

The Việt Nam Professional Football (VPF) Company has proposed postponing the 2021 domestic season until February next year due to the worsening COVID-19 situation.



Hà Nội FC and Hồ Chí Minh in action earlier this year. VPF Photo

It's all over bar the shouting, and boy will there be a lot of shouting.

With Friday's news that the Việt Nam Professional Football (VPF) Company has proposed postponing the 2021 domestic season until February next year due to the worsening COVID-19 situation, it looks like we've seen the last of club football in Việt Nam this year.

Yes, the proposal still needs to be approved by Việt Nam Football Federation (VFF) and clubs still have to have their say (some reportedly learned of the decision through media reports), but if something so drastic is even being floated, in my mind it's a fait accompli.

While such a lengthy postponement will hit everyone in the game hard and is being welcomed by no one, there are undoubtedly some parties who will benefit more than others, at least in the short term.

Winner – Park Hang-seo

The national team coach is essentially now running a club team.

Without league matches to play the Korean strategist will surely have the benefit of a plus-size squad in training camps for virtually as long as he wants, giving him the chance to drill his tactics so deep into his players' minds that generations of their descendants will understand the wingback's role in the 3-5-2.

That's a luxury Việ t Nam's opponents in the final round of World Cup qualification won't have, particularly heavyweights Australia and Japan, whose squads are made up of players who ply their trade all over the world.

The lack of competitive action will surely be a concern, but I think overall the benefits of having greater access to the team outweigh any worries about match sharpness for the time being.

Loser - players

According to some counts, there are about 700 professional players in Việ t Nam's top two leagues and only 48 or so of them will be involved with the senior national team.

That leaves more than 600 others stuck in limbo for months and the prospect of being unable to compete for so long will surely have most of them absolutely gutted.

Aside from the emotional issue of being without the beautiful game, there are probably hundreds of players worried about making ends meet going forward.

V.League players make a decent living compared to average incomes in Việ t Nam but make no mistake, they don't earn the astronomical sums Premier League players do.

As the league is suspended and not cancelled, clubs are required to keep paying their players, but there's no guarantee they'll be able or willing to fulfil that obligation, just look at what's happened at .

Winner – big clubs

While every club is going to take a huge financial hit without matches to generate revenue, there are definitely some better positioned to ride out this storm than others.

Sông Lam Nghệ An (SLNA) and Quảng Ninh, for example, were in well-publicised financial difficulties long before this postponement was mooted.

If they're thrown into even more dire straits by the postponement, clubs with deeper pockets like Hà Nội FC and Hoàng Anh Gia Lai could reap the rewards down the line by gobbling up their top players on cut-price deals.

Loser – fans

Football is nothing without fans, and what are fans without football?

No matter the strength of the public health argument for postponement and even being aware that it can't have been an easy call for anyone to make, going without football for such a long spell is going to sting for V.League fanatics.

For me, the Premier League doesn't quite scratch the itch a mid-table Phố Hiến FC- Huế clash does, but I suppose watching Harry Kane and Harry Maguire compare forehead and wallet sizes will have to do for now.

Stay safe wherever you are and with a bit of luck, hopefully, this is the last year we have to worry about COVID wrecking an entire season.

Source: *VNN*