



Guidelines for a Safe Return to Sports, under the New Normal

Developed by the Bhutan Olympic Committee

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Introduction

These guidelines have been developed by the Bhutan Olympic Committee to address a safe return to sport, during the current pandemic. The guidelines consist of information from the World Health Organization (WHO) and other international sport organizations.

Given the diversity of sports and the varying levels of contact required for each sport discipline, the National Sports Federations (NSFs) and Sports Associations (SAs) are also required to adopt their own protocols, in line with that of their respective International Federations to minimise the risk of Covid-19 infection and transmission.

It is the complete responsibility of the NSFs and SAs, to ensure complete adherence to protocols during the implementation of their programs and activities, including the training of national athletes, and to secure the full compliance of their athletes and officials with all the protocols mentioned hereunder, for all training activities undertaken:

Getting your workplace ready:

- 1. Clean and disinfect premises:** All areas within the premises must be cleaned and disinfected, using clinically approved disinfectants that have no significant side-effects on exposure, through touch or smell. The areas to be disinfected include but are not limited to:
 - a. Entrances (doorknobs, handles etc.) to premises, buildings, rooms
 - b. All common areas used by staff and visitors
 - c. Washrooms and toilets
 - d. All other surfaces that are touched by users regularly

Ensure cleaning and disinfection of workplaces on a regular basis. The schedule for cleaning and disinfection must be done before or after work hours.

- 2. General measures to minimize risk**
 - a. Install handwashing facility at the entrance
 - b. Avoid meetings and events
 - c. Encourage e-communication
 - d. Actively monitor communities where COVID-19 is spreading, and ensure employees from those areas stay at home
 - e. Use of Druk trace app must be made mandatory for all staff and visitors
 - f. Ensure physical distancing at workplace (at least 1 meter)

- g. Open windows and doors whenever possible to make sure your workplace is well ventilated
- h. Develop contingency work plans, in case of community outbreak in Thimphu
- i. Ensure that employees who display mild symptoms of COVID 19, to self-quarantine and visit the nearest flu clinic

3. Measures to encourage individual hygiene:

- a. Make it mandatory for individuals to clean and disinfect surfaces (desks/tables) and office equipment (telephone, computer)
- b. Place hand sanitizer in prominent areas around the workplace
- c. Ensure continuous running water and soap to promote regular hand-washing
- d. Display posters promoting hand-washing
- e. Make face mask mandatory for employees and visitors
- f. Designated waste bin for proper disposal of face masks and tissue papers
- g. Discourage potluck lunches to reduce risk of infection

Getting sports facilities ready:

1. **Consent signing:** The concerned NSF/SA must ensure that all athletes provide a signed consent form, declaring their consent and knowledge of all the limitations and risks associated with training under the current scenario (A sample consent form has been included in *Annexure 1*).

Prior to commencement of national team training and opening sports venues to the public, NSFs must submit a written undertaking to abide by all the protocols prescribed in this SOP, and all other Government directives and health advisories, issued from time to time in the context of COVID-19 prevention (A sample undertaking has been included in *Annexure 2*). All sports facilities must endeavor to offer an environment for sports activities, ensuring the best possible protection against transmission and infection.

2. **Clean and disinfect premises:** All areas within the premises must be cleaned and disinfected, using clinically approved disinfectants that have no significant side-effects on exposure, through touch or smell. The areas to be disinfected include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Entrances (doorknobs, handles etc.) to premise, buildings, rooms
 - b. All common areas which are used by staff and visitors
 - c. Playing surfaces, various equipment at the field of play, operational areas for field of play

- d. Gyms and medical centres
- e. Washrooms and toilets
- f. All other surfaces that are touched by users regularly

In addition, they must ensure the cleaning and disinfection of sport facilities on a regular basis. The schedule for cleaning and disinfection must be done before or after training hours.

3. General measures to minimize risk

- a. Encourage personal training at home and provide online coaching
- b. Maintain daily log of athletes and staff
- c. Use of Druk trace app must be made mandatory for both athletes and coaches
- d. Training shall be conducted in small groups ensuring, that a minimum distance of 1 meter is maintained at all times by all athletes, officials and staff
- e. Install handwashing facility at the entrance
- f. All training equipment shall be handed over to the athletes only by a staff wearing adequate protective equipment like masks and gloves
- g. Where possible, separate training slots with enhanced protective measures should be offered
- h. Actively monitor communities where COVID-19 is spreading, and ensure athletes from those areas stay at home
- i. Open windows and doors whenever possible to make sure sport facility is well ventilated
- j. No spectators shall be allowed within the centre, at any time. Only athletes and training staff shall be present at the venue
- k. Special precautions shall be taken for training engagement of para-athletes as per guidelines and instructions of qualified medical personnel. Para-athletes shall train in a designated centre
- l. Cases requiring urgent First-Aid intervention shall be handled by authorised medical personnel ensuring adherence to necessary precautionary measures for physical contact
- m. Use of gym shall be avoided/ limited to inescapable requirement; and as far as possible exercise shall be allowed using personal equipment, which shall not be shared by any other athletes
- n. The use of gym shall be allowed in specific time slots, allowing sufficient time for disinfection between two slots, and the maximum number of people allowed to use the gym at a time shall be determined by the NSF/SA of respective centre depending on available space
- o. Each gym equipment shall be disinfected after every single use by the user

