEFA postpones Champions League, Europa League finals

AFP | Nyon, Switzerland

UEFA announced on Monday that it has postponed the Champions League, Europa League and women’s Champions League finals, originally scheduled for May, due to the coronavirus pandemic, with no new date given.

European football’s governing body had already postponed the competitions until further notice earlier this month.

UEFA said that “no decision has yet been made on rearranged dates”.

“The working group, established last week as a result of the conference call among the stakeholders of European football, which was chaired by UEFA president, Aleksander Ceferin, will analyse the options available,” UEFA said in a statement.

“The group has already begun



General view of the trophy before the Round of 16 draw (file photo)

its examination of the calendar. Announcements will be made in due course.”

The 2020 men’s Champions League final had been due to be played at Istanbul’s Ataturk Stadium on May 30, with the Eu-

ropa League final to have been staged in Polish city Gdansk three days before.

The women’s Champions League final was scheduled for May 24 in Vienna.

Four of the men’s Champi-

ons League last-16 second legs, originally slated for March 17 and 18, were delayed because of the new coronavirus outbreak, along with all of the Europa League last-16 return games.

Europe’s top leagues have all been postponed, while the 2020 European Championship has been put back until next year.

Atletico Madrid, Paris Saint-Germain, Atalanta and RB Leipzig are the four teams to have so far booked their places in the Champions League quarter-finals.

More financial pain for UEFA and Europe’s major clubs could be on the horizon if the Champions League cannot be completed.

Last season UEFA paid out 1.9 billion euros (\$2.1 billion) in prize money and TV revenue to clubs competing in the Champions League.

Napoli, Lazio backtrack on return to training

AFP | Milan

Italian clubs Napoli and Lazio have both postponed their planned return to training this week due to the coronavirus pandemic which has killed over 6,000 people in Italy.

Italian football has been on hold since March 9 because of the COVID-19 outbreak which has become the Mediterranean nation’s biggest disaster since World War II.

But some clubs had been thinking of resuming training behind closed doors.

“SSC Napoli announces that sports activities are suspended until a date to be decided,” the southerners said in a statement.

“The resumption of training



Napoli’s coach Carlo Ancelotti (C) leads a training session (file photo)

sessions will be established in relation to the evolution of the health emergency regarding the spread of Covid 19.”

Napoli are sixth in Serie A and last trained on March 12, before their Champions League last-16 second leg against Barcelona was postponed.

They had been planning to return to training on Wednesday.

FIFA teams up with WHO to support fight against pandemic

Reuters | London

Soccer’s global governing body FIFA has joined with the World Health Organisation (WHO) in the fight against the coronavirus pandemic with the organisation’s president Gianni Infantino calling for teamwork to tackle the crisis.

Infantino joined WHO Direc-

tor-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus at a media conference on Monday to launch the “pass the message to kick out coronavirus” video campaign.

“We need teamwork to combat the coronavirus,” Infantino said. “FIFA has teamed up with WHO because health comes first.”

“I call upon the football com-

munity worldwide to join us in supporting this campaign to pass the message even further. Some of the greatest players to have played the beautiful game have put their names to the campaign and are united in their desire to pass the message to kick out COVID-19.”

Twenty eight players including Argentina forward Lionel



The logo of FIFA is seen in front of its headquarters in Zurich, Switzerland

Messi, Italian goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon and Brazil keeper Alisson Becker have backed the initiative aimed at reinforcing five WHO guidelines in stemming the spread of the virus.

They are featured in video clips issuing reminders about washing hands, sneezing etiquette, distancing, face-touching

and what to do if you develop symptoms.

“This virus is a global problem and it has shown to all of us two things. One, is how vulnerable we are and the other is how global the world is. Exceptional situations require exceptional measures and global problems require global solutions,” said Infantino.