



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**CONTACT:**

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

[press@cityofchicago.org](mailto:press@cityofchicago.org)

**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT TEAMS UP WITH CHICAGO'S PROFESSIONAL SPORTS TEAMS TO PRESENT THE "WE ARE NOT PLAYING" CAMPAIGN TO COMBAT COVID-19**

*Hometown teams join with the City to remind residents to take simple precautions as next step in STAY HOME. SAVE LIVES. campaign*

**CHICAGO** – Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot today announced a groundbreaking campaign, "**We Are Not Playing**," in partnership with Chicago's professional sports teams to combat the spread of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). Each of Chicago's hometown professional sports teams - including the Chicago Bears, Blackhawks, Bulls, Cubs, Fire, Red Stars, Sky, White Sox – has signed on to the initiative, which leverages the influence of sports teams and their players to drive compliance with the statewide Stay at Home order, directing residents to keep themselves and their neighbors safe from the spread of COVID-19 by staying home.

"We all have a role to play in meeting the challenge of COVID-19, and our success is directly tied to every Chicagoan making sure they Stay Home and Save Lives," said Mayor Lori Lightfoot. "I am grateful to each of our hometown teams for stepping up and doing their part by joining in this call for every neighborhood and community. They're not playing, and neither are we. The more we stay home and act responsibly, the more lives we'll save, and the sooner we'll be able to get our city back on track and enjoying the games we love."

**We Are Not Playing** is an integrated initiative that will kick-off with digital and out-of-home billboards around Chicago, before moving online and onto social media. The initiative is widespread, touching multiple municipalities, is comprised of many supporting elements, and it builds on the recently launched "Stay Home. Save Lives" movement created by Mayor Lightfoot.

"Normally, this is one of those sweet times of the year when we're enjoying White Sox games AND Cubs games AND Blackhawks games AND Bulls games AND Fire games," said George H. McCaskey, Chicago Bears Chairman. "Of course, the situation our city and our world are in right now is anything but normal. We've all got to do what we can to get through this. That means following the Mayor's directive and staying home. We owe it to our families, our friends, our neighbors, and all of the medical personnel who are working so hard and so selflessly dealing with this crisis. Bears fans get it. They know what's at stake. And, they'll do the right thing."



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The City is making full use of Chicago's storied sports history, and the special place these teams have in its residents' hearts, to convince all Chicagoans of the importance of practicing social distancing and self-isolating at home to flatten the curve of COVID-19.

"As far as time-outs go, none are more important to our fans than this one. All of us need to listen to the experts by staying off the field of play and stay at home. We owe that to ourselves, but we especially owe it the people that do not have that stay-at-home option, beginning with our front-line responders. Let's not make their jobs tougher by ignoring these safeguards or interfering with them," said Rocky Wirtz, Chairman Chicago Blackhawks and Co-Chairman of the United Center Joint Venture.

The campaign will roll-out across the City beginning today, April 6, with digital and social advertisements in phase one, and celebrity/all-star player social videos set to come online afterwards. The goal of this campaign is to appeal to every Chicagoan with a sports figure that can be easily recognized as the City works to gain compliance with the statewide Stay At Home Order. The campaign was developed from concept to execution by award-winning Foote Cone Belding Chicago (FCB) agency. With a consistent thread of design and message, the campaign is a message of unity through the city's on-the-street assets, the far social reach of Chicago's sports teams and their players' influence. The agency provided their creative, design and digital expertise pro bono.

"There has never been a more important time to harness the power of creativity to help support our city and keep its residents safe and healthy," Kelly Graves, President of FCB Chicago. "FCB Chicago has a long history of partnering with organizations that make our city a better place to live and work - lending our support on this initiative was something that our team was ready and willing to take on the moment we got the call from Mayor Lightfoot's office."

"The Bulls are proud to join Mayor Lightfoot and our fellow pro Chicago sports teams in urging Chicagoans to stay home and save lives. I have always said that this is the greatest city in the world, and we all have a crucial role to play to protect the place we are lucky to call home," said Michael Reinsdorf, President & COO, Chicago Bulls. "Teamwork, looking out for one another and coming together as a community is needed now more than ever. Do your part by staying home to help everyone on the front lines working tirelessly throughout this pandemic to save lives."

"Sports has always served as a great example of achieving a common goal and overcoming the odds. As we battle the biggest public health crisis facing our generation, the Chicago Cubs are happy to join the Chicago sports community in encouraging Chicago residents to work together as a team to fight this pandemic," said Tom Ricketts, Chicago Cubs executive chairman. "If we can all do our part to follow public health guidelines to stay at home we can slow or stop the spread of this disease. Stay inside so that we can come together and watch baseball soon."



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"The Fire has an international roster and fan base – we have fans, players, coaches and families connected to this pandemic across the globe," said Chicago Fire FC Owner Joe Mansueto. "On behalf of our entire Club, we would like to thank Mayor Lightfoot for her leadership during this time and we are in full support of the 'We Are Not Playing' campaign. Although our 'Homecoming' match at Soldier Field has been postponed, our fans will, in due time, experience that special day. There will be a time when games resume, but for now, we all need to stay at home to flatten the curve. We know that Chicago will, once again, be a symbol of resilience for the country."

Today's announcement is part of the City's exhaustive response to the COVID-19, which is intended to keep the public safe, contain the spread of the virus, and provide relief to the healthcare system. In recent days Mayor Lightfoot's administration has announced a number of measures to enhance the City's emergency response on COVID-19, with new guidelines built to reduce non-essential services, increase teleworking to protect the health and safety of the workforce, and lift the economic burden placed on residents—all while ensuring that essential City services can be continued.

"We love sports. In fact, it's usually all we think about. But, for the foreseeable future, sports don't matter. The health of our citizens is paramount," said Arnim Whisler, Red Stars Owner and CEO. "With that in mind, the Chicago Red Stars are shifting our emphasis from being a leader on the pitch to a leader in social distancing. If we work together, we can and will flatten the curve."

As the City continues to respond to COVID-19 it will pursue additional measures as needed to contain the virus. The City urges residents who are mandated to stay at home and who do not have access otherwise to contact 311 to be connected with food and other social services.

"Our top priority is the health and well-being of everyone in the city of Chicago and throughout the greater Chicagoland area," said Adam Fox, Chicago Sky President and CEO. "We are proud and committed to lending our voice to support the guidelines and best practices set forth by Mayor Lightfoot and to stay home and save lives. We are all in this together."

"The City of Chicago is home to the very best sports fans in the world. For every sports team in Chicago, our fans have been there for us, in both good times and bad," said Jerry Reinsdorf, chairman of the Chicago White Sox. "The teams receive so much support from our fans that it is our responsibility to give back whenever and however we can. When Mayor Lightfoot invited us to participate in the 'We Are Not Playing' campaign, the answer was easy. It is an honor for us to support the Mayor's campaign, reinforcing the critical importance of social distancing and staying home. Just as our fans help make the difference for our teams at home, we all can make a difference in this fight. Our actions right now can save lives. Baseball and basketball will resume one day, and our lives will return to some type of normal, but until then, every person in Chicago has a role to play to help this city win."

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More information and the latest local updates on COVID-19 can be found on the [Chicago.gov/coronavirus](https://chicago.gov/coronavirus) website. Residents can tune in and have their questions answered by Dr. Arwardy, Commissioner of Chicago Department of Public Health, during the daily “The Doctor Is In” Livestream, M-F at 11am. They can also register for mobile updates by texting COVID19 to 78015 or email questions to [coronavirus@chicago.gov](mailto:coronavirus@chicago.gov).

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