

Guidelines for the conduct of National Championships

COVID-19 pandemic has changed our lives and our sports activities drastically. With a view to the safe future, TTFI has developed a roadmap in the form of guidelines for returning to regular training and competition practices. These guidelines are intended as recommendations for all members of the table tennis community to continue to enjoy and participate in the sport during the current global health emergency, and to return to a shared enjoyment of it in the future.

These guidelines deal with the SOPs as circulated by the Central Government and, when complemented with the prescribed guidelines of the local authorities and laws of the states across the country, they will have a greater effect in preventing and spreading COVID-19. Central and state governments are continuously issuing and updating procedures regarding restrictions that need to be duly respected by all.

The recommendations outlined in this document are, by and large, the same but may change as and when new information on the COVID-19 outbreak, its prevention and treatment become available. TTFI takes no responsibility whatsoever for any possible infection of COVID during the table tennis activities.

TRAINING:

Recommendations for participation in group training for athletes, coaches and staff:

- i. Exact numbers of small groups allowed to be in sports and leisure facilities should be based on instructions by local authorities, but in any case, capped; there should be no open training sessions without a limit on time or participation numbers;
- ii. Where possible, separate training slots with enhanced protective measures should be offered to people who are more at risk of complications in case of infection;
- iii. Hand washing to be mandatory upon entering and before leaving the training venue and encouraged throughout. If possible, hand sanitizers should be made available at all training venues;
- iv. No touching or shaking of hands amongst participants permitted. Social distancing rules must be strictly observed;
- v. A wet disinfectant mat should be placed at the entrance of the venue to facilitate sanitizing of shoes;
- vi. Every 2 hours, all closed areas on the premises (such as offices, changing rooms, hallways, etc.) should be ventilated, wherever possible. This should also be done before a changeover of attendees within the venue;
- vii. Any participant must have shown no signs or symptoms of COVID-19 as established by the Competent Health Authorities in the past 14 days or as per guidelines of local health authorities;
- viii. Individuals with a documented case of a COVID-19 infection need clearance from an approved health professional to participate in training;
- ix. Where possible, participants should aim to be present at the intended training location for 14 days before beginning group training and not travel extensively in this period, which significantly reduces the risk of introducing COVID-19 into the training group;
- x. Eliminate contact with compromised individuals. Signs and symptoms of COVID-19 may vary. Athletes, coaches and staff should not be in close contact with anyone who is sick for 14 days before beginning group training. This recommendation reduces the risk of introducing COVID-19 into the training group by someone who may have been infected with COVID-19 but not experiencing any symptoms;
- xi. Follow proper respiratory hygiene. This means:
 - Covering your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze;

- Disposing of the used tissue immediately and wash your hands.
- xii. Social distancing measures should be upheld as far as possible:
- Distance between participants should be kept to an absolute minimum of 1m (3 feet) at all times, but it is advised to keep a physical distance of 2m (6 feet 5 inches) wherever possible;
 - Participants should refrain from shaking hands, hugging and touching in greeting or celebration;
 - No Doubles training;
 - Adapted multi-ball training;
 - Ensure that only the coach touches balls;
 - Area to be secured so that balls cannot mix with other balls;
- xiii. The playing court should have an area of at least 5mx12m (16 feet 5 inches x 39 feet 4 inches), surrounded by barriers. It is recommended to keep at least 2m (6 feet 5 inches) space between the courts and only two persons (maximum) per table tennis court allowed. Coaches may be in the facility but should remain outside of the bordered court.
For training facilities without barriers, managers may improvise division between tables.
- xiv. Coaches must maintain required physical distance from participants during practice and follow guidelines by local authorities on appropriate PPE (Personal Protective Equipment)
- xv. Continuous sanitizing and prevention practices should be applied (cleaning equipment, washing hands, wearing protective gear as directed by the local government)
- xvi. Eliminate non-playing time in the facility including using public showers and changing rooms. Prevention practices required in bathroom areas;
- xvii. Eliminate sharing equipment and observe the following steps:
- No sharing of rackets. The racket is part of the player's own equipment;
 - No breathing on the ball for tackiness; balls to be cleaned after practice;
 - No switching of table sides;
 - No touching or cleaning of the table with the hands during practice;
 - Every person to use his/her hygiene products;
 - Leave at least a ten-minute window for changeover between different training groups to ensure a contact-free switch;
 - If the facility is not dedicated to table tennis only, and tables and barriers need to be covered each time, dedicated individuals should be appointed for setting up and breaking down movable equipment. These individuals should, at the very least, practice proper hand washing techniques before and after touching equipment, but preferably use face masks and gloves while carrying out this task.
- xviii. All participants to bring their water bottles and snacks. Physical distance to be maintained during short breaks;

