

## Reycup 2020

*Soccer in times of COVID-19*



### **Pre-Tournament – will there be a Reycup?**

2019: the year that the COVID-Pandemic caused worldwide problems. Of course, soccer was one of the minor important problems. This pandemic had a great impact on the tournament and our planning. I booked my flight when COVID-19 was something that only seemed to happen at Wuhan in China. Some weeks later it also touched us in Europe. That was the time when we still had no idea how the virus will restrict our live and I hoped that in July it would only be something in the past and we would have medicine to handle it. Time went by and it didn't become better, but in opposite. So the question rose if there will be a tournament at all. Other tournaments already had been cancelled and I read the Icelandic news each day. On Iceland it looked quite good compared to many other countries. But arranging a soccer tournament where many people meet is still something different than arranging daily life. So it wasn't 100% save that the tournament would happen even 4 weeks before start. But the Icelandic government (e.g. COVID-Test at airport) and Þróttur (the hosting club) developed good plans so that Reycup 2020 could be carried out. But the question how to get there was still an exciting question as airlines reduced their traffic because of restrictions. In total I had to book my flights 5 times. Now I've got a pile of vouchers. After this exciting preparation period I was already tired before the tournament started. But as I reached Reykjavik and our friends at Þróttur. I was happy and glad that I didn't cancel.

It was also good to get out a bit because of all the restrictions we had to live with for so many weeks.

### **The REFEX-referees**

Like the year before we wanted to go with 5 referees to Iceland. 3 talented referees from Spain planned to take part in Reycup and enjoy this fascinating island afterwards. Due to Corona-Crisis they had to cancel a few weeks before. I could read in their email how sad they have been.

After their cancellation I tried to acquire some new referees. 3 referees from Belgium showed much interest. But in the end they weren't able to participate either because Belgiums COVID-regulation wanted each tourist that came home to stay in quarantine for 2 weeks afterwards.

So Michael Imhof and me were the only two this year.



We also made up our mind. Of course, there was still a risk. But the situation on Iceland, like described above, looked quite good and there were only few tourists. It wasn't more dangerous than going shopping at home.

### **The Tournament**

Because of COVID I thought there will only be a small edition of Rey Cup especially as no foreign teams were able to take part. But I was wrong! All Icelandic clubs were happy that there was at least this tournament in Reykjavik. So it was the biggest Rey Cup ever! Because of so many participations the games already started on Wednesday afternoon. The games were like we knew them from other participations before. Always a good attitude, players fighting for the ball, in general fair and kind behaviour, no one that was making trouble. Thank you all! But compared to some years ago, we could also see the development of Icelandic football. In previous years we always said that they play very physical (but fair) with lots of running and duels. Now it has become a bit more a passing game, less going into a duel with the ball at your foot.

Like I said before, there was a bit more to do. So in the end my personal tournament record went up from 27 games to 29 games. There were also 5 games I had to do alone.

But the **REFEX-highscore** is now held by **Michael Imhof: 30 games** in a tournament!

Does it sound (too) much for 4 days? Maybe, but we are not there for sitting and watching. We love to be on the fields. After a short break, we cannot wait to take the next game!

It's like in athletics, some do short distances, some do medium and some do long distances. We're prepared and love to do Marathon! ☺

But it's not only Michael and me, it's also the other referees that spend much effort. All are great ladies and guys!

### **Hygiene concept & socialising**

It was clear before that it won't be like we were used to with all the events and contacts beside the games. Þróttur couldn't allow teams or spectators to enter the club house. Also teams had to avoid close contacts. As far as we know, nothing happened, no virus was spread.

One special task for us as referees was to clean the balls:



Here you see that the whistles that were provided by Þróttur had to be disinfected after usage:



The events in the end of the day where we met others were cancelled and the BBQ event was splitted to 2 locations. Of course, it was sad that there were these restrictions, but we knew that it was right and we supported it. But although we were missing this program that makes this tournament so wonderful, we had a good time. One evening we met with our dear friend Mats. We spend some hours, talking and having some drinks. It's fantastic when you go to a foreign place far away and can meet friends and spend time with them. Thank you Mats, you're a wonderful person!

We also had a nice short meeting on Sunday after the last games had been done: Michael and me went down to the pool for relaxing. At the national Stadium we met Gunnar Oddur Hafliðason. Gunnar is an Icelandic referee we met 2016 at ReyCup for



the first time. He has also joined REFEX for taking part at HCA-Cup some years ago. Now he's been promoted to Icelandics top league! Great! It's a great pleasure to meet such a good referee and such a nice guy. We had a nice talk. We hope to have some games in future with you again.

Also the final party on Sunday evening with all from Þróttur had to be cancelled. Instead of this Michael and me got an invitation to the Hilton for a dinner. It was wonderful, delicious.



But I would always exchange it to having some fries and a beer with all those great people, our friends of Þróttur!

### **Summary**

Again we had a great time at Reycup. We enjoyed the great hospitality, good and fair games. Of course, we were missing the foreign teams and the events for socialising. Much respect and many thanks to Þróttur to make this tournament happen under such difficult circumstances. You all did a great job!

When it was Monday morning and we had to leave we were sad that it was already over again. But we're looking forward in excitement to next Reycup!

### **Lifi Þróttur!**

*Jörg Irle & Michael Imhof*