



Final YSF Corona Virus Update

While we recognize that the Florida Governors latest statement indicated some promising signs that the situation is beginning to return to some sense of normalcy, it is with great sadness that the YSF management team has decided NOT to continue the remainder of the spring season or to run our proposed “mini-tournament”. The following reasons contributed to our final decision:

1. *Young Children* - I fully recognize that this virus in the main does not affect children, but the YSF is a tournament that caters to children under the age of 15 years and at the end of the day I could not in all good conscious contribute to even the slightest possibility of making even one child or one member of their extended family sick. It is critical of us as a management team and more importantly as a public organization, to maintain a level of responsibility for the common good, especially as it relates to young children.
2. *Practice fields* - While some clubs utilize private fields for practice the large majority of clubs/teams use county/city/government controlled parks to practice. These parks may have plans to open, but the process and timing of their opening will be a little lengthy and in some cases allow certain activities but not full contact football. Teams cannot play in a tournament while not having a place to practice.
3. *Game Fields* - The YSF ‘mini tournament’ idea at a minimum would require a 3-4 field facility, on both sides of the state, somewhere close to the middle to continue the tournament. Following my attempts to obtain at least 10 facilities, I was unable to find any that provided me with the governing approvals along with a free capability to operate a contact football tournament. Only one field gave me even a small chance but required me to submit a proposal with limits on social distancing and guidelines that were impossible for us to achieve running a contact football tournament, and a very low probability of approval for use within the next 2-3 weeks.
4. *Timing* - Timing is not on our side. A very large portion of our teams are part of fall programs and these programs need to begin their processes for trying to start their fall seasons (activities such as equipment collections, helmet reconditioning, no contact drills, player registrations etc). We have just simply run out of time. While some of our teams are single teams and not inherently limited by large fall clubs, I must be responsible and fair as an organization and be considerate of these fall programs to not further hinder and/or complicate their ability to provide a fall season. Especially given that they will still face huge obstacles for this next season. Some of those Presidents also have board hurdles to climb to gain approvals to play, and are also concerned with being equitable with all their teams.
5. *Virus Safety Guidelines* - Football is a contact sport in every single way. Items such as social distancing, mask wearing, sanitization or fan controls are all untenable obstacles for a sport such as contact football. Suggestions from some that I should commit to providing proposals for solving these issues, but “not worry if we don’t actually enact them”. This is not something I am willing to do. At risk of sounding pompous, I will not commit to doing something I am unable to do, by acting like I am going to do it. This tournament has taken 12 years to build and destroying it for a short term gain is not going to happen.
6. *General Liability* - The liability issue is of great concern. While I understand that football is by default a dangerous sport, currently this virus adds an exponentially larger challenge, in that right now there is no guarantee of a limit of liability to organizations, in either state or federal terms. With the clear risks still being detailed by the CDC, I cannot guarantee children’s safety at this time if we put them in close contact

quarters, which is what regular football does. Once the general consensus moves to a sufficiently safer level, which I believe it will do within the next couple of months the situation will be different.

7. *Amount of teams* - As it stands right now, following a general polling of all our clubs we were bordering on there not being enough actual teams willing to commit to participating in a mini tournament at this time. However, many of those teams could not even guarantee that they would be able to field a team they believed would play, due to parents possibly refusing to allow their children to participate, resulting in last minute cancellations causing scheduling nightmares. Adding to the challenge, delaying the tournament any further, in order to obtain a more certain set of commitments would have resulted in further team losses due to the timing factors mentioned above.

For these reasons above and a few more smaller ones, it is my view that we have run out of options. As a large tournament we have always lived under the premise that one cannot “satisfy all people at all times” and for those folks I certainly apologize. This is an unprecedented situation that has resulted in massive losses not only for this tournament but far more importantly for the many folks who have lost their loved ones, and their livelihoods. My thoughts go out to all those folks.

Thank you all and above all be safe!