COMPETITIONS

I. Participants

- Any participants must have shown no signs or symptoms of COVID-19 as established by the WHO in the past 14 days, or per guidelines of local health authorities;
- Individuals with a documented case of a COVID-19 infection need clearance from an approved health professional to participate in the competition;
- Apply proper hygiene practices, such as washing hands upon entering and before leaving the training facility, cleaning equipment and using sanitizing products extensively, and follow additional guidance by local health authorities;
- All participants to carry their face masks and use them as advised by local authorities and the event

ORGANISERS:

- No touching or shaking of hands amongst participants. Social distancing rules must be observed;
- Follow proper respiratory hygiene. This means:

- Covering your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze;
- Disposing of the used tissue immediately and wash your hands.
- Where possible, use individual transport rather than group travel;
- Changing rooms to remain closed; participants to arrive ready to play the match and to depart immediately after. Time in shared facilities of competition venue should be avoided or severely reduced;
- Warm-up in separate hall according to schedule. Note that warm-up time may be reduced to accommodate all players while upholding social distancing measures;
- Apply prevention practices in shared areas if they cannot be avoided (such as bathrooms), including avoiding physical contact and application of appropriate hygiene practices;
- No sharing of equipment;
- If advised by local health authorities, umpires to wear masks and gloves in the venue.

II. Organizers and staff:

- Ensure compliance with all advice and guidance issued by local authorities;
- Ensure that no individual that has disclosed symptoms of COVID-19 in the past 14 days is allowed to participate or work at the competition in question and that any prior infections with COVID-19 have been cleared by a health professional;
- Place wet disinfectant mats at each entrance of the venue to facilitate sanitizing of shoes;
- Every 2 hours, all closed areas on the premises (such as offices, changing rooms, hallways, etc.) should be ventilated wherever possible. This should also be done before a changeover of attendees within the venue;
- Based on guidance by local authorities, assess the risk of having spectators attend the event and decide whether to play behind closed doors;
- If it is decided that spectators shall be allowed into the venue, ensure that social distancing measures can be upheld according to guidance issued by local authorities; this may mean reduced spectator numbers;
- No racket control to take place;
- Follow guidelines set out by NADA regarding Anti-Doping procedures during the event;
- All draws to be done online;
- Choice of shirt colour to be done before the match (online);
- Ensure that social distancing measures can be upheld in the call area.

This includes:

- Considering a layout to ensure a distance of 2m (6 feet 5 inches) can be up kept between individuals;
- Ensuring that PPE in the form of face masks is worn by everyone. Where permissible, organizers must ensure a sufficient supply of face masks for participants.
- Stripped down match protocol:
- Walk in to ensure social distancing;
- Presentations in box to follow distancing measures;
- No handshakes;
- Coin toss to be done by the umpire in the seat and with players remaining on their sides;
- No timeout sign to be placed on playing table; only signaled by the umpire and small sign placed on umpire's table instead;
- Towel rule to be relaxed;
- Towels not to be used for wiping any surfaces, but only own hands and face. Only one box per player, no swapping between games;
- Ensure that social distancing measures can be upheld on the field of play.

This includes:

- Considering a layout with fewer tables to ensure a distance of at least 2m (6 feet 5 inches) between playing courts;
- Having a bigger box to ensure the distance between umpires, players and volunteers remain more than 2m (6 feet 5 inches) at all times;
- Ensuring that distance between coaches and their players on the field of play can always be at least 2m (6 feet 5 inches); this may mean placing the chairs farther behind the court surrounds;
- No multiball to be implemented;
- Placing towel boxes at a distance from the umpire that ensures social distancing is maintained throughout;
- Provide bottled sealed drinks, instead of public-shared water dispensers.;
- Provide the on-site doctor with sufficient PPE and ensure they are trained in response to COVID-19;
- Provide an isolation room for suspected cases of COVID-19 on-site;
- Apply continuous sanitizing and prevention practices (cleaning equipment, washing hands, wearing protective gear as directed by the local government);
- Ensure all staff keeps a distance of at least 2m (6 feet 5 inches) from other individuals;
- Ensure all staff are briefed on appropriate hygiene practices and are applying them consistently;
- Provide hand sanitizer throughout the venue;
- Ensure that shared areas (bathrooms, racket control, food courts, etc) have demarcations to assist in keeping the appropriate distance from other individuals.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Minimize risks among participants through continuous infection prevention measures (frequent hand washing, avoid touching your face, cover your mouth when coughing, etc.);
- All participants should self-monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 daily. A participant with symptoms should not attend practice and need to notify coaches, staff, and their healthcare providers. Daily recording of symptoms may be adopted;
- Coaches or staff must monitor athletes for symptoms and prevent symptomatic athletes from training. PPE and prevention supplies should be made readily available (hand sanitizer, facial tissues, facial coverings, etc.);
- Regular group training in any type of space should be done by observing good hygiene practices throughout;
- Equipment may be shared with frequent disinfection before another person uses it. Every person is encouraged to use their hygiene products, but disinfectant (spray) and hand sanitizers should be made available by the training provider/venue.



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November 11, 2020