



**ATHLETICS SOUTH AFRICA NPC**  
**Reg No 2006/034767/08**

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## **OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT**

**29 June 2020**

### **CIRCULAR 36 OF 2020 - ASA ALIGNMENT WITH GOVERNMENT EXISTING PROTOCOLS**

Dear Members

#### **1. ASA Circular 35 Updated**

Since the release of ASA Circular 35, ASA has received regular communication from Members regarding the content of ASA Circular 35 and other related Circulars.

ASA Members are cautioned not get the wrong impressions regarding ASA's implementation of the government's National Disaster Act Level 3 Risk Adjustment Strategy, with specific reference to the staggered opening of professional non-contact sport and professional athletes' training, as announced on 30 May 2020 by the Honourable Minister Nathi Mthethwa.

After careful consideration, the ASA Board are of the view that the COVID-19 virus infection rate is still on the rise, and the risk of our athletes getting infected and the grave consequences as a result of the infection, are very real.

With the above in mind ASA has resolved that it will not be hosting any national activities and participation at international events until ASA deems it is safe to do so or until it is expertly advised by the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture, that it is medically safe to host events for athletes at national and international stage.

ASA has taken comparison to the protocol models of World Athletics, other bodies and other countries, and we reached a decision that none of them addresses the current dire scenario faced by South African athletics.

The ASA Board has decided that, instead all effort must be concentrated in making sure that not a single life of an athlete, coach, support teams, event staff, volunteers



**ASA Board Members:** Aleck SKHOSANA (President); Dr Harold ADAMS (Vice President); Jakes JACOBS (Chair Cross Country); James MOLOI (Chair Road Running); Pieter LOURENS (Chair Track & Field); Dorah MNGWEVU (Chair Athletes); Ntathu GWADISO (Additional); Motlatsi KEIKABILE (Additional); Esther MALEMA (Additional); Shireen NOBLE (Additional); Jazz MNYENGEZA (USSA Rep); William MOKATSANYANE (SASA Rep); **Honorary Members:** Mervyn KING; Mluleki GEORGE

and all involved, is lost because of COVID-19. We value every life. And that, to ASA, comes first.

Our athletes insurance does not cover COVID-19 and its complications thereafter, which insurers are very clear that they do not provide cover for.

ASA advises and encourages only the use of private facilities because they have cover. We have many other professional and non-professional athletes, some of whom are domicile in areas or come from impoverished communities, where they are far from medical centres. They too must be equally protected from infections and from possible death.

We are very firm that athletes and the entire athletics family must be able to follow the rules and regulations as set by the government. This includes rules and regulations governing the availability of the stadiums and related facilities for use, the athletes and coaches must follow that to the letter.

We align ourselves fully with government because as ASA we cannot create a protocol that can save a life of an athlete, coach or any role-player. We are not convinced as ASA that we should put athletes and coaches in a position that is not safe, and we do not want to see anyone from the athletics family form part of the statistics.

Our programmes and activities continue to be either postponed or cancelled and will be opened when it is time to do so and when we deem it safe to. ASA has chosen to be extra-ordinary cautious because one death, would be one too many for our sport, especially when we knew that this is an avoidable situation.

It should be noted that athletes who are based at university facilities or any facilities where they have been granted permission to operate, that is fine.

## **2. Olympic Squad preparation**

With regards to the athletes on the Olympic Squad, due to the individual nature of athletics, the athletes on the Olympic Squad do not prepare for the Olympic Games from a central venue.

Given that the sport of athletics is technical in its nature, athletes and their coaches and support teams, will require access to municipal stadiums on individual basis, where access operate under terms of the bylaws of the local government.

Note that each relevant municipal stadium will apply clearance individually. Professional athletes, including those in the Olympic Squad must follow the health protocols offered by government when using these stadium facilities and as prescribed for the relevant municipal stadiums in line with the National Disaster Act Risk adjustment strategy, as announced by the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture from time to time.

ASA strongly advises Provinces and clubs to follow all government prescribed precautionary measures until further notice.

### **3. Virtual Running**

The ASA Board has a particular concern on the virtual runs being conducted by individual organisers who may not understand the risk they impose on the athletes who may be running in an unsecured and unprotected environment.

Virtual running no doubt has many advantages, such as flexibility to run the race at a time and place that suits one best, not travelling to the race, more possible variations of participation, being able to compete against anyone in any province or country and the treasured memories, medals or prize money on offer, etc.

Unfortunately, virtual running also has its disadvantages, such as the race may not entirely actually be virtual, as you may still need to run real, performances are not comparable as they do not take place at the same time or same place, the athletes do not actually go anywhere, it is not the real thing and there is no sense of community.

The biggest disadvantage of the current trend of virtual running is the poor information to, and from, the athlete that entered and participated in the race. The race organiser cannot provide medical support if the athlete becomes ill, or gets injured while participating. Neither can the organiser secure the competition environment, to prevent cheating and accidents that can lead to the death of the athlete who may be actually running.

Members are kindly requested to advise their members of the risks involved in participating in unregistered virtual runs.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Aleck Skhosana' with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mr. Aleck Skhosana

President: Athletics South Africa

SASCOC: Acting 1st Vice President

Secretary General: CAASR5