4. Measures to encourage individual hygiene (coaches and athletes):

- a. Make it mandatory for athletes and coaches to clean and disinfect sports equipment after use
- b. Place hand sanitizers in prominent areas around the sports facility
- c. Ensure continuous running water and soap to promote regular hand-washing
- d. Display posters promoting hand-washing
- e. Make face mask mandatory for athletes and coaches
- f. Designated waste bin for proper disposal of face masks and tissue papers
- g. Discourage sharing of food and drinks to reduce risk of infection
- h. Physical contact of any form shall be avoided as part of training routine, for example handshakes, high-fives, tackling, sparring etc.
- i. Ensure physical distancing at workplace (at least 1 meter)
- j. Athletes shall change before and after the training at their respective homes/rooms. Use of low ventilated spaces and rooms that prevent social distancing, such as locker rooms and small dry land rooms shall be avoided
- k. Residential athletes requiring usage of common shower areas shall ensure soaps, towels and any other utility is not shared. Athletes shall ensure social distancing is maintained at all places. Guidelines for cleaning toilets, social distancing norms and hygiene practices shall be displayed clearly inside every toilet

5. Athlete education

- a. Prior to resuming sports activities at the centres, each athlete shall be educated on COVID-19 precautionary measures, which are to be implemented at the facility and during activities. Prior to commencement of activities, coaching staff shall re-emphasise proper hygiene and health safety practices to all athletes as part of daily briefing.
- b. Athletes shall be trained in disinfection practices to allow them to disinfect their own rooms and prevent contamination
- c. Non-residential athletes and residential athletes returning to the facility shall be educated on the existing precautionary measures regarding usage of common facilities
- d. Provision shall be made for education material for athletes and other personnel to promote required behaviors (e.g. regular and thorough hand-washing, covering mouth and nose with a tissue or sleeve during coughing/sneezing). Some topics on which resources (preferably published by WHO) shall be made available are -
 - Good hygiene for COVID-19
 - Hand washing guidance
 - Covering of coughs and sneezes (use and disposal of tissues)
 - Self-isolation (self-quarantine) for coronavirus (COVID-19)
 - Advice for people at risk of coronavirus (COVID-19)

- e. Posters illustrating best hygiene practices and anti-COVID precautionary measures shall be displayed at clearly visible spots throughout the centre/sports venues.
- f. Athletes and other personnel shall be educated on hygiene practices and required behaviours relevant to their sport and environment. Some mandatory precautionary practices shall include:
 - No sharing of drink bottles and towels.
 - No sharing of mats, or equipment without an appropriate cleaning protocol, in between training sessions.
 - No physical contact in the form of handshakes, hugs, high-fives etc.

6. Measures to ensure safe public access to sport facilities

- a. Make DrukTrace check-in mandatory
- b. Maintain daily log of public users with their contact information
- c. Designate time slots for public usage of sports facility
- d. Allow minimal number of users to ensure physical distancing (at least 1 meter)
- e. All equipment shall be handed over only by a staff wearing adequate protective equipment like masks and gloves
- f. Mandatory sanitization and cleaning of equipment after or before use by individuals
- g. Mandatory hand wash before entering the facility
- h. Make face mask mandatory
- i. Mandatory temperature checking equipment and personnel at the facility
- j. Opening and closing time to be specified and strict adherence by concerned NSFs and SAs

- k. No spectators to be allowed

Continuous monitoring and management of protocols:

To ensure smooth functioning of the sports activities and to achieve desired results after resumption of activities, a proper monitoring process shall be put in place to ensure adherence to guidelines and any early detection of illness within officials and athletes.

1. Monitoring of athletes/ support staff/ management staff
 - a. A checklist may be prepared and a system of obtaining daily reports from various stakeholders may be put in place by respective NSFs and SAs. Ensure submission of daily reports to the Management by the concerned officer.
 - b. All athletes and support staff, including the ground staff and management staff shall be consistently apprised regarding early reporting of any suspected COVID-19 symptoms.

Managing a suspected COVID-19 case

1. All athletes/other personnel must be made aware not to attend sports activities if they are unwell with any of the following symptoms, even if only mild:
 - c. Cough
 - d. Sore throat
 - e. Fever (e.g. night sweats or chills)
 - f. Shortness of breath
2. Any athlete/staff with a possible respiratory tract infection should refrain from coming to office/training until a doctor, given the potential for worsening illness, has cleared them to do so
3. If an individual is being tested for COVID-19:
 - a. They must immediately self-isolate and discontinue work/sports activities until COVID-19 has been excluded and they have been medically cleared by a doctor to return to work/ sports activities
 - b. Isolation of close contacts will be a decision for medical staff, based on case specific detail

Categorization of sports and precautions for each category

A general categorization of sports depending on the nature of training and competition requirements have been made and baseline precautions have been assigned to each category. The COVID-19 Task force in-charge of NSF's and SAs, while resuming activities under any category, must take into account the local conditions and their preparedness. These precautions shall be adhered to at all times without exception. The following table details general precautions to be followed for all groups of athletes.

