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GAA President John Horan has confirmed there'll be no return to games at any level while social distancing is in place, a bleak picture that he estimates could hit the association for EUR50m.

Speaking in an extensive interview on *The Sunday Game*, Horan said he can't envisage games taking place until social distancing is removed from society at large, reducing the chances of this year's football and hurling Championships taking place.

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Blue Billywig Video Player Horan said he doesn't believe that staging games behind closed doors is a realistic option, claiming that 'if it's safe enough for the players to be in close contact on the pitch, I think then it's going to be safe enough to have a certain number of people in the gathering in the actual ground itself'.

The Dubliner said his own belief is that a green light for 'crowds gathering in that situation will probably come before we have contact sport' anyhow.

Horan also spoke of being 'taken by surprise' at the government's road map to recovery making provision for groups of four to convene for training from May 18.

"There was a concept in it that people could gather together in groups of four but we felt that that just couldn't be marshaled within our clubs and that's why we continue to keep our premises closed," said Horan, reiterating that pitches will remain shut until July 20 at least.

Asked if he can envisage GAA activity of any sort being played while social distancing measures are in place, Horan shook his head.

"I can't see it happening to be quite honest because if social distancing is a priority to deal with this pandemic, I don't know we can play a contact sport and that is what Gaelic games is, it is a contact sport," said Horan.

"The key thing is it's a contact sport, our concern has to be the players on the pitch, their families and their work colleagues and they are all amateurs. I know they take it very seriously at inter-county level and they have a very professional approach to it but we cannot risk anybody's health. When all this is over and we're all back to normal life, I would hate to think that we as an organisation made a decision that cost any family a member of their family."

The most recent GAA statement on a potential return to activity stated that there'd be no inter-county action until October at the earliest.

Horan admitted that even if this schedule is realised, it's almost certain the remaining games in the Allianz Leagues won't be played, meaning the 2020 competition is likely to be declared null and void.

One potential way of ensuring games do go ahead from October would be to initiate a programme of testing for players though Horan said this is unlikely, partly because of the expense.

"I think we have to be beyond that point of testing players before they go out on the pitch," said Horan. "It has already been said that if sporting organisations wish to take on a testing process, they'll have to fund it themselves."

Horan maintained that all timelines and schedules have the capacity to change, for the better and the worse, depending on the national state of play.

He revealed a bottom line figure of a potential EUR50m loss to the Association if games aren't played in 2020.

"Our whole planning and budgeting this year would have been on the basis of money coming in as revenue from our games and coming in from our sponsors," he said. "Looking at the figures at the moment, it's looking like we will end up with a loss of between EUR25m and EUR30m in Croke Park, that is centrally in Croke Park and the actual stadium, and throughout the organisation taking into account county boards and clubs, the loss for the year for us if we get no games played is probably heading in the region of EUR50m."

That's considerably down on the EUR60m figure suggested by GAA Director General Tom Ryan in early April which also related merely to central GAA.

But it remains a huge potential loss that Horan acknowledged has the potential to halt their grant funding for various units and projects.

"Unfortunately they've possibly just hit bad timing with any application," said Horan. "The money is not there. As soon as the money comes back on stream, we'll be only delighted to get back out supporting our clubs and redistributing the money but as I've said to you, a EUR50m loss throughout the whole organisation, and we don't keep big reserves, we just won't have the funding there to keep handing it out."

On the issue of social distancing and whether this will be the deciding factor for games and activity taking place beyond October, Horan nodded.

"I would have a concern putting people into contact and then returning them to their families," he said. "I was talking to one club manager during the week and he said there's four brothers on a squad he's managing and they have told him that they're not going back because their father is elderly, he has an underlying health issue and they're not prepared to take the risk of bringing anything home to their father."