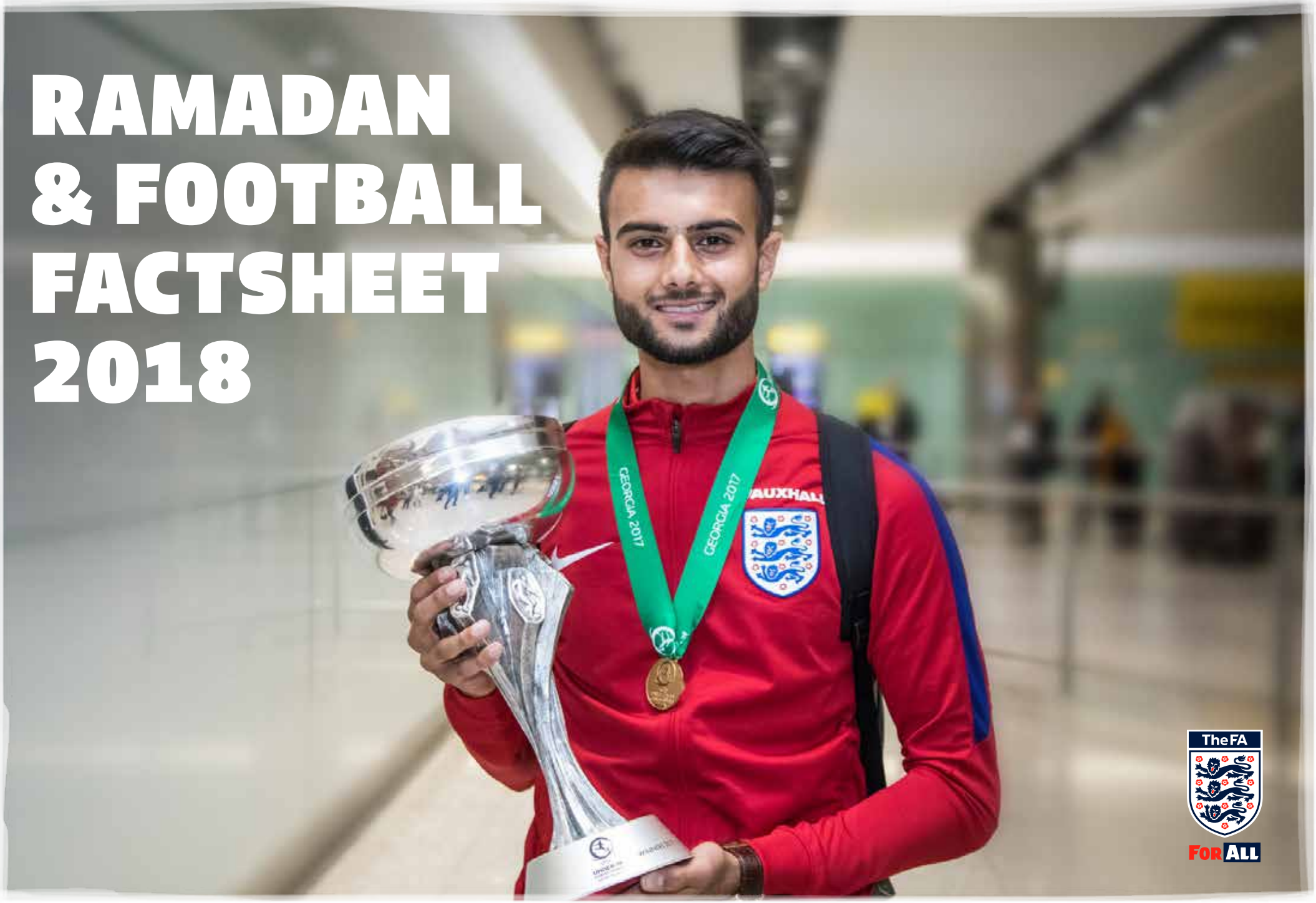
RAMADAN & FOOTBALL FACTSHEET 2018



EACH YEAR DURING THE MONTH OF RAMADAN MUSLIMS AROUND THE GLOBE FAST DURING DAYLIGHT HOURS

THIS FACTSHEET HAS BEEN COMPILED TO EXPLAIN WHAT RAMADAN AND FASTING MEANS IN THE WORLD OF FOOTBALL AND TO THE MANY MUSLIMS INVOLVED

WHAT IS RAMADAN?

