

RETURN TO TRAINING AND COMPETITION GUIDANCE FOR ATHLETES, COACHES, CLUBS & OFFICIALS (POST) COVID-19 IN JAMAICA.

The world has been gripped by a highly infectious pandemic caused by the SARS corona virus 2. COVID-19 infection has caused severe disruption to all aspects of life inclusive of the sporting landscape. There was a cessation of all sporting activities worldwide including athletics. There has been a gradual return of sporting activities in different countries as the pandemic has been brought under some measure of control. The athletic fraternity is anxious to see the return of athletic activity. This must take place in a safe environment that will minimize the risk of transmission of COVID-19. These protocols if adhered to will minimize that risk

This document has been specifically tailored for the Jamaican landscape using inputs from World Health Organization (WHO) mass gathering guidance and inputs from other countries approaches.

The primary consideration is the rules and regulations provided by the Government of Jamaica acting in conjunction with the Ministry of Health. The secondary consideration should be the specific recommendations set out in this document. The more restrictive of the two sets of regulations take precedence.

This document's criteria and recommendations are based on known factors about COVID-19 at the time of writing. A lot of athletes especially the senior ones may already have returned to training with the easing of the Government's restrictions and the impending reopening of the country. We however need to bear in mind that every case of COVID-19 is potentially life altering or deadly at **all** age groups. This is especially so in individuals with specific risk factors (co-morbidities) such as asthma, hypertension, diabetes, liver and kidney disease and immune suppression etc. All these factors are common in the Jamaican population. We should also remember the words of the Minister of Health who pointed out that with the Government measures in reopening the country and lifting of restrictions we are going to see cases grow exponentially. Short of an effective vaccine or cure being found there is no way of completely eliminating the risk of infection and related fatalities.

Governmental response to COVID-19 in phases;

1. Phase 1. GOJ requires shelter in place i.e. lockdown.
2. Phase 2. Group activities prohibited.
3. Phase 3. Small group activities allowed. Most Public training facilities closed.
4. Phase 4. Public training facilities open with no limitation on group size.
5. Phase 5. Vaccine or cure for COVID-19 is developed. (Or serological testing to determine immunity).

Jamaica's governmental response is currently somewhere between phases 3 and 4. It is quite possible that if there is a resurgence of cases we may revert to the more restrictive public health measures previously employed. Guidelines are therefore given for activities during all the phases. Having determined the current local phase the guidelines for that phase is applied. Proper hygiene and social distancing applies in all phases.

PHASE 1.

- Individual training at home with own equipment. Avoid training with other athletes.
- Virtual coaching only. No in person coaching.
- General physical activity on public streets if allowed and can maintain social distancing. Avoid parks, weight rooms and gyms.
- Rigorous cleaning of living spaces. Frequently touched areas to be cleaned multiple times daily. Work out equipment cleaned before and after use.

PHASE 2.

- Individual training at home or outside with own equipment while maintaining social distance. No training with others.
- Virtual coaching only. No in person coaching.
- General physical activity on public streets if allowed. Avoid parks, weight rooms and gyms.
- Rigorous cleaning of living spaces. Frequently touched areas to be cleaned multiple times daily. Work-out equipment cleaned before and after use.
- Wear a mask when in public.

PHASE 3.

Before participating in group activities athletes, coaches, officials and staff must fulfill the following criteria;

- No signs or symptoms of COVID-19 in the past 14 days. If person was infected they must have medical documentation to show that they were cleared to participate. Athletes, coaches, staff should self-monitor for symptoms daily and record and report symptoms if any occur.
- Must not reside in a community that has been under quarantine in the previous 14 days.
- No close or sustained contact with any person infected with COVID-19 for the 14 days prior to commencing group training.
- Practice infection prevention measures. (Inclusive of the wearing of masks).
- Train outside where social distancing can be maintained.
- No sharing of equipment. No touching of each other with hands.
- Use communal equipment only if able to disinfect it before and after use by each athlete.
- Avoid activities requiring direct or indirect contact between athletes e.g. high jump or pole vault pits. Can do these activities if pits adequately sanitized between athletes, one athlete at a time or use an athlete specific tarp or cover for pits.
- Frequent cleaning of all equipment used with disinfectant before during and after each training session.
- All participants to maintain social distance during training.
- Ideally 2 negative COVID-19 tests separated by 24 hours and results available before beginning of group training for all participants.
- Temperature and symptom check before start of each training session. Participants with any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 should be referred to a healthcare provider for follow up and should not train until cleared.

PHASE 4.

- No signs or symptoms of COVID-19 in the past 14 days. If person was infected they must have medical documentation to show that they were cleared to participate. Athletes, coaches, staff should self monitor for symptoms daily and record and report symptoms if any occur.
- Must not reside in a community that has been under quarantine in the previous 14 days.
- No close or sustained contact with any person infected with COVID-19 for the 14 days prior to commencing group training.
- Practice infection prevention measures. (Inclusive of the wearing of masks).
- Maintain social distance during training.
- Frequent cleaning of all equipment used with disinfectant before, during and after each training session.
- May share equipment but clean between use.
- Ideally 2 negative COVID-19 tests separated by 24 hours and results present before beginning of group training for all participants.
- Coaches/staff to question athletes about presence of symptoms and check temperatures, refer to healthcare providers as necessary.

PHASE 5.

- All participants to be vaccinated if this is available.
- Education to be continued on signs and symptoms and athletes not to train if symptoms develop.
- Practice infection prevention measures.
- Continue rigorous, frequent schedule of sanitizing/cleaning equipment with disinfectant before, during and after training.

RETURN TO COMPETITION IN STADIUM OUTDOOR COMPETITION

1. LOCAL COMPETITION
2. INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION
(See World Athletics (WA) Guidelines)

LOCAL COMPETITION

Overview

These are aimed at health and safety aspects of organizing outdoor athletics competition in a COVID-19 pandemic situation in World Health Organization (WHO) phases 4, 5, 6 and post peak period. These guidelines are aimed at ensuring personal and public health for participants and should be considered by meet organizers. These guidelines are aimed at reducing COVID-19 risks as much as possible. Local or national public health and safety regulations and restrictions will take precedence over these guidelines. Organizers should monitor changes to national regulations and ensure compliance with local health laws. These guidelines are subject to change as the science and knowledge on COVID-19 changes.

Stakeholders will have to be made to understand that they participate in meets at their own risk. Athletes should sign an indemnity agreement releasing meet organizers from any responsibility associated with contracting COVID-19.

Main stakeholders considered;

- Professional athletes.
- Athletes' staff: coaches, managers, physiotherapists etc.
- Event technical officials.
- Event volunteers and workforce (sponsors and partners, timing and accreditation systems, security, and stadium support services).
- Event medical and anti-doping staff.
- Media and Broadcasters.
- Attending spectators. (Will be governed by public health regulations and guidelines. The WHO risk assessment tools for mass gatherings should be used).

Risk assessment to be conducted for all accredited attendants. If individuals are deemed to be at greater than normal risk they should undergo a medical clearance protocol. A medical doctor or public health specialist needs to be assigned to do COVID_19 prevention. This person to be responsible for risk assessment and mitigation.

At the Stadium

- Spectators and accredited personnel should be kept separate. They are to have separate entrances, and two separate flows.
- Everyone in the stadium is required to wear masks at all times and in all locations. Athletes are exempt when warming up or competing.
- Accredited personnel must wear masks and have personal hand sanitizers to enter field of play. Personal kit should include masks and hand sanitizer gel.
- Warm up zones to be in open-air zones with restricted access.
- Chairs in call rooms to be disinfected between each use.

In competition

- Minimize number of people on field of play. Essential personnel only.
- Protective glasses/face shields and masks for officials having close contact with athletes.
- No hugging after races. Keep distance from the public and officials where possible.
- Equipment guidelines
 - Clean starting blocks between each race.
 - Clean relay batons after each use.
 - Athletes to use hand sanitizers before each attempt in vertical jumps.
 - Landing mats to be cleaned after each jump.
 - Mix sand in jumping pits with viricidal agent.
 - Add chlorine to steeplechase water jump.
 - Clean throwing implements after each use.
 - Officials handling throwing implements to clean hands after each handling.
 - Recovery areas for athletes should be open air.

After competition

- Minimize numbers in media mixed zones. Plexiglass screen between athletes and media, and cleaned after each use.
- Live award ceremonies not recommended.
- Thorough disinfection of venue and equipment after competition. Agreed between Covid-19 coordinator and venue operator.

INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION

Procedures are similar to local competition except specific procedures for receiving international athletes. Athletes to comply with government requirements for entry.

Pre competition

- Welcome desks at airport. Welcome bag to each athlete.
 - Contents
 - Disposable masks (3 per day).
 - Bottles of hand sanitizers.
 - Disinfectant wipes.
 - COVID-19 public health leaflet. Event specific.
 - Minimize numbers of passengers in transportation. No more than half legal capacity. Drivers and passengers to wear masks.
 - Athletes to make note of contacts to facilitate contact tracing if necessary.

Appendices:

1. Infection prevention measures.

Key Points from the CDC:

- There is currently no vaccine to prevent coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).
- The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus.
- The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person.
 - Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
 - Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.
 - These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.
 - There is some indication that **COVID-19** can be spread by people who show no symptoms of infection.

CDC Guidance on how to protect yourself

Clean your hands often.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

Avoid close contact – maintain social distancing.

- Social distancing – stay at least 6 ft / 2m away from others if possible
- Avoid going out, except for groceries and necessary items
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick

Take steps to protect others.

- Stay home if you are sick, except to get medical care. Learn what to do if you are sick.
- Wear a face mask.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow. Disinfect your elbow asap after. Throw used tissues in the trash.

Clean and disinfect.

- Clean AND disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily. This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks.

Guidance for training.

- Maintain social distancing.
- Wash hands before entering a common area where training takes place.
- Thoroughly disinfect all implements, equipment, etc. – anything you might touch.
- Keep your equipment and gear at least 6 ft / 2 m away from others.
- Wash hands immediately after ending the training session before touching other items, getting in car, etc.

2. Signs and symptoms of COVID-19.

These can include the following;

- Cough.
- Fever.
- Chills.
- Muscle pain.
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing.
- Sore throat.
- New loss of taste or smell.
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest.
- New confusion.
- Bluish lips or face.

Symptoms can range from mild to severe illness and usually appear 2 to 14 days after exposure to the virus that causes COVID-19.

***Prepared by Medical Committee of the JAAA.
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