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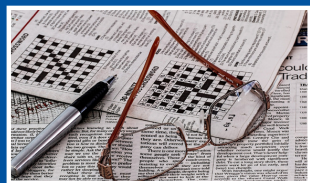
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Full story:
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NEWS

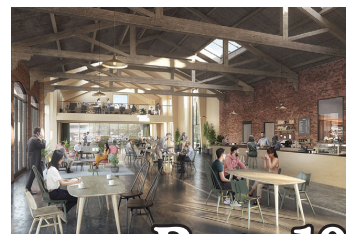
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SPORT

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FOOTBALL: Wanderers could be in mini group Contingency plans revealed for the EFL



Adams Park - the home of Wycombe Wanderers

PROMOTION from League One and Two could potentially be decided through an eight-team mini tournament.

The idea is one of three contingency plans under consideration after being discussed during a meeting with club captains and the League.

Wycombe would be joined by Rotherham, Oxford United, Portsmouth, Fleetwood Town, Peterborough United and Sunderland in their group.

This could mean the number of teams that get promoted from League One to the Championship could be affected.

Another plan discussed would see teams promoted 'on merit' where the current top two teams would be promoted from all EFL leagues, meaning two extra teams would need to be relegated at the end of the 2020/21 season to return the leagues to their original numbers.

The EFL statement reads: "The position of the EFL remains un-

By Robert Folker

changed in that the priority is to resume the 2019/20 season as soon as it is possible with matches only returning at an appropriate point and based on guidance from the relevant authorities.

"The health and wellbeing of the nation has to come first.

"However, it is also our view that a successful return to playing in this country can only come about through a continued collaborative approach with all stakeholders, including the Premier League and Football Association, in order for important issues to be aligned such as, but not limited to, scheduling of fixtures, promotion, relegation and the opening and closing of transfer windows.

"This work has been ongoing for some time and will continue in the weeks ahead.

"Clearly, before any return to football can take place, suitable

testing arrangements for participants must be in place and this is core to our current planning, as is ensuring there is absolutely no negative impact on the country's frontline workers, the emergency services, league and club staff members.

"The EFL's medical advisor is working with a select group of medical professionals and sports scientists to ensure their collective expertise is utilised to address these issues.

"This group will consider the latest medical information and evidence from both in the UK and abroad, particularly around the viability and accessibility of the various Covid-19 tests that are currently available.

"As part of our work to address the broader challenges posed by Covid-19, the EFL will continue to engage in dialogue with the government, football partners, member Clubs and other relevant stakeholders about the evolving situation.

"At this time our operational mitigation and scenario planning is con-

tinuing so that when it is appropriate and safe for football to return at EFL clubs up and down the country, we can make the necessary determinations quickly and with some clarity.

"This work includes the relevant protocols for playing behind closed doors at all 71 clubs and access to those matches for our broadcast partners and supporters.

"In consideration of the current challenges, a variety of proposals and ideas have also been put forward by EFL Clubs in relation to operational and financial matters.

"While these contributions are welcome, it is important to emphasise that there is a range of opinion among our membership and that no decisions have been taken at this stage."

The EFL's preference is still to finish the remaining season by playing out all remaining fixtures over a 56-day period.

Prior to the season being suspended, Wycombe sat in eighth place.



Matt Bloomfield

Skipper joins PFA panel

MATT BLOOMFIELD IS ONE OF MANY CAPTAINS TO JOIN THE PANEL

WYCOMBE Wanderers captain Matt Bloomfield has been selected by one of the country's leading football organisations to discuss wage deferrals.

Bloomfield, along with Peter Clarke of Tranmere Rovers, John Mousinho of Oxford United, Leyton Orient's Matt Harrold, Scott Cuthbert of Stevenage and Walsall's Mat Sadler, were selected by the PFA to join a working party panel to talk about issues relating to the recommendation that League One and Two players should defer 25 per cent of their wages during the suspension of the league season.

In a statement issued to the media on April 16, Wanderers chairman Rob Couhig confirmed that the club will not be asking its players to defer wages.

He said: "We have not asked players to defer their wages in April.

"Our understanding of the joint statement (from the EFL and PFA) was that while it permitted clubs to request a deferral of the players' wages, it was not a mandate.

"My belief is that deferrals are loans from our future revenue. To the extent we can avoid doing so, we will try to avoid accumulating debt that will impact our future operations.

"We continue to communicate with the players through their leadership in the hope that a global solution to all issues arising from the shutdown can be resolved.

"We expect to have a better understanding of a possible resolution by the end of April."

Before the league was suspended on March 13, Wycombe sat in eighth place, just three points off the automatic promotion places in League One.