Twitter Thread by Dale Johnson

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The Premier League schedule can just about handle the games that have been postponed... so far.

But the league is on the brink of a fixture crisis, and the failure to entertaining agreeing curtailment / abandonment options may come back and bite them hard.

From the initial fixture build there were three Premier Lague catchup dates built in - the midweeks of March 2, April 20 and May 19.

However, these placeholders were primarily for teams which reached the Carabao Cup final and/or the FA Cup final.

PREMIER LEAGUE SCHEDULE 2020-21 @DALEJOHNSONESPN

Aug 29 - Community Shield
Sept 5 – INTERNATIONALS
Sept 12 - Premier League 1
Sept 15 - Carabao Cup R2
Sept 17 - UEL qualifying (Tottenham)
Sept 19 - Premier League 2
Sept 22 - Carabao Cup R3
Sept 24 - UEL qualifying (Tottenham)
Sept 26 - Premier League 3
Sept 29 - Carabao Cup R4
Oct 1 - UEL qualifying (Tottenham)
Oct 3 - Premier League 4
Oct 10 – INTERNATIONALS
Oct 17 - Premier League 5
Oct 20 - UCL & UEL
Oct 24 - Premier League 6
Oct 27 - UCL & UEL
Oct 31 - Premier League 7
Nov 3 - UCL & UEL
Nov 7 - Premier League 8
Nov 14 – INTERNATIONALS
Nov 21 - Premier League 9
Nov 24 - UCL & UEL
Nov 28 - Premier League 10
Dec 1 - UCL & UEL
Dec 5 - Premier League 11
Dec 8 - UCL & UEL
Dec 12 - Premier League 12
Dec 15 - Premier League 13
Dec 19 - Premier League 14
Dec 22 - Carabao Cup QF
Dec 26 - Premier League 15
Dec 28 - Premier League 16
Jan 2 - Premier League 17
Jan 5 - Carabao Cup SF
Jan 9 - FA Cup R3
Jan 12 - Premier League 18a
Jan 16 - Premier League 19
Jan 19 - Premier League 18b
Jan 23 - FA Cup R4
Jan 26 - Premier League 20
Jan 30 - Premier League 21
Feb 2 - Premier League 22
Feb 6 - Premier League 23
Feb 9 - FA Cup R5
Feb 13 - Premier League 24
Feb 16 - UCL & UEL
Feb 20 - Premier League 25
Feb 23 - UCL & UEL
Feb 27 - Premier League 26 + Carabao Cup final
Mar 2 - Premier League catch-up date
Mar 6 - Premier League 27
Mar 9 - UCL & UEL RO16
Mar 13 - Premier League 28
Mar 16 - UCL & UEL RO16
Mar 20 - Premier League 29 + FA Cup QF
Mar 27 – INTERNATIONALS
Apr 3 - Premier League 30
Apr 6 - UCL & UEL QF
Apr 10 - Premier League 31
Apr 13 - UCL & UEL QF
Apr 17 - Premier League 32 + FA Cup SF
Apr 20 - Premier League catch-up date
Apr 24 - Premier League 33
Apr 27 - UCL & UEL SF
May 1 - Premier League 34
May 4 - UCL & UEL SF
May 8 - Premier League 35
May 11 - Premier League 36
May 15 - Premier League 37 & FA Cup final
May 19 - Premier League catch-up date
May 23 - Premier League 38
May 26 - UEL final
May 29 - UCL final

Added to that, even without COVID postponements, if a PL team were to get the semis of the Champions League or Europa League and the final of both domestic cups there aren't enough spare midweeks to fit those games in.

Looking at you, Man City, Man United and Tottenham.

Now it looks like we have the added complication of Tottenham v Fulham being postponed.

If at least one of those clubs remains in the FA Cup through to Round 5, the game can only be played on March 2.

But it could get even more complicated.

If Tottenham reach the Carabao Cup final, they also have to rearrange (coincidentally) Fulham v Tottenham which is due to be played April 24.

If Spurs go far in the UEL and to the FA Cup final, they will have nowhere to play TWO matches before the season deadline of May 23.

Man City can just about manage things at the moment as they can play Everton on January 20 and Chelsea on an empty UCL RO16 week (they are paired with Chelsea in the UCL weeks) and Villa on March 2.

If the EFL semi cannot go ahead next week they also have nowhere to move games.

So this also feeds back into the Premier League clubs "kicking the can down the road" on a curtailment plan.

It's such a massive problem now because every club has their own vested interests again.

This should have been agreed in August with all teams on zero points.

Instead this is groundhog day, with every club having their own reason to fight a particular corner (more than they would have in August).

There is now the realistic prospect of being unable to play all 380 Premier League games by May 23, and it only looks like getting worse.

Other divisions have the chance of playing into June to get their seasons finished, but the Premier League and all other top flights must finish by May 23.

Even if UEFA allowed games through to May 30, that would still discount any club which reached a European final.

In short, clubs like Spurs COULD face the prospect of having to play two games in a midweek (as in September).

Sunday > Tuesday > Thursday > Sunday

And Spurs (and others) might have to do that in both April and May to get the games in.

But we may see more games off yet.

Additional note that this is only a problem for clubs in Europe. And the last two games have involved clubs in Europe.

There is no issue rearranging a game between clubs not in Europe, such as Aston Villa v Newcastle.

And I really need to improve the proof reading of my tweets.

Manchester City’s first-team squad has resumed training today in preparation for their match at Chelsea on Sunday. So that may release some pressure on the fixture list.

I'd suggest it's better than Everton v City is played on Jan. 20 to avoid other problems down the line.

It may well be of course that the PL will make sure both Everton and Man City get their FA Cup games played before rescheduling to Jan. 20.

That's because a postponed FA Cup game could only be played on Jan. 20 ahead of round 4 the following weekend.