



# PLAYER BRIEFING

## BIENNIAL FIFA WORLD CUP PROPOSAL & PLAYER RELEASE PERIODS FOR NATIONAL TEAM FOOTBALL

### BACKGROUND

This briefing explains two urgent debates and what they mean for players: (1) the plans to shorten the player release periods (international windows) for national team football; and (2) the proposal to hold the FIFA World Cup every two years.

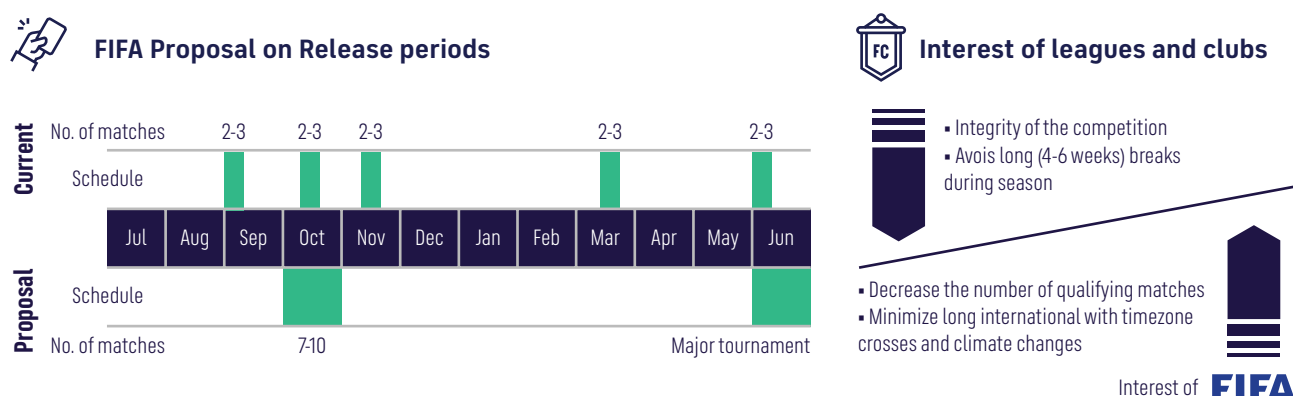
You will find information on:

- / **how a reduction of the player release periods (international windows) for national team football would affect players**
- / **what it means for players if the FIFA World Cup takes place every two years**
- / **what professional footballers need to think about as they look at these proposals.**

**This is a crucial moment for players and the future of their industry and require the support and agreement of players and their collective representation.**

### RELEASE PERIODS

Players have a special interest in the international match calendar, the release periods for national team players, and the safeguards that manage their workload. These questions are about players' welfare – they are separate from any discussions on new competition formats.



#### Background

- Radical reduction of the release periods for players
- 1 or 2 release periods for players to their national teams per year (currently 5)
- 7 instead of 10 national team games outside the final tournaments per year; but long competition national team window every summer
- Matches to be played in fewer but therefore longer international windows

#### Player-centric considerations

- Proposal reduces international travel for players
- Very limited opportunities for players to be nominated for national team (risk of injury or other reasons)
- Long release windows have high/negative impact on domestic league competitions and situation of players who are not called up

### FIFPRO PLAYER UNION RECOMMENDATION

Shorter international windows mean that players can travel less. But a more balanced approach, with three release periods, would give players more opportunities to be nominated for national teams, and protect the home market for all professional players.

### SEASON BREAKS

#### FIFA Proposal on season breaks

##### Current off-season break length vs recommended/mandatory off-season break



#### Background

- Guarantee of an off-season break of 25 days for all players
- Current planning foresees the off-season break at the end of every season after the completion of an international national team tournament
- Confederation or FIFA Biennial World Cup

#### Player-centric considerations

- Off season breaks should last at least 4 weeks, ideally 5
- In-season breaks are not considered at the moment (minimum of 14 days)
- The proposal has so far not outlined how off-season breaks will be enforced or protected
- Additional player workload safeguards must be considered

### FIFPRO PLAYER UNION RECOMMENDATION

Guaranteed off-season breaks are good news – it's what we've been asking for. But those breaks must be enforced and protected; if not, players always run the risk of being called back early. This is what's missing at the moment. Season-breaks and other workload safeguards are crucial for players' health and welfare – they must be kept separate from the discussion on new competitions.

\*Data is based on the FIFPRO Player Workload Monitoring Platform, which was developed in cooperation with KPMG Football Benchmark.

### COMPETITIONS

Competitions for clubs and national teams need to innovate over the next decade – but without harming players' domestic markets. Players' health and welfare – their workload – must be part of the discussion. Any changes to competitions must support the small and medium markets.

#### FIFA Proposal on 2-year World Cup cycle



#### Schedule

How will the biennial world cup impact the rest of the major national team competitions?

#### Background

- FIFA World Cup to be played every two years
- New qualification format and radically less player release periods for qualification (see above)
- More possibilities to qualify for the FIFA World Cup
- Major international team competition every summer

#### Player-centric considerations

- High workload pressure through ongoing international tournaments on players from leading markets
- Unforeseen economic impact for domestic leagues and clubs at the moment
- Strong focus on national team competitions might negatively impact the development of small and medium sized leagues and employment markets for players

### FIFPRO PLAYER UNION RECOMMENDATION

Holding the FIFA World Cup every two years would have a major impact on all parts of the football industry – above all the players. The proposal must be looked at carefully. And if there are better ways to support players and national team competitions in small and medium sized markets, they should be considered.