Ramadan is the 9th month in the Islamic calendar and is also known as one of the Five Pillars of Islam. Ramadan lasts for one lunar month which is a maximum of 29 or 30 days and its start and ending dates are determined by the sighting of the moon. This means it comes around 11 days earlier each year and so starts on a different date each year.

During daylight hours adult Muslims and those who have reached puberty are required to abstain from eating, drinking and smoking. The obligation of fasting does not apply to those who are physically and mentally unwell, travelling or pregnant. If any individual has not been able to observe one, they may need to make up later or donate a set amount to the poor.

WHAT FOOTBALL RULES APPLY TO RAMADAN?

The FA rules make it clear that all faiths are observed and respected:

FA RULE B5 FOOTBALL & RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE

a. A Participant cannot be compelled to play football on bona fide occasions where religious observance precludes such activity, save where the Participant:
   (i) has consented to do so on such occasions; or
   (ii) is registered as a player under written contract, which shall be taken as consent to play on such occasions unless otherwise provided for in the contract.

b. Annually, when planning programmes, Competitions shall define and notify agreed dates of such occasions.

WHEN WILL RAMADAN BEGIN AND END THIS YEAR?

Ramadan is expected to begin this year on 15 May and end on 14 June (depending on the sighting of the moon).

RAMADAN AND YOUTH FOOTBALL

There is no set age when Muslims start fasting, it is generally post-puberty which can vary from between 8 and 16 years old. This will affect Muslim participation in youth football during Ramadan, especially in the older age groups. As this is the case best practice for leagues would be to ask any predominantly Muslim teams about their plans to fast and play.

"Players are often shocked to see a Muslim girl with a headscarf running their game, but once I blow the whistle they see I'm no different to any other ref. Ramadan is an important time for me, but I carry on refereeing throughout."

Jawahir Jewels
FA Referee

FASTING

Fasting combined with extra prayers and a lack of sleep can leave people feeling a little more tired and dehydrated than normal. Many Muslims will find it harder to play football and may not want to take part.

Muslims who are fasting do not expect you to stop eating or drinking, although it would be polite not to eat, drink or smoke in front of them. They may also enjoy sitting together and sharing food when they break their fast (Iftar) and will welcome non-Muslims to join in. To fast with Muslim friends, even for part of the day, is a good way of enhancing your understanding.

PRAYING

Muslims may practice their faith more during Ramadan and may wish to offer prayers during the day. This will normally be two to three times a day for a few minutes a time for which they will require a small private area. Muslims may also attend extra prayers, known as 'Tarawih', during the night.

ACKNOWLEDGING THOSE OBSERVING RAMADAN

As with any religion, showing your Muslim friends that you know it is Ramadan is likely to be appreciated. Posting an acknowledgement on your website or twitter or simply a notice in your clubhouse is a good idea.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN RAMADAN ENDS?

The end of Ramadan is marked by the festival of **Eid** for which Muslims may take time off. The day Eid falls on will depend on the sighting of the moon therefore flexibility is necessary. The appropriate way to express best wishes to a Muslim at Eid is to say **"Eid Mubarak"**.

SUGGESTED TWEET OR WEBSITE MESSAGE

"Ramadan Mubarak to all our Muslim friends. Best wishes to you for this the holy month of Ramadan. "

GUIDANCE AROUND FIXTURES

It is always important to take note of any important religious dates when planning fixtures. Ideally, if a team has a significant number of Muslim players it is best practice to try and avoid arranging fixtures during Ramadan.

Annually The FA produces a calendar of religious dates in order to support the game, this guidance has been written to provide you with the most significant dates for religious observance together with some information on them. Click here to see the current **calendar**.

"Faith and football are two essential parts of who I am. The flexibility that I've been shown in this regard has been vital in my journey in football. Taking note of Ramadan and all other faith events will help make football a game for everyone"

Robina Shah MBE
High Sheriff of Greater Manchester
Manchester FA IAB Chair & Board Director
FA Disability Committee & Womens Board

"Ramadan is important to many people in football, not just players but also coaches and tutors. We have to make sure everyone in the game can be their true selves and still go out their and do their job to the fullest. That's inclusion and is for people of all backgrounds"

Taff Rahman
FA Coach, Coach Tutor and Scout

www.mcst.org.uk

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www.the-amf.com