Categories	Description	Examples	Precaution for training activity	Precaution for equipment usage
Non-Contact sports	Individual sports with no requirement for physical contact during training or competition.	Olympic Archery, Shooting, Golf, Athletics	<p>Maintain distancing norms of minimum 1 meter between athletes and staff</p> <p>Sanitize exiting facility as soon as training is concluded</p> <p>No spectators shall be allowed</p> <p>Limit number of players/participants</p> <p>All pre and post games socializing, at the venue must be avoided at all costs and athletes shall exit facility immediately after training</p>	<p>Personal equipment such as bows, arrows etc. shall be used without sharing.</p> <p>Sports specific safety equipment such as eye protectors, face protectors etc. shall not be shared.</p> <p>Additional staff may be appointed for proper disinfection of the equipment prior to continuous usage.</p>
Partial contact sports	Mostly team sports which require some level of physical contact during training or competition and where equipment is usually shared	Weightlifting, Bodybuilding, Tennis, Badminton, Table Tennis, cricket, and Indigenous games.	<p>Training activities may be performed in small groups (maximum 8-10) maintaining distancing norms of minimum 1 meter between athletes and ensuring aspects of training which require physical contact are avoided like tackling, body blocking etc.</p> <p>Coach shall oversee proceedings from a safe distance, with staff allowed to pick up balls, cones etc. which would then be disinfected.</p>	<p>Personal equipment shall not be shared.</p> <p>All equipment shall be properly disinfected after every single use as per the standard procedure using disinfectant.</p> <p>Additional staff may be appointed for proper disinfection of the equipment prior to continuous usage.</p> <p>Equipment which is bound to be shared and utilised continuously during a training such as balls must be used carefully without using such equipment to rub/ touch face, remove sweat etc.</p>

			<p>Training shall be in small groups, players maintaining social distancing from each other during exercises and sessions.</p> <p>All pre and post games socializing, at the venue must be avoided at all costs and athletes shall exit facility immediately after training</p> <p>No entertainment group such as dancers shall be allowed</p>	<p>Consistent hand sanitization is a must before, during and after every training session.</p>
Contact sports	Individual sports (all combat sports) which require mandatory physical contact during training or competition	Boxing, Judo, Karate, Football, Volleyball, Basketball, Taekwondo and others	<p>Selective training activities may be performed by athletes individually without engaging in physical combat with other athletes and utilizing alternative practice equipment like punching/kicking bags, slam balls, choke dummies etc.</p> <p>Distancing norms of minimum 1 meter between athletes and staff shall be maintained</p> <p>Athletes shall exit facility as soon as training is concluded</p>	<p>Personal equipment shall not be shared. All equipment shall be properly disinfected after every single use as per the standard procedure using disinfectant.</p> <p>Additional staff may be appointed for proper disinfection of the equipment prior to continuous usage.</p> <p>Equipment which is bound to be shared and utilised continuously during a training such as punching/ kicking bags, slam balls, skipping ropes etc. must be used carefully without using such equipment to rub/ touch face, remove sweat etc.</p> <p>Consistent hand sanitization is a must before, during and after every training session</p>

Annexure 1

Athlete consent form for resumption of training

Training Consent Form

Name _____

D.o.B _____ Gender _____ Sport _____

Training Centre _____ Contact number _____

- I hereby acknowledge the risks associated with resuming training under the present COVID-19 pandemic situation
- I hereby acknowledge that the risks involved, necessary precautions and protocols for resumption of training have been duly informed to me by _____ (name of NSF).
- I hereby acknowledge that the National Sport Federation cannot guarantee the complete elimination of risks posed by COVID-19 through the implementation of the precautions and protocols enacted by the National Sport Federation
- I hereby declare that I am willing to resume training on my own consent without the influence of any other party and I shall adhere to suggested safety precautions and protocols by the National Sport Federation

_____ (Signature of athlete)

_____ (Signature of Coach)

_____ (Name of athlete)

_____ (Name of Coach)

(Name and Signature of the General Secretary)

Official Seal and Date:.....

Annexure 2

NSF undertaking for resumption of training

Declaration

Name of NSF- _____

- We hereby acknowledge the risks associated with resuming training at the centre under the present COVID-19 pandemic situation
- We hereby declare that we have studied the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) in detail and assume the responsibilities allocated to us within the SOP
- We hereby declare that we have developed our own SOP to cover safety measures over and above the basic measures mentioned in the general SOP developed by the BOC
- We hereby declare that we shall adhere to the protocols and precautionary measures prescribed in the SOP and the Government orders issued from time to time in the context of COVID-19 prevention prior to and after resumption of training

_____ (Authorised Signatory from NSF)

_____ (Name of Authorised Signatory)

_____ (Designation of Authorised Signatory)