



**Republic of Malawi**

**Ministry of Youth and Sports**

**GUIDELIES FOR REOPENING OF SPORTING ACTIVITIES  
AMID COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

**Date: 24<sup>th</sup> August, 2020**

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Like all other social and economic activities, sporting activities in the country have been on suspension for a long time due to the Covid-19 pandemic and this has created genuine fears that the standard of sports, physical fitness of players and the competence of both players and officials will drastically decline to non-recoverable levels if the suspension continues. Secondly, the economy of the sports industry and the country as a whole will continue to collapse. It should be noted that the sports sector is huge and complex since it cuts across both urban and rural settings. Though the economic impact of sports seems minimal due to lack of research based evidence, there is huge human-power that fully relies on earnings from the sporting activities. The suspension of the sporting activities has therefore caused a lot of suffering to most Malawians whose survival depends on such activities.

It is against this back ground that the Ministry of Youth and Sports proposes the re-opening of sporting activities at the beginning of September, 2020. However, realising that the pandemic is still among us, the Ministry has compiled some measures to be followed as sporting activities re-start so that players, officials, spectators and all stakeholders are protected. The guidelines will come into effect on the day they will be approved by the Presidential Task Force on Covid-19.

## **2.0 APPLICATION OF THE GUIDELINES**

The Guidelines will apply to all types and levels of sport events and all the people involved in the organization and management of sport events.

For the sake of clarity, the guidelines are classified into two categories:

- a. Guideline for Sport Games/ Competitions; and,
- b. Guideline for Sport Meetings/ conferenes e.t.c

## **3.0 GUIDELINES FOR DIFFERENT LEVELS OF SPORT EVENTS AND STAKEHOLDERS**

### **3.1 General Guidelines for Preparation of the Sport Events**

- 3.1.1 The organizers of the event should make sure that they understand the Covid-19 preventive measures related to the event they intend to organize before they organize the event (game or meeting). It should be noted that the responsibility of Covid-19 prevention during the event lies in the hands of the event organisers, with support from law-enforcers, Healthy personnel and other key stakeholders to involve.
- 3.1.2 The organizers should incorporate Covid-19 preventive measures into their event plan at all levels of the event management.
- 3.1.3 The organizers should submit, least a month before the date of the event, their event plan to Malawi National Council of Sports, through the respective Sports Association, where applicable, for approval to organize the event.
- 3.1.4 The organizers should sensitise all stakeholders on the event plan way before organizing the event.
- 3.1.5 The organizers should make sure that they mobilize adequate necessary equipment for the event including personal protective equipment for all participants.
- 3.1.6 For sports events, the organizers should ensure that they have exhausted also contractual issues with participants before engaging them in the event. For example, insurance, allowances (including risk allowances where necessary), clear working conditions and consent from parents or guardians of participants below the age of 18.
- 3.1.7 The organization plan of the event should clearly show monitoring mechanism of compliance to covid-19 preventive measures.

### **3.2 Guidelines applicable to training for Sports Games or competitions**

- 3.2.1 All sports personnel and stakeholders with covid-19 symptoms should not be allowed to participate in sporting activities until they are treated and are fully recovered;
- 3.2.2 All sporting activities should start with players training for a period of six weeks to gain fitness in order to prevent injuries and deaths;
- 3.2.3 Training should be done only in the presence of registered with the Medical Council of Malawi, who will be checking temperatures and general health of all players and officials.
  
- 3.2.4 All training balls and equipment must be disinfected before use.
  
- 3.2.5 Organizers to provide water and soap for washing hands before and after training.
  
- 3.2.6 Organizers to conduct independent audit inspection at every training ground to ensure compliance before being audited by Law enforcers who will impose sanctions for noncompliance.

### **3.3 Guidelines applicable to Sports Games or competitions**

- 3.3.1 Before first main game or competitive event of a particular sports, the respective Sports Associations or organizers should host at least two test or friendly matches to assess if the guidelines are working and if the participants are complying with the measures. The Presidential Task Force on Covid-19 or their relevant delegated personnel should be invited to be part of the test matches observers. The invitations should be sent

to the committee at least two week in advance for proper planning.

- 3.3.2 Matches to be played only in the presence of a respective Sports Association or organizer designated Match Inspector and Medical Personnel.
- 3.3.3 Players and their officials to be quarantined for 14 days before participating in the sport event;
- 3.3.4 All players and sports officials to avoid public transport where possible;
- 3.3.5 The date, time and venue of the matches should be communicated to relevant stakeholders together with invitation and confirmed at least 72 hours before kick-off.
- 3.3.6 The respective Sports Association and relevant competition authorities Shall Set an **Event Coordination Team** comprising of a Sports Association's Delegate (Match Commissioner), A Health Authority Official, Stadium Manager and Security Personnel that will ensure that all Measurers and standard put in place are adhered to.
- 3.3.7 The **Event Coordination Team** shall inspect the Venue at least 48 hours before the game to certify if it is in condition to host the particular match.
- 3.3.8 On the eve of the match, the **Event Coordination Team** led by the Association delegate shall hold an Event Coordination Meeting all concerned stakeholders to clarifying the Rules and Regulations governing the event.
- 3.3.9 All Sports Associations should identify and train event Coordinators for their respective sport across the country.
- 3.3.10 All facilities at the venue should be cleaned and disinfected a day before the event e.g. dressing rooms,

toilets, medical rooms, seats where possible, and all equipment.

3.3.11 For games or competitions, all entrances into the sport facilities should have:

- a. hand washing facilities(water and soap) and sanitizers;
- b. Infrared thermometer for checking body temperature.

3.3.12 Entry into all sports facilities to be allowed only after thoroughly hand washing with soap or hand sanitised

3.3.13 During the sports event, all players( Except those on the field of play ), all officials, spectators, Guests, support staff and service providers should put on protective face masks and observe all necessary measures including observing social distance;

3.3.14 In order to maintain social distance, as per Covid-19 preventive guidelines, the following measures shall be observed :

- a. Increasing gate charges;
- b. Printing tickets half of the capacity of the venue;
- c. Pre-selling tickets and not at the venue;
- d. Early opening of gates;
- e. All media personnel to be accredited by organizers and to control numbers;
- f. All guests to be given complementary tickets.

3.3.15 Each sports facility should have a special room for isolation of those suspected to be covid-19 positive before they are tested and taken for quarantine;

3.3.16 Avoid hosting and participating in international sports events until the situation normalizes;

- 3.3.17 All sports facilities and equipment to be disinfected before and after use;
- 3.3.18 Sports event organizers to demonstrate capacity and preparedness before being allowed to organize the event;
- 3.3.19 Sensitize participants and the general public on Sports Covid-19 preventive measures through messages to be disseminated during the event;
- 3.3.20 Intensive monitoring and evaluation of implementation of the covid-19 preventing measures during sport events;
- 3.3.21 Avoid sharing of uniforms and equipment that allow direct contact of players and officials;
- 3.3.22 Where possible prefer using outdoor (open space) sports facilities and reduce capacity in indoor sports facilities by 50%;
- 3.3.23 Ensure proper ventilation for indoor sports facilities;
- 3.3.24 Limit number of people entering change (dressing) rooms;
- 3.3.25 No hand shake during starting of games and cheering of teams;
- 3.3.26 Reduce capacity of buses / cars carrying players and sports officials;
- 3.3.27 Complete separation of players from spectators;
- 3.3.28 Any suspected cases to be reported immediately to healthy authorities;
- 3.3.29 No use of towels and linen on massage beds;
- 3.3.30 Regular sanitising of treatment beds, door handles and key surfaces after use by each athlete;
- 3.3.31 Avoid touching of non-essential surfaces;
- 3.3.32 After every event convene a post-mortem meeting to analyse the event in order to improve organization of the next events. Compile and submit a report of the

event stating what worked and what went wrong and the recommendations for improvement.

### **3.4 Guidelines Applicable to Sport Meetings /Conferences and Indoor Sports Events**

- 3.4.1 Some of the measures in 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 will apply;
- 3.4.2 Reduce capacity in indoor sports facilities or venues by 50%;
- 3.4.3 Ensure proper ventilation of indoor sports facilities or venues;
- 3.4.4 Avoid sharing of microphone, pens and papers between participants during meetings;
- 3.4.5 Resort to electronic communication during invitations and sharing of meeting documents;
- 3.4.6 Participants should sit between 1.5 to 2 metres apart;
- 3.4.7 For indoor sport events, regularly clean and disinfect the floor and surfaces of furniture and equipment.
- 3.4.8 Always put on face masks;
- 3.4.9 Wash hands and sanitize regularly.

## **4.0 ENFORCEMENT MECHANISM**

4.1.1 The following stakeholders will be assist in enforcing the measures:

- a) Security Personnel;
- b) Sports Officials;
- c) Medical Personnel;
- d) Media personnel
- e) Spectators
- f) Stadium owners
- g) Sports Covid-19 Task Force

4.1.2 Intensive monitoring and evaluation exercise

### **4.1.3 Sanctions**

Failure to comply with the sports covid-19 preventive measures will attract sanctions such as ban for organizing or participating in sports event, fines and arrest by law-enforcers in line with the laws of Malawi.

## **5.0 EXPECTED CHALLENGES AND RISKS FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GUIDELINES**

- 5.1 Claims for risk allowances by officials and players;
- 5.2 Lack of compliance of the preventive measures by some stakeholders;
- 5.3 High costs of managing sports events due to costs of water, soap, sanitizers and protective wear, extra security and medical personnel than normally required;
- 5.4 Difficulty in enforcing preventive measures in less organized sport events, particularly in rural areas;
- 5.5 Need for intensive monitoring and evaluation